Following Jesus Christ to the Margins: Understanding and Evangelizing Second Generation Latino Youth in the United States

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INTRODUCTION

Latino immigrants by and large come to the United States in search of a true human and spiritual fulfillment. Within the venture they carry over their faith, culture, and traditions to be expressed and handed down to future generations. They also bring an outlook filled with hope and illusion, setting the foundation for their new homes. At the time of migration the Latinos may consider what they might lose through the process, namely, supportive family ties, occupations, religious communities, etc., meanwhile hoping to preserve the most important values interconnected with their cultural traditions from the land that once provided them with life. Although it is impossible to know what characteristics the future might conceal, as the individuals immigrate to a new country, they are open to embracing new values the «promising future» could provide. Nonetheless, some of the «hidden» traits are now evident and are currently found embedded within the children of the migrant-labeled, second-generation Latino youth. This dissertation specifically provides informative guidance and special attention to the predicaments faced by the second-generation Latino youth, meanwhile presenting a plausible resolution with the hope of prompting the Church to better understand and respond to the modern missiological challenges for evangelizing this population.

Latino immigrant parents see themselves vividly present in the lives of their children, and thus aspire to become and have in them all they did not. Furthermore, their reason for living comes from the ability to provide adequate nurturance, with the hope of shaping them into productive adults who appreciate themselves and others. Thus, in being raised with these values, the second-generation Latino youth should be prone to adopting this manner of thinking. However, since they are living in an obscure and ambivalent process of growth and development, many complexities impede them from reaching their fullest potential. As a result, it can destine them
and their offspring to a continuous state of poverty and marginalization with under-developed tools for fulfillment.

In addition, the negative reception received from the dominant culture regarding issues of differentiation and the correct process of assimilation also contributes to and affects the youth’s clear cultural hybrid identity and purpose in life. In general, the second-generation Latino youth in the U.S. do not seem to comprehend and appreciate the unique potential of their missionary role in this country. This is elicited and visible in the lack of personal investment towards their human capital, which paradoxically goes against the continual search for the better way of life their parents first sought to find in this country. Furthermore, many are unaware of their true identity and are unable to acknowledge that as marginal youth they possess a divine purpose. Clearly, they have not been assisted in realizing that their purpose in life can be as great as, and can be parallel to, the biblically marginalized. For it is within the conditions of those who are pushed to the margins of society that God chooses the locus for divine transformative and fulfilling encounters. Thus, through the proper aid of this understanding the children of the immigrant could come to value and treasure their true sense of being and reach a transcending life.

In parish life one finds that many of these youth are lacking in academic commitment, success, and participation in the life of their Church’s communities. In my pastoral experience as an immigrant and pastor in the United States, and based on the sociological and ecclesiological studies on this particular group, I have come to find what I suspected. To my sorrow a great percentage of the second-generation Latino youth in the U.S. is not worshiping or practicing their faith. They seem to be short of recognizing and/or appreciating all the wonderful traits the Church has to offer. On the other hand, the U.S. Church has failed to make the second-generation Latino youth a missionary pastoral priority. Now, since the issues these youth are undergoing are not equivalent to those experienced by the youth in mainstream society or the first generation Latino youth, they are not being attended to in the most suitable manner. Hence, the second-generation Latino youth has been forced to deal by themselves with the additional unique stressors of finding themselves within the Church and society.

The Church does not currently have a targeted and specialized pastoral program that takes into account the particular needs of the second-generation Latino youth. It is evident they must be reached out to and attended to with a more innovative Christian perspective that addresses their contextual social-cultural reality. This notion in turn propelled my
initiative of finding a way to once again have the youth become involved within the Church, meanwhile focusing on establishing the reality that the Catholic Church, and Christianity itself, despite complex contemporary secular challenges, does indeed have and proclaims a hopeful future for them. Furthermore, the fact that currently more than half of all Catholic youth in the United States are Latino highlights the urgency of making them a missionary priority. I believe that through a liminal process, whereby these youth can receive a personal reaffirmation, they can experience a personal conversion which would lead them into an active social participation and reincorporation within the context of a ministerial group.

Needless to say that if the Church does not want to risk losing a great percentage of its future members, it must specifically address and assist in this population’s unique pastoral needs. She can adequately serve as the answer to their dilemmas by helping them discern who they fully are, thus discovering who they are supposed to be, and aiding them to recognize their God-given identity and purpose in the current Church and society. In turn, this will allow the youth to uncover their talents, while encountering an inculturated Gospel message that liberates and empowers them to live within a transcendent state of being.

1. Purpose and Method

For this reason, this dissertation proposes a new pastoral response, labeled «Integral Liberating Evangelization,» which embraces the objectives of the triad, a «New Evangelization, Human Development, and Christian Culture,» initially called for by Pope John Paul II, and currently promoted by Pope Benedict XVI, along with their teachings pertaining to an Authentic Human Liberation. This pastoral proposition is also complemented by the teaching of True Human Liberation, initially presented by Latin American Liberation Theology, and actualized in the North American context by Hispanic-American theology, with its strong focus on the mestizo marginalized persons as locus for God’s transforming

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1 JOHN PAUL II. «Opening Address at Santo Domingo Conference,» in Santo Domingo and Beyond, 1993.
3 As delineated in the documents by J.RATZINGER. «Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation» (March 22, 1986), and «Instruction on Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation» (August 6, 1984), #1.
power. Furthermore, this dissertation demonstrates how the missionary approach of «Integral Liberating Evangelization» can help the second-generation Latino youth confront and digest all the ramifications that marginality imposes, meanwhile providing them with a transforming discernment process for a true fulfilling and transcending Christian life.

Fundamentally, the missionary intent of this proposition is to address the contextual socio-cultural and biblical-pastoral understanding of the second-generation Latino youth living in the United States, who are struggling with the reality of marginality and experiencing a crisis of identity and purpose. Since the conditions of this young population are very complex, it requires a scientific, historical and critical analysis of their circumstances, in order to provide a substantive and relational missionary assistance to their human and spiritual needs. Consequently, the dissertation offers an anthropological treatment of their contextual reality, considering ethnological and ecclesiological data, inductively analyzed and critiqued by secular and Christian anthropologists as well as theologians. Clearly, a permanent characteristic in the lives and environment of second-generation youth has been one of conflict within themselves, their communities and Church. This research has found a clear life-giving relationship within the tense circumstances of people, and how God has transformed them into positive and transcending experiences. As such, it offers illumination and sustainable hope to the current marginal circumstances of second-generation Latino youth.

2. Limitations

There are many limitations that influence and exist within this dissertation. In some cases the existing limitations open the way for promising future measures that can strengthen the provided information, meanwhile others simply hinder the collection of data. Some examples include the lack of prolific data on the particular marginal reality of second-generation Latino youth and their place within the American Church and society. This absence of precise material regarding the leading concern compels the dissertation to consider information from various scientific works that indirectly or secondarily deals with the target youth population. Hence, although this limitation is one that seems to create a boundary

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4 Some prominent examples are the work of V. ELIZONDO and A. FIGUEROA-DECK, O. ESPIN, H. RECÍNOS, G. RIEBE-ESTRELLA, F. SEGOVIA, among others. Their contributions will be highlighted in Chapter 4 and 5.
around the amount of existing material, however, the dissertation positively brings light to the issue.  

Subsequently, the fact that the unique contextual reality of this generation has not been given proper and specialized priority by the Church in her missionary and evangelizing plan also limits the amount of available ecclesiological data. With this restriction in mind, the dissertation also took into account limited parochial information as a way to address this general concern. Although the gathered material was of good use, the dissertation yet builds on pastoral intents and efforts that have worked only for short periods of time, due to the absence of sustainable support from the official structural Church. This perspective may give the impression that this dissertation’s contribution is set to fall short, as other attempts have done so. Hence, this limitation highlights the notion that an actual implementation of the dissertation’s missiological proposition, which has not yet been realized in the contextual reality of U.S. second generation Latinos, might not be surely successful.

Another limitation is found within the absence of a thorough examination of the psychological aspects or traumas this population faces, creating a disadvantage when the symptoms of marginality were not looked into in greater depth, due to the fact that the general objective and focus of this dissertation are theological and not psychological in nature. This lacking circumstance, of course, leaves an open window for future research as to how marginality does affect this targeted youth in their person and psyche, their spirituality and their religious engagement in the Church and society. A final yet important limitation takes into account the revised literature and the general use of the term Latino or Hispanic. The considered literature does not thoroughly capture the profound diversity within the Latino community, which at times marginalizes groups that voicelessly fall prison to this categorization, thus creating a potential lack of representation and understanding of the less represented individuals in society. In a sense, this dissertation falls victim to an etymological cultural dilemma, as it broadly bundles diverse groups into one-size-fits-all.

Nonetheless, by closely evaluating the presented conditions faced by these youth, one becomes fully aware of the urgency to implement an inculturated missionary pastoral response that corresponds to the contextual reality of this population. It also show that the challenges posed by the second-generation Latino youth in the United States represent the reality of people on the move in other places in the world and thus, despite the limitations, highlights the need to address their unique issues in a global
manner, so that the universal Church may benefit from efforts of inculturating the gospel message in diverse marginal contexts.

3. The Flow of the Argument

In trying to thoroughly understand and appreciate the marginalized condition of the second-generation Latino youth in the United States, along with seeing how their condition can be used as a tool and a medium for a transcending transformation both with the Church and society, the presented chapters introduce specific information regarding their dilemmas. The first chapter begins with an anthropological consideration of secular marginality. It includes evidence from natural and social scientific disciplines, which explores the biological and cultural characteristics of the human person as a social and political individual. Special attention is given to concepts of race and ethnicity, which are determining factors that contribute to human physical and social differentiation, thus creating confusion, isolation and rejection for marginalized people who end up in cultural homelessness. The chapter presents a liminal process which can be used by people in the margins to liberate, reconcile, and transcend their lives beyond the paralyzing negativities marginality imposes.

The second chapter focuses on the reality that even people of faith can end up as marginalized victims within and outside of their own religious structures. They can be considered unimportant and insignificant, causing them to feel religiously displaced, excluded, unappreciated, and unable to experience the gift of God’s presence in the midst of their own communities and institutions. This chapter offers a Christian anthropological treatment of religious marginality, both individual and collective, with an emphasis on the importance of its particular cultural manifestations, and how it is possible for people of faith to allow God to empower them to become productive individuals in the kingdom of God.

Chapter three presents a modest treatment of a biblical development of marginality, emphasizing the action of God as the claimer, defender, affirmer, and enabler of those unjustly deprived of God’s given gifts. One of the principle emphases is on how people in the Bible experience, endure, and respond to their marginalized encounters. This is presented to help better understand and appreciate the existence of marginalities as it affirms the ongoing promise of God’s proven and transforming presence within the life of the marginalized.

In chapter four, the socio-cultural conditions of Hispanics in the United States are considered, focusing on the Latino youth. This chapter situates
sources of marginality in order to better understand the current circumstances of these youth for a potential pastoral response by the Church. Hence, chapter five is dedicated to the pastoral perspective of the marginalized condition of Latino youth in the U.S., considering the effect and influence of the development of the youth’s identity or lack of, and their behaviors. It further presents the general development of an U.S. Hispanic ministry with a particular emphasis on how it has been considered and attended to within the American church, denoting their marginalization within the institution.

Thus then, chapter six proposes an «Integral Liberating Evangelization,» and its potential benefit to second-generation Latino youth. It also presents a pastoral response that can be implemented and exercised within existing or for future Latino youth support groups at a parish level. This was done by creating a specific program composed of interactive sessions that take into account all of the material from the chapters and several missiological characteristics of the Church’s call for a new evangelization.
CHAPTER I

Theories of Marginality: A Secular Consideration

This chapter offers an anthropological consideration of secular marginality. The presentation briefly includes evidence from some natural and social scientific disciplines, which touch the biological and cultural characteristics of the human person as a social and political individual. Special attention is given to concepts such as race and ethnicity, which are factors that contribute to human physical and social differences. The chapter begins with a brief etymological development of the term «margin» into the concept of «marginality» within secular and religious realms. Then follows a presentation on the concept of «anomie,» as source and manifestation of marginality, using the anthropological investigations of Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) in regards to social integration, human longings and fulfillments. Next, the theory of liminality is presented as a process of transition, transformation, and transcendence, using the important research of Victor Turner (1920-1983) on human rituals and dramas. The discussion will then turn to the socio-cultural development of marginality found in the United States. It will focus on key issues such as the social assimilation of new generations of immigrants as well as the negative and positive aspects of marginality.

In particular, the aim will be to consider patterns of human behaviors seen in people who are also structurally marginalized. Such people develop the desire to migrate from their own communities, societies, countries, and this world, deeming it as the only solution to their unfulfilled human
longings and desires. The presented material is based on ethnological data which has been inductively analyzed and critiqued by prominent anthropologists. Although two main anthropological approaches, conflict and consensus, are recognized as important to this consideration, the first approach is primarily emphasized. The chapter will conclude with the consideration of the «in-beyond» experience of marginality as the most constructive approach for immigrants to develop healthy informed and balanced identities and personalities. This discussion will situate the main goal of this dissertation, namely, to understand the marginal reality of Second-Generation Latino Youth in the United States and how their integral formation and education is affected. This understanding will help reveal the sociopolitical and cultural complexity of the pastoral challenge of ministering to these youth.

1. Developmental Process of Marginality

The term «margin» comes from the Latin word *Margo*, which means «an edge, brink, a border.» Webster’s Dictionary defines «margin» as «the space around the printed or written matter on a page,» a «limit beyond or below which something ceases to exist or to be desirable or possible: a margin of endurance…». Accordingly, it defines «marginal» as «situated on a border, edge, or fringe,» «at the lower limit,» «insignificant,» as «having contact with two or more cultural groups but not fully accepted in any of them.» Having been filtered through different scientific disciplines

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1 The main emphasis is on cultural anthropology with its close relation with psychosocial and economic sciences, which also includes the common linguistic elements for the study of myths as well as «of society as a system of communication, structure, and the way the human being organizes and classifies his/her whole experience of the world.» In addition, at times, this anthropological treatment may be aided by «historical recorded data and with human geography for uses of space or acts» that transform natural and social environments. W. BENTON - H. HEMINGWAY-BENTON, *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*. Vol. I. Chicago (1992) 969-970.


3 Webster’s Concise College Dictionary, New York (1999) 512. In addition, Michael Downey concludes that the term «margin» or «the margins» carries four interconnecting connotations: (1) a margin is a border line or limit, demarcating the words on a typed or written page from its edge; (2) its identity is established by way of negation, in and on the terms of its relation to the center; (3) it refers to the periphery, that space which is unimportant due to its distance from the center; (4) the margin is empty, being constituted by nothing. M. DOWNEY, *The New Dictionary of Spirituality*, Minnesota (1993) 623.
and special interests, thus producing various meanings and foci, two categories encompass the effects of marginality:

(1) A state of being «marginalized» socially, not fully valued, appreciated, or included by a ruling or dominant race, group, community, society, or church in decisions that affect the entire body; (2) a psychological state of marginality of «liminality», frequently associated with particular transitions in which one feels dislocated, uprooted, unsure. In practice, both states (one more social, one more personal) can overlap and are frequently characterized by confusion, lack of self-esteem and darkness.⁴

When these definitions are applied to particular people or groups in society, they appear as victimized individuals who have been directly or indirectly consigned to the margins of «the social-symbolic order, the center, with its prevailing worldview…, [who] are not at home or are not in step with the status quo… often viewed as living a borderline existence between order and chaos, usually on the verge of caving into the abyss of chaos.»⁵ Accordingly, one generally finds the marginalized people as subordinate to the dominant group. They are the victims of many types of rejection and abuse of power. Janice E. Perlman, in her research on urban poverty and politics, articulates that competing sociological, anthropological, and economical theories provide a classification of the marginalized people in five broad categories. She says that the marginalized may be understood and found as:

(1) those located in substandard squatter settlements at the periphery of the city; (2) the jobless or underemployed; (3) migrants from a rural to an urban culture who are caught in the transition; (4) racial or ethnic minorities who had trouble integrating into the dominant ethnic group; or (5) deviants, be they pathological, gifted, or nonconformist.⁶

Marginality is often understood as having different connotations since it is caused by a variety of factors. However, there are some factors in the marginalization of people, namely, «race, gender, economic status, politics, education, occupation, and age that seem to be more important … [T]hese determinants are so interdependent that they influence each other.»⁷ In

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⁶ J. E. PERLMAN. The Myth of Marginality, 93-96.
⁷ J. Y. LEE, Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology, 32-33.
addition, these factors are generally used to legitimize the marginalization of people on the basis of «differences» in relation to the center of power. Such differences might be considered as unacceptable, abnormal, unnatural, and/or threatening to the uniformity of the mainstream. Accordingly, also «this element of difference often leads to an overwhelming sense of fatalism and powerlessness in the face of economic systems, political structures, or religious institutions.»

Marginalized people are intentionally denied access to equal participation in power and decision-making within their socio-structural systems. In this vein, «Marginality may derive from overt or covert processes of exclusion or noncommunication in a society. Their marginality may reveal itself in a social passivity, as, for example, in low levels of productivity, education, or subsistence.» Consequently, the marginalizing process greatly undermines and denigrates people, causing them to develop a sense of worthlessness, helplessness and lack of belonging. These negative repercussions caused by marginality contribute to a crisis of identity coupled with a great sense of ambivalence towards their present and future world.

Because the causes of marginality are various and deeply rooted in powerful structures, understanding it becomes a complex endeavor, which is further complicated by efforts to confront, change or transcend its damaging reality. Marginalized individuals can overcome their negative and confusing experiences by first discovering the basis of their own sense of marginality in order to gain a clearer understanding of its roots and consequences. In this way, they can consciously «become agents of change…. [For] radical social change occurs when the creative subjectivity of marginal persons are empowered, acknowledged, and integrated into the dynamic social fabric.» One marginalizing manifestation in society has been described as anomie, where the focus is on how society lacks norms of control, benefitting some and hindering others.

2. Marginality as Anomie

The term «anomie» comes from the Greek anemos (a = without, and nomos = law). Etymologically, it signifies «lawlessness,» but also «unusual» or «abnormal.» The word has a negative connotation, implying

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10 Ibid, 563.
a «lack of purpose, identity, or ethical values in a person or in society; disorganization, rootlessness, etc.»\textsuperscript{11} Anomie can be broadly defined as «a condition of an individual or of society characterized by a breakdown or absence of norms and values or a sense of dislocation and alienation.»\textsuperscript{12} As a concept of personal normlessness, the study of anomie\textsuperscript{13} has most often stressed the «socioeconomic causes» within «the relationship between individuals and the constraining forces of social control.»\textsuperscript{14}

The work of anthropologist Emile Durkheim presents the concept of anomie very prominently in his two important books, \textit{Division of Labour} and \textit{Suicide}, noting three determining factors: the economy, self-interests, and the lack of regulation or control. He begins his reasoning by presuming that in the boom of diverse labor opportunities, social integration is created through organic solidarity. However, when «the economic change is too fast for the growth of moral regulation to keep pace with increasing differentiation and specialization, then an abnormal or anomic pathological division of labour occurs.»\textsuperscript{15} In the book, \textit{Suicide}, Durkheim complements his notion of anomie and concludes that its reality «is endemic in modern economic life,» because it arises «at times of economic depression or boom, when there is a lessening of economic (and possibly normative) regulation. In such periods, people are less locked into the order of society, so their basic desires may become limitless and confused.»\textsuperscript{16}

Durkheim concludes that without the proper regulation of special self-interests, the experience of unattainable goals and unfulfilled desires and needs will condemn individuals in society «to a state of perpetual unhappiness…thus leaving them without a check-rein.»\textsuperscript{17} His preoccupation came from the realization that human desires and the need for fulfillment are infinite. Consequently, for the sake of peace and


\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Webster’s Concise College Dictionary}, New York (1999) 34.

\textsuperscript{13} As a sociological concept, anomie is frequently identified and associated with the works of E. DURKHEIM and R. K. MERTON who used the term to describe the social quality of individuals, groups and societies. K. MARX also, contrasting DURKHEIM, referred to the alienation of people as a form of anomie within society.

\textsuperscript{14} J. HORTON, «The Dehumanization of Anomie and Alienation,» \textit{British Journal of Sociology}, Vol. XV, no. 4 (1964) 285.


\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}, 21.

\textsuperscript{17} E. DURKHEIM. \textit{Suicide}, 148, 258.
fulfillment, there must be a regulatory system to keep people within attainable limits. The lack of such regulatory systems neglects the reality that «Social conditions or events which lead to this cultural ambiguity are, therefore, conducive to a form of suicide born of continual and perpetual frustration of unattainable ambitions.»

3. Structural Marginality

Durkheim’s conclusions of the lack of social regulations pertaining to anomie have had a far-reaching significance for the topic of socio-cultural marginality. He raises up for scientific scrutiny the fact that social structures play a determining role in the development of the individual’s self-identity and personality. In other words, personal decisions need to be influenced by societal structures and made with an understanding of their effects on these structures. Within this perspective, «Structural Marginality»—the presence of structural inequality in the social system—shows its shape and its repercussion, namely, that some people are placed in the center of power and others on the margins. Durkheim made his conclusion by considering the different variables of suicide rates, and used them as clues and evidence to state that «personal facts…can be explained in terms of social differentiation…» Such variables, however, were found within cultural environments involving individuals and families «on the move,» in particular people with «emigrating» desires. Accordingly, Durkheim made the important recognition that «emigration and suicide,» marked by their lower level of integration in society, are the two greatest social determinants and manifestations of dissatisfied marginal people. Structural marginality causes these groups isolation and exclusion, which in turn affects their personal relationships and support systems. These difficult experiences contribute to the realization that «the departure from their society» is the only solution to their darkened social reality.

In regards to the role of the economy and self-interest, as Durkheim suggested, the economy no longer has restraints from moral codes as it did in the past, when church, state and other civil organizations were more influential institutions. John Horton concludes that the problem centers on

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20 Ibid., 365.
the fact that the economy «now dominates as the realm of unrestrained self-interest, or even class interest. Formerly a means to, and a means limited by other ends, economic activity has become an end on itself. In other words, anomie has become institutionalized.»

This reality will certainly continue to breed and nourish an anomic social condition for years to come.

Robert K. Merton (1910-2003), Durkheim’s disciple, described anomie in the context of his theory of «deviant behavior» while still relying on socioeconomic factors. He recognized that the problem stems in part from the fact that American culture depends on economic goals and gains for success. People in the lower levels of society therefore find prospects for achieving success to be constrained. Accordingly, Merton defined anomie as «a breakdown of the cultural structure, occurring particularly when there is an acute disjunction between the cultural norms and goals and the socially structured capacities of members of the group to act in accord with them.» In other words, as long as there are socially structured barriers to the achievement of the legitimate goal of success, there will be unfulfilled expectations, characterized by disagreements, dissatisfaction, disassociations and/or inconsistencies. These unfulfilled experiences, if not properly understood and attended, will nourish a deviant behavior ultimately manifesting an acute anomic socio-cultural condition.

Furthermore, Leo Srole (1908-1993) differentiated five theoretical elements of anomie and developed a scale for measuring the social sources in the attitudinal variable, all which offers a subjective experience of anomie in the form of alienation. Srole concluded that the reality of

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21 J. HORTON, «The Dehumanization of Anomie,» 286.
23 From the contextual reality of the United States of America, Merton’s reasons that: «The American value-system creates almost universal striving for success, and specifies a range of normative approved means of securing this goal, but the structure of economic resources in that society enables only certain privileged groups and classes to succeed. This creates feelings of relative deprivation among many disprivileged individuals, who then turn to various forms of individual deviance, where these seem to offer alternative means to the same desired ends. In other words, anomie occurs as the disjunction of means and goals.» The Dictionary of Sociology. E. GORDON MARSHALL, 22.
24 L. SROLE, «Social Integration and Certain Corollaries: An Exploratory Study,» in the American Sociological Review. Vol. 21 (1956) 709-716. A summary of the five measuring elements of anomia are: «1) the sense that leaders are detached from and indifferent to his/her needs; 2) the idea that the social world is unpredictable and hence
social anomie includes ethnic prejudice, as being «one of the prime forces on the urban scene contributing to the formation of patterns of distance, discrimination and rejection toward out-groups in general and toward minority groups in particular.»  

4. Alienation and Marginality

The concept of alienation needs to be considered here because it is often interchangeably used with anomie to manifest and/or describe a marginalized experience. The word comes from the Latin «alieno, alienus, alienare,» which means «to make one person or thing another,» «to take away,» «to let go,» «to transfer.» When the term is used in reference to a relationship or friendship, it signifies a state of «not belonging to one’s house, family, country,» «foreign to,» «unsuitable,» «averse,» «a stranger» in character.  

In a sociopolitical regard, Karl Marx understood alienation as estrangement, and used it as the moral basis for his treatment of workers within the capitalistic system. He acknowledged the workers as alienated in at least three ways, «from the product of labor because they did not own it, from the process of production because they did not control it,» and from one another. For him, «self-interest,» which Durkheim also treated as a problem of individualism, was precisely the «motivating force of society because man has been alienated from his human and social activity, labour. The doctrine of self-interest is an example of alienated thinking.» Furthermore, Marx considers alienation to gravely hinder people’s «self-
realization as human persons and the full flowering of their potential as creative, productive citizens in the society.»

In theory, this understanding presents human beings as the source of true fulfillment in their becoming active agents of a collective product, benefiting the social whole. Phenomenologically, it can be said that Marx’s anthropological presentation of man - his identity and purpose - are intrinsically connected upon the contribution or lack of material and economic factors in the socio-communal environment. Personal and social alienation, therefore, is the result of man’s unproductive relationship with the collective material and socioeconomic structures.

In a contrasting anthropological position, the late Pope John Paul II saw an intrinsic connection between man’s alienation and the triad of his identity, work (labor), and transcendence. Although the Pope’s articulation is theological in purpose, there is an underlying contextual sociopolitical source and repercussion in his presentation that is helpful to this discussion. He concluded that humankind would experience alienation if it did not fulfill its biblical vocation to «subdue the earth» as a creative agent.


It is helpful to note that this is precisely one of the concepts by which Marxism has been criticized as reducing the human being to a mere social molecule, subordinated to the functioning of the socioeconomic structures. In this regard, Christian Anthropology claims to offer a more integral approach, says Charles Curran, «that recognizes and respects all aspects of the human. The economic and political are important aspects of the human and cannot be neglected. However, the human being cannot be reduced only to the economic and material…Catholic anthropology has recognized the social aspects of the human person and has tried to steer a middle course between the two extremes of individualism and collectivism.» C. E. CURRAN. «Anthropology.» The New Dictionary of Social Thought, Minnesota (1994), 44. In this vein, McFadden points out that such Marxist perspective emphasizes that «the future is the dominant mode of time and a vision of an authentic although yet-to-be achieved model supplies the hope out of which a nonalienated society can be achieved.» R. M. McFADDEN. «Theological Anthropology.» The New Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. I. 2003. Washington, D. C., 509.

31 LE., states, «Man is the image of God partly through the mandate received from his Creator to subdue, to dominate, the earth. In carrying out this mandate, man, every
Pope emphasizes that in the exercise of God-given free will, one must always remember, «work is for man, and not man for work.» In this teaching, human beings can thus only find fulfillment as they transcend themselves through their work as it creates an environment of hope for the future. Human fulfillment, nevertheless, begins by acknowledging the potential of one’s transcendence through the realization of one’s personal identity and dignity in the community along with the free exercise of labor and generous self-interest. In other words, by first recognizing one’s identity, one is better able to see the gift of one’s human capacity of transcendence through the fruit of one’s work and generosity. In this practice persons are then the subject of work, insulating them from any alienating factors.

In the same manner, the Pope shows that humanity’s alienation comes about on a personal level due to the deliberate self-enclosure and on a social level as the consequence of society’s treatment of the person as a thing, as a means to an end, and without an independent significance of self. Thus, the Pope writes,

Alienation is found also in work, when it is organized so as to endure maximum returns and profits with no concern whether the worker, through his own labor, grows or diminishes as a person, either through increased sharing in a genuine supportive community or through increased isolation in a maze of relationships marked by destructive competitiveness and estrangement, in which he is considered only a means and not an end. ... When man does not recognize in himself and in others the value and grandeur of the human person, he effectively deprives himself of the possibility of benefiting from his humanity and of entering into that relationship of solidarity and communion with others for which God created him. Indeed, it is through the free gift of self that one truly finds oneself. This gift is made possible by the human person’s essential «capacity for transcendence.»...

human being, reflects the very action of the Creator of the universe.» J. P. II. Laborem Exercens II, 4. http://www.vatican.va/edocs/ENG0217/__P5.HTM (accessed on 1/25/12)

32 LE, 6:2 The Holy Father reaffirmed the principle of the priority of labor over capital, whereby the worker is the «primary efficient cause, while capital, the whole collection of the means of production, remains mere instrument or instrumental cause.» LE, 12:1.

33 LE, 27:5 reads, «In work, thanks to the light that penetrates from the Resurrection of Christ, we always find a glimmer of new life, of the new good, as if it were an announcement of “the new heaven and the new earth” in which man and the world participate precisely through the toil that goes with work.»
refuses to transcend himself and to live the experience of self-giving and of the formation of an authentic human community oriented to his final destiny, which is God. A society is alienated if its forms of social organization, production and consumption make it more difficult to offer this gift to self and to establish this solidarity between people.  

In this perspective John Paul II shows his greatest criticism of the destructive ideological understandings that lead to imperialism, as in the case of Marxist collectivism and/or Capitalist liberalism. Clearly, the Pope shows his concern for the abuse of human dignity, and the lack of inclusive and realistic social norms, which is what produces alienation. In addition, as the Pope emphasizes human beings' freedom of choice in their deliberations for life, he also points out the necessity to exercise the gift and value of self-determination as one appreciates the «concept of the person as the autonomous subject of moral decisions.» It is well to note the Pope’s acknowledgement of the quality of «transcendence» as the vocational essence of the human person and as the effective source for the destruction of personal and social human alienation. Moreover, one can theoretically see in the Pope’s anthropology the social dimension in relation to the person’s individual participation. This perspective reflects the basis of a humanistic Christian anthropology that «grounds the concept of the common good as the end or goal of the political order, which ultimately redounds not only to the good of society and the good of others but also to the good of the individual person involved.»

Furthermore, it is consistently accepted that alienation is the result of a lack of inclusive and sustaining norms in society. It is considered the subjective expression of anomie, as when «the alienated individuals are considered as excluded and devoid of behaviour rules.» The reality of alienation embraces and manifests a combination of psycho-sociological factors and consequences. In this regard, Luigi Tomasi states,

Psychological fragility, affective loneliness, lack of stimuli and ideas which make life appear useless and empty, social non-adaptability, the search for

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34 JOHN PAUL II. *Centesimus Annus*, 41,2, 41,3. The Encyclicals of John Paul II. Indiana, 1996.
35 *Ibid*, 13:1
strong feeling, affective disappointments, intense feelings of unhappiness, insecurity and anxiety, fear of not succeeding, depression, dejection due to failure, and the belief that one will find oneself faced with a different situation which appears insuperable and with no way out, all these are psychological as well as social factors.  

This brief discussion has recognized the reality of anomie as structural in its origin and institutionalized through its developments. Anomie, therefore, with its subjective experiences in the form of alienation, and coupled with all its psychological factors, is surely a clear manifestation of cultural and social marginality. It is truly a negative experience for the people who are not able to live up to or fulfill the normative expectations of the mainstream society. Certainly, attaining socio-cultural integration is the ideal fulfillment for all members of society. Unfortunately, it is not the reality of all, especially those who because of economic status, educational deprivation, ethnic identity, genetic make-up, or lack of social support systems, are not able to enjoy the equal opportunities for success. Their circumstances call for assistance. Hence, there is the need to facilitate, accompany and enable these marginalized persons by integrating their lives into a society that is respectful of differentiation, and therefore just. After all, «individual well-being depends on the social integration that attaches individuals to other individuals…rooted in the intensity of social interaction.»

Any socio-cultural and religious integration requires a process of transformation and re-adaptation. This process removes, renews, reintegrates, and transcends people by moving them through a liminal dynamic progression, which, though it is present in every society, is manifested and experienced differently within particular cultures. However, it is manifested in the form of social and religious rituals along with human dramas. The development of the various understandings

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39 T. BJARNASON. «Parents, Religion and Perceived Social Coherence: A Durkheimian Framework of Adolescent Anomie.» Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion. Vol. 37, no. 4 (1998) 744. As Durkheim put it, one participates in the «constant interchange of ideas and feelings from all to each and each to all, something like a mutual moral support which instead of throwing the individual on his own resources, leads him to share in the collective energy and supports his own when exhausted.» E. DURKHEIM. Suicide, 210.
regarding this process of marginal liminality is considered in the following section.

5. Marginal Liminality in the Rites of Passage

Every culture has rituals that manifest their social and cultural relationships to encounter their transcendental longings. Through rituals people manifest past, present, and future forms of community building and sustenance. Because rituals reflect cultural traits and traditions, there are different approaches and interests in the way they are exercised and celebrated. Nonetheless, the final goal and purpose is fundamentally the same. People long for wholeness, fulfillment, and transcendence. While considering the term «ritual,» and its «transformational» elements, anthropologists articulated the process of Liminality, a term which derives from the Latin «limen,» meaning a threshold, chasm, or margin. The conceptual significance of the term embraces its use as «entrance,» «house-dwelling,» «doorway,» «doorkeepers». As a process, liminality contains transitional rites (of passage), and restorative rites (of purification, healing, etc).

Arnold van Gennep (1873-1957), a French anthropologist, first developed the concept of «the rites of passage,» presented in his book published in 1909 under the same title. In this important book, he spells

40 Broadly, ritual can be understood as «those conscious and voluntary, repetitious and stylized symbolic bodily actions that are centered on cosmic structures and/or sacred presences… Ritual is intentional bodily engagement in the paradigmatic forms and relationships of reality. As such, ritual brings not only the body but also that body’s social and cultural identity to the encounter with the transcendental realm. By conforming to models or paradigms that refer to the primordial past and that can be shared by many people, rituals also enable each person to transcend the individual self, and thus it can link many people together into enduring and true forms of community. As a result, ritual draws into itself every aspect of human life, and almost every discipline of the social sciences and humanities has something to say about it.» E. M. ZUESSE. *The Encyclopedia of Religion. Vol. 11-12.* Ed. M. ELIADE. New York (1995) 405-406.

41 It is helpful to know that «transformative rituals serve to bridge the various departments and divisions thus established, generating the cosmos in whole or in part when it is threatened by change. These rituals arise in response to anomaly, fault, disequilibrium, and decay, and they have as their aim the restoration of harmony and ideal patterns.» Ibid., 405-416.


43 A. van GENNEP. *The Rites of Passage.* Chicago 1960.
out two types of rites: «(1) Rites that accompany the passage of a person from one social status to another in the course of his or her life, and (2) Rites that mark recognized points in the passage of time (new year, new moon, etc.).»

Out of symbolic elements denoting a continuous process such as «tomb» (from earthly to eternal life), «simulated death and resurrection,» «womb» (from conception to delivery), «door,» «archway,» «tunnel,» etc., he subdivided the rites of passage into a process of three phases, namely, «rites of separation, rites of transition (marge), and rites of re-incorporation (aggregation).»

This process of liminality proved to be his main contribution to anthropology, as it became an effective tool to a deeper understanding of the human condition within the process of change, maturation and fulfillment.

It is in the second stage of the liminal process that marginal people experience the ambiguous yet creative process of transformation. Here one can appreciate people’s internal processing, their defining sense of belonging, identity and purpose in life, and finally the wisdom and resolute for reintegration to the wider community. In this regard, Victor Turner (1920-1983) in his comparative study of rites of passage, «Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage,» developed and complemented van Gennep’s original contribution.

Turner found this process of liminality helpful for cross-cultural applications. He focused on


45 A. van GENNEP. The Rites of Passage, 11. V. Turner states that Gennep demonstrated that «human nature had become cognizant of a tripartite movement in space-time… He insisted that in all ritualized movement there was at least a movement when those being moved in accordance with a cultural script were liberated from normative demands, when they were, indeed, betwixt and between successive lodgments in jural political systems. In this gap between order and words almost anything may happen.»

46 Turner makes his own description of the three phases offering a thorough understanding of the progressive transformation of «states» and «status» in people’s lives. He describes the first phase, separation, as «detachment of the individual or group from either an earlier fixed point in the social structure or from an established set of cultural conditions (a “state”).» The second phase, liminal period, «(the “passenger,” or “liminar”) becomes ambiguous; neither here nor there, betwixt-and-between all fixed points of classification, he passes through a symbolic domain that has few or none of the attributes of his past or coming state.» And finally, in the third stage «the passage is consummated and the ritual subject…re-enters the social structure, but not always at a higher status level.»

how the second stage offers «regenerative and transformational» possibilities for any given culture and society. Therefore, he believed and emphasized the therapeutic effects of «rituals of status elevation» as well as «rituals of status reversal» for the restoration and legitimation of established social structures.\textsuperscript{47} Consequently, Turner extended his theory of liminality by going beyond van Gennep’s original focus, that is, from «the outward change of social aspects and status,» to «the inward, moral, and cognitive changes within the deconstructive and reconstructive processes.»\textsuperscript{48}

This concept of liminality is rich and promising for the understanding and realization of the socio-cultural transformation of society. One can get a clear and deep sense of its relevance as a transitional process demarcating change of location, state, social status, and age in the following descriptive definition.

It may, in various cultures, have punitive, purificatory, expiatory, cognitive, instructional, therapeutic, transformative, and many other facets, aspects, and functions. But basically the process and state of liminality represents at once a negation of many, though not all, of the features of preliminal social structure and an affirmation of another order of things and relations. Social structure is not eliminated, rather it is radically simplified: generic rather than particularistic relationships are stressed.\textsuperscript{49}

This new and complementary approach allowed Turner to move his understanding of liminality as a social and cultural transition. The move was from the mere «intermediate sense» to an independent and sometimes enduring category where people exercised their potential of renewal, innovation and creativity.\textsuperscript{50} There is a sense of an ambivalent freedom in this liminal period. For example, the person in it «becomes ambiguous, neither here nor there, betwixt and between all fixed points of classification; he passes through a symbolic domain that has few or none of the attributes of his past or coming state.»\textsuperscript{51} This ambivalent condition

\textsuperscript{47} A detailed development is in Chapter 5, «Humility and Hierarchy: The Liminality of Status Elevation and Reversal in Victor Turner’s, The Ritual Process, 166-203.
\textsuperscript{49} V. TURNER. Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors., 196. [Italics are mine for emphasis]
\textsuperscript{50} V. TURNER. The Ritual Process, 95.
\textsuperscript{51} V. TURNER. Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors., 232.
characterizes the socio-cultural marginal people, who in addition to being socially «betwixt and between,» cannot be sure of any future stable social condition. Interestingly, Turner includes in his classification of marginals those who are «migrant foreigners, second-generation Americans, persons of mixed ethnic origin, parvenus (upwardly mobile marginals), the déclassés (downwardly mobile marginals), migrants from country to city, and women in a changed, nontraditional role.»

Furthermore, in this contextual proposition, Turner has noted that people within this liminal phase do not live inside the framework of norms and fixed categories of the mainstream social system. Their sense and purpose for change is «anti-structural.» These liminal people, to survive and succeed, create an environment with new norms in order to nourish a renewed sense of community, characterized by «equality, undifferentiated humanness, androgyny, and humility.»

Depending on the level of social integration and acceptance, this new structure can be temporary or can become permanent. The dynamic elements of this unique process of liminality result in what Turner called communitas – referring to «an unstructured… comitatus, community, or ever communion of equal individuals…» who find support and fulfillment in an egalitarian sharing and inclusive fellowship among people within developing socio-cultural forms.

The intentional factors that prompt these liminal people to form such communities are triggered by «ideological» marginality as they affiliate to confront, renew, and transform the normative society in response to «structural» marginality. Religiously, these liminal people, manifesting their ideological perspectives and desires, are present in the

52 Ibid., 233.
54 V. TURNER. The Ritual Process., 96. A pertinent part of his comprehensive summary of his entire researched conclusion on «communitas, or social antistructure» is offered. It is «A relational quality of full unmediated communication, even communion, between definite and determinate identities, which arises spontaneously in all kinds of groups, situations, and circumstances…It is a liminal process which combines the qualities of lowliness, sacredness, homogeneity, and comradeship…The bonds of communitas are undifferentiated, egalitarian, direct, extant, nonrational, existential … [this liminal process] is spontaneous, immediate, concrete, not abstract. It is part of the 'serious life.' It does not merge identities: it liberates them from conformity to general norms, though this is necessarily a transient condition if society is to continue to operate in an orderly fashion.» V. TURNER - E. TURNER. Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture, 250.
Church in the form of small Christian communities, as it will later be presented.55

It is worth noting that Turner regarded the anti-structure emphasis of *communitas* providing positive characteristics, because they abolish all imposed and/or manipulated social distinctions that might otherwise be obsolete and ineffective for sustaining a creative, progressive and integrated socio-cultural unity.56 Accordingly, Turner was able to see the process of liminality as a socially interactive location in which the «confrontation between “activity which has no structure” and its “structured results” produces in men their highest pitch of self-consciousness.»57 His reasoning centers on the belief that structures are not supposed to be absolute and static while *communitas*, as a dynamic relationship, is eternal in nature.58 Therefore, Turner’s *communitas* manifests and maintains the tense ongoing liminal state as the creative force that recreates the responsive change to the new socio-cultural needs and demands within a dignified and inclusive social life.

Furthermore, Turner identified a triad of different forms of his *communitas*, namely, the spontaneous (or existential), normative, and ideological ones.59 The relationship between the triad of forms of

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55 Small Christian Communities as developed in Latin America and in the United States will be presented in the second half of this chapter.

56 His understanding was greatly influenced by Sartre’s consideration of structure as «a complex dialectic of freedom and inertia, where the formation and maintenance of each group is contingent on the free engagement of each individual in its joint activities.» V. TURNER. *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*, 236. Also in L. ROSEN. «Language, History, and the Logic of Inquiry in Lévi-Strauss and Sartre.» *History and Theory*. Vol. 10, no. 3 (1971) 281.

57 Ibid., 255.

58 Turner concluded that out of anomic, angst, alienation, as manifestations of «structure’s breakdown may be communitas’ gain … it is culture that fabricates structural distinctions; it is culture too that eradicates these distinctions in liminality.» V. TURNER. «Passages, Margins, and Poverty: Religious Symbols of Communitas.» *Worship*. Vol. 46, no. 7 (1972) 409, 411.

59 The «Spontaneous (existential)» *communitas* is formed from the midst of marginalized and anti-structural people. He offered the Hippy communities as an example in modern times. The «Normative communitas “attempt to capture and preserve spontaneous communitas in a system of ethical precepts and legal rules” Here, the marginal group itself, as it moves toward reintegration or its own organization, is attempting to become a perduring social system.» And finally, the Ideological communitas – is characterized by the «“formulation of remembered attributes of the communitas experience in the form of utopian blueprint for the reform of society.” This
communitas manifests a «tense creativity.» This tension is seen as dialectic between the «immediacy of communitas» and the «mediacy of structure,» thus becoming a positive and creative source for restructuring and transforming relationships, which in turn, reintegrates people into renewed social communities. In this perspective, no society can properly function, progress, and/or renew itself without such dialectical tension, because «Exaggeration of structure may well lead to pathological manifestations of communitas outside of or against “the law.” Exaggerations of communitas…may be speedily followed by despotism, over-bureaucratization, or other modes of structural rigidifications.»  
Accordingly, this dialectical tension becomes the locus of symbolic social creativity sustaining and renewing healthy inclusive communities.

It is also worthy to note that these dialectic tensions within communities are manifested in public events in the form of «social dramas,» which Turner defines as «units of aharmonic or disharmonic process, arising in conflict situations.» Subsequently, this concept of drama encompasses

phase is in tension with normative communitas because it envisions how the primitive communitas might serve as a model for society as a whole.» As Turner refers to the tension between these forms of communitas, he emphasizes that «spontaneous communitas cannot remain for long, but soon develops a structure, norms, and rules for itself, and thus becomes normative communitas. Ideally, what happens is that the stable structure benefits from liminal communitas; “Structural form is divested of selfish attributes and purified by association with the values of communitas.”» C. F. STARKLOFF «Church as Structure and Communitas: Victor Turner and Ecclesiology.» Theological Studies. Vol. 58 (1997) 650, 653.

60 V. TURNER. The Ritual Process, 129. Also cited in C. F. STARKLOFF, «Church as Structure and Communitas,» 652.

61 V. TURNER. Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors., 33. He goes on to point out four main phases of dramas in public action, accessible to observation, namely: (1) «Breach of regular, norm-governed social relations occurs between persons or groups within the same system of social relations, be it a village, chiefdom, office, factory, political party or ward, church, university department, or any other perduering system or set or field of social interaction.» (2) «The crisis – during which, unless the breach can be sealed off quickly within a limited area of social interaction, there is a tendency for the breach to widen and be extended until it becomes coextensive with some dominant cleavage in the widest set of relevant social relations to which the conflicting or antagonistic parties belong. It is now fashionable to speak of this sort of thing as the “escalation” of crisis.» (3) «The redressive action – in order to limit the spread of crisis, certain adjusting and redressive “mechanisms,”… informal or formal, institutionalized or ad hoc, are swiftly brought into operation by leading or structurally representative members of the disturbed social system.» (4) «The final phase – the reintegration of the disturbed
the symbolic tension in verbal, physical and artistic manifestations. Speaking from observation, Turner says that «when the interests and attitudes of groups and individuals stood in obvious opposition, social dramas did seem to me to constitute isolable and minutely describable units of social process.»

Certainly, it is where the consummation of change takes place and renewed communities arise.

This presentation now turns to the developmental understanding of socio-cultural marginality. The discussion will include a general portrait of how the American society has tried to understand and deal with the reality of marginality, along with how marginalized people have reacted to the society’s mainstream efforts in creating a normative and uniform society.

6. Socio-Cultural Marginality

Cultural sociologists, anthropologists, and theologians have developed an understanding of cultural marginality as a conceptual reality based on the conflictive relationships between different cultural groups. Consequently, ethnicity has a determining role in the process of defining socio-cultural marginality in society. An ethnic group, in general terms, is understood here as a fragment of a society «whose members are thought, by themselves or others, to have a common origin and/or to share important segments of a common culture and who, in addition, participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant ingredients.» Among the cultural commonalities that bring people to an

social group or of the social recognition and legitimation of irreparable schism between contesting parties.» Ibid., 37-42.

62 Ibid., 33.

63 Dennis Duling highlights two prominent scientific approaches in his articulation of a socio-scientific concept of ethnicity. (1) The Primordialist approach, which stresses “natural bonds” that are «fixed, a priori, involuntary, ineffable, even “sacred”. These bonds are deeply rooted in family, territory, language, custom, and religion. They are the major foundation for group norms, values, and behavior.» These natural bonds are normally referred to as «cultural stuff.» (2) The Constructionist approach, considers ethnic identity not as «inherent, fixed, or natural; rather, it is fluid, freely chosen, and thus can be seen to be perpetually constructed, that is, continually reconstructed.» The embrace of both mentioned approaches Duling calls «a socio-cultural model of ethnicity.» D. C. DULING. «Ethnicity, Ethnocentrism, and the Matthean Ethnos.» Biblical Theological Bulletin. Vol. 35, no. 4 (2005) 127.

64 In this definition, J. Milton Yinger emphasizes three important aspects worth noting: «(1) The group is perceived by others in the society to be different in some combination of the following traits: language, religion, race, and ancestral homeland
ethnic identity are the traits related to race, language, religion, and ancestral homeland. One or more such cultural traits classifies people as ethnic, and they can become sources for political, social, economic, educational, religious, or other types of marginality.

________________________ with its related culture; (2) the members also perceive themselves as different; and (3) they participate in shared activities built around their (real or mythical) common origin and culture.» This is an important delineation because it shows the existence of different variables, causes and consequences. According to Yinger, if even one of the three aspects is present in the life of a person, it would indicate that «there is an ethnic factor operating that deserves attention, in terms of its causes and consequences.» J. M. YINGER. Ethnicity. Source of Strength? Source of Conflict?, 3-4.

J. M. Yinger states that «race is seen as one of the defining characteristics of ethnicity.» Although race and ethnicity are overlapping concepts, more often «race – as well as language, religion, and ancestral homeland – helps to mark the boundaries of an ethnic group. The extent of racial homogeneity within an ethnic group can range from nearly complete to slight. Whatever the degree of homogeneity, the race factor helps to define an ethnic boundary only if it is correlated with ancestral culture or with lingual or religious differences.» Ibid., 16, 20. Interestingly, in the United States over a hundred years ago, W. E. B. Du Bois highlighted the cultural traits of race and not so much its biological one when he described it as «a vast family of human beings, generally of common blood and language, always of common history, traditions and impulses, who are both voluntarily and involuntarily striving together for the accomplishment of certain more or less vividly conceived ideals of life.» W. E. B. DuBOIS. «The Conservation of Races.» American Negro Academy, Occasional Paper, no. 2 (Washington, 1897) 7. Cited in Yinger, 17.

Language as a symbolic system embodies and communicates particular meanings and ways of life. Hermeneutically, then, what is important for our consideration is «the proper understanding of what is mediated through language.» As a cultural feature, language represents a view of the particular world of the person expressing it. Language is, therefore, a manifestation of the significance of the person. In this sense, language is a source for man to have an articulated world at all. This is so, because «for man the world exists as world in a way that no other being in the world experiences. But this world is linguistically in nature.» H. G GADAMER. Truth and Method, 401. Furthermore, Veling states that, «Language is the medium of all interpretative tradition. It is not an instrument or a tool we use; rather, as Heidigger suggests, it is the house in which we live.» T. A. VELIN . Living in the Margins: Intentional Communities and the Art of Interpretation, 87.

Although also present in the United States to some degree, in general other countries place greater emphasis on determinants such as income, vocation, and education levels more than skin color, body structure, facial features, etc. J. R. FEAGIN. Racial and Ethnic Relations, 9.
In 1928, Robert E. Park (1864-1944), and later, in 1937, Everett V. Stonequist (1901-1979), pioneer sociologists from the University of Chicago, developed a theoretical framework of marginality from a socio-cultural point of view. Their research was centered on the similarities and differences present in the dynamic process of participating in two cultural worlds, “one of which is often “dominant” over the other; within which membership is implicit based upon birth or ancestry (race or nationality); and cohere exclusion removes the individual from a system of group relations.”

It is from within this contextual dynamic, in their conclusion, that the “marginal man” comes out with his unique social and cultural reality. Stonequist made a very important identification and differentiation of marginal people – the “cultural hybrids” and the “racial hybrids” – as living in “cultural transitions and conflicts…” These groups of people have to endure cultural and social conditioned experiences, causing their state of being to be clearly marked by enormous pain and conflict. However, it is within these types of environments that new societies, people, and cultures can arise with creative vision and hope.

It is important to note that both Park and Stonequist, from their society’s mainstream point of view, determined that, in general, marginality is a negative state of being. In addition, they considered marginality as a transitional process from which one must move from and go toward the center of society to find freedom, acceptance, and relevance. Their scientific investigations concluded that marginality was a reality to be despised and repudiated. In this context, Park adapted from Israel Zangwill (1864-1926) the theory of the Melting Pot as a Process of Assimilation in the United States.

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72 The Melting Pot is an illustrative metaphor, which describes the actual socio-cultural process of Assimilation in the United States. In this context, the melting pot concept requires people, usually immigrants, to abandon their original cultures and to take on the accepted normative mainstream culture. This theory will be presented thoroughly in the second part of this thesis.
Liminality. He articulated it into four stages: (1) the Contact or Encounter; (2) the Competition (where conflict is pertinent); (3) the Accommodation (where conflict is supposed to decrease or disappear); and (4) the Assimilation (where true fusion of cultures occurs, thus signifying the image of the Melting Pot). Robert Park came to the conclusion that in the United States the «failure of assimilation» into the dominant society was responsible for causing the social and cultural marginality of the people. Robert Park came to the conclusion that in the United States the «failure of assimilation» into the dominant society was responsible for causing the social and cultural marginality of the people.

Time and experience have challenged Park’s theory of assimilation. Some prominent present-day scholars criticize his socio-cultural articulation, pointing out that his theory of assimilation precisely failed because it was based on the Melting Pot theory. It underestimated the uniqueness and importance of ethnicity, especially for those who are not white Europeans and their descendents. Consequently, it has been concluded that total assimilation is not a desirable ideal. Park’s theory is however helpful, in that it reveals the quality and intentional relationship that the then social mainstream was forging with the various marginal groups, characterized by a negation of their racial and ethnic culture. This concept of the melting pot within the process of assimilation will be developed in detail and applied to the socio-cultural and religious reality of Latino Youth in the U.S. in the second part of this dissertation.

7. Negative Marginality

Socio-cultural marginality as a negative state has been the best qualitative definition used by mainstream society to describe the condition of ethnic groups. For example, in many countries such as the United States, this qualification presents the marginal people as the root of the country’s cultural and racial conflicts, as well as a threat to the national unity. Consequently, the mainstream society in the U.S. during and since the last half of the twentieth century has nourished the negative understanding and treatment of non-European immigrants as a problem, many times to be avoided, rejected, and/or kept at a distance.

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The source of the definition of cultural marginality has been perceived as the negative ethnic experience of being associated with two cultures, while feeling marginal to both, as stated by sociologists Stonequist and Park. As recipients of this cultural bias, marginalized people have had to experience a life of great uncertainty and an unstable perception of their personhood. This life experience questions the very root of their identity, as well as their sense of communal and family belongingness. It was from this understanding of marginality that Stonequist came to the conclusion that «the duality of cultures produces a duality of personality – a divided self.» Such duality can surely cause a radical internal crisis in people’s lives due to their experience «of dual acculturation, integration, and often amalgamation as well. One is caught between two worlds and is unable, both because of outside forces and because of forces within oneself, to move fully into either one.» In turn, these experiences cause a deep sense of personal suffering, confusion, lack of direction, and even self-alienation and so a marginal person becomes «hypersensitive about his or her racial origins and develops an inferiority complex.» It can then become a burden pushing people to «physically withdraw from their communities or social groups, because of the severity of the pain.»

The new generations, particularly the second and third generations, experience the greatest and most confusing negative effects of marginality. Their identity suffers a more complex crisis although it may seem more invisible to them when being compared to the first generation, who can still identify a clear and direct support system in connection to their place of

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76 For Park, marginality is a category of a personality derived from a cultural conflict. R. PARK, «Introduction,» to Everett V. Stonequist. *The Marginal Man: Study in Personality and Cultural Conflict*, xvii.

77 Uncertainty or ambivalence, in this context, «is a condition in which people feel mixed emotions or sense mixed evaluations; they have “experiences of mixed feelings, a vague and diffuse sense of being pulled in two directions”...[It is worth noting that] People do not necessarily develop feelings of ambivalence because of some entirely personal dynamic. Rather, ambivalence often reflects the structure of the society we live in. One part of the social reality pulls one way, another part pulls the opposite way.» A. J. BLASI. «Marginality as a societal position of Religion.» *Sociology of Religion*. Vol. 63, #3 (2002) 274.

78 E. V. STONEQUIST. *The Marginal Man*, 217.


birth. Second and third generations, however, have a well-marked experience of a compound marginality. In such a process, one finds the direct and/or indirect, loud and/or quiet, conscious and/or unconscious experiences of the ambiguous forms of attractions, rejections, acceptances and repulsions, while living in two seemingly antagonistic worlds, as earlier described by Stonequist. Due to the uncertainty and obscurity of this marginal identity, people survive, adapt and/or react to their marginal reality in various ways. Some people may altogether decide to ignore their marginal reality; others may choose to become something or someone they are not – all in hopes of escaping and/or making their marginal state disappear. In that regard, J. Y. Lee offers a helpful notation that reflects and embraces the experience of all cultural marginalized people in the U. S. He shows the distinction and relationship between «marginal experience and marginal status,» when he says,

Marginality is experienced only by those who are in a marginal status, but not all those who belong to marginal status are fully conscious of their marginality. Many Asian-Americans who stay within their ethnic enclaves, for example, may not want to confront their marginality. Because they do not seek to be part of the dominant group, they do not have to endure the rejection, even though they have been rejected, ultimately, because of their Asian-ness. Therefore, even those strict traditionalists who adhere to the norms, values, and identity of their ancestors still share the collective sense of marginality. No marginal group is free from marginal experience, even though some members of the group try to avoid it.  

This «in-between» marginal state of being manifests the unfortunate negative social mirroring the new generations must confront. Often times, they are not fully accepted by the mainstream society because of their physical characteristics and ethnic roots. Unfortunately, they are not fully accepted by their ancestral world because of their new practices and identification with their new society’s mainstream. Accordingly, they can develop an unfulfilling and floating identity, thus considering themselves as prisoners «caught between two worlds, neither of which is fully, both of which are partially.» Consequently, some youth develop a very insecure identity and harbor destructive feelings against both cultures.

82 J. Y. LEE, Marginality, 45.
The negative reality of marginality is approached and characterized by a self-negating force that robs the marginal people of the opportunity of cherishing, maintaining and appreciating the good values of both their ethnic roots as well as those of the mainstream. Consequently, the dominant society creates a social norm making it a more difficult and confusing experience as it triggers a double negative perception. For example, some of the mainstream’s population, due to bias propaganda, develops a negative perception and lack of acceptance of the different racial and ethnic groups. This negative understanding directly affects and taints the lives of the marginalized, as they grow up hearing and perceiving a rejection to their cultural roots, the formation of their cultural identity and personality. Many of them come to believe that if the mainstream defines and perceives their ethnic differences as negative and even inferior, it might hold some truth. To illustrate this reality, this author, a pastor, many times has felt heart-broken in the confessional upon hearing several second-generation Latino youth confess their shame toward their parents, cultural origins and traditions, since their mainline population considered these characteristics insignificant, too different, or too weird.

Moreover, it is significant to note that social and cultural definitions are usually understood, interpreted, and approached as representations and projections of the different points of view and special interests of the definers, not the defined. Although marginality has been viewed as a negative state of being, as an «in-between» experience, this is an understanding which reflects only one part of its whole reality. The concept of being «in-between» has been presented as a negative «state of being» and should be avoided, for it is considered an obstacle, a reality that must be negated in order to find progress and fulfillment in life. Consequently, racial and ethnic marginality for non-white descendents of non-European ancestors has been understood as not having a fulfilling relationship within it; without a life of its own. Such an understanding of marginality can cause a great sense of powerlessness and dependency. However, this presentation recognizes another perspective of marginality, one that demonstrates a positive outcome for those who survive and live within the margins.

8. Positive Marginality

The positive characteristics of marginality are found in the survival and successful efforts within the many struggles and challenging experiences of cultural uncertainties, rejections and pain. This marginal perspective finds
a self-affirming mechanism, which concentrates on and emphasizes a 
positive purpose of life that is relational and fulfilling. Within this view, 
«the norm of marginality shifts from the center to the margin, the norm is 
from the outside to the inside.»

Marginality becomes thus unusual, different, creative, radical and pregnant with new and promising possibilities in the future of the marginalized people.

The work of Joseph Campbell (1904-1987) on mythology, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, considers the positive and affirming nature of marginality in the development of cultural and religious leaders. He believes that myths represent and manifest people’s anthropological ripeness for success in life. In adapting Arnold van Gennep’s three stages of the rites of passage, Campbell recognizes this liminal process of – separation, initiation, and return – as flowing into a true rebirth, manifested as a redeeming life for the person and his or her community.

In this promising perspective, when persons survive and transcend themselves and their condition through the marginal passage, the individual person «finds “the treasure,” receives a “blessing,” and becomes “master of two worlds” … with a new experience of personal freedom, centeredness, and clarity of vision; of being united at a new level of integration with one’s deeper self and God.»

In this vein, marginality is clearly and positively affirmed, and it shows the empowerment of a person to become «a leader, someone who learns from his or her own experiences and times of darkness, and goes on to help transform lives, cultures, institutions, eras….Marginality is not only related to experiences of darkness and transitions, but to potentiality, to “what may be”».

Accordingly, when people successfully and positively take on their marginal cultural threshold of life, they, «to be sure, are able to overcome the anxiety-laden aspects of this duality and to use it for highly creative purposes.» Interestingly, Professor Park noted that although the marginal person lives in a very confusing, painful and challenging state of being, if the experience is survived, understood and dealt with properly, he or she could become «the individual with the wider horizon, the keener

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84 J. Y. LEE. *Marginality*, 56.
86 E. SELLNER. «Living and Ministering On the Edge,» 277.
87 Ibid., 278, 279.
intelligence…relatively the more civilized human being.» 89 These survivors become not only sources of inspiration to their communities but more importantly they are considered examples of «resourcefulness, persistence, and leadership» to be emulated. In fact, «those individuals who have the potentialities to reconstruct their personalities and “return” as creative agents not only adjust themselves but also contribute to the solution of the conflict of races and cultures.» 90

Furthermore, what is considered negative marginality, namely, a state without a life of its own, is in fact its creative and foundational element for transformation. In this state of dependency, marginality finds fulfillment through its interconnecting mechanisms and capabilities. It offers hope and nourishment precisely through its dependence on inter-relationships. J. Y. Lee has developed this perspective and describes it well, when he says that marginality is,

… always relational, for it relates worlds that oppose one another. So marginality is best understood as a nexus, where two or three worlds are interconnected. It is also like a symbol, which does not exist by itself but exists only in relation to others. It is never closed. It is an open-ended and unfolding horizon…That is why marginality is a condition that offers opportunity for creativity. The idea of interconnectedness «in-between» leads us to a positive and self-affirming understanding of marginality «in-both» worlds. This new self-affirming definition complements the earlier self-negating definition, or the classical definition of the dominant group. 91

This type of marginality is considered positive because the individuals live within the spirit of «in-both» perspectives. By their very nature they are called to be inclusive of other cultural and positive manifestations of life. From the American context, Lee believed that only when new generations first appreciate their own ethnic and racial origins, and understand its basic ethos of life, then will they be able and ready to appreciate all the other new cultural manifestations of their new country. He illustrates his reasoning well when he says,

To be Asian-Americans in a contemporary pluralistic society means to strive to be simultaneously true Asians and true Americans. In a genuinely pluralistic society, Anglo-Americans will be regarded only as one of many


90 E. SELLNER. «Living and Ministering on the Edge,» 270.

91 J. Y. LEE, Marginality, 47. [Bold is mine for emphasis]
ethnic groups; likewise to be an authentic American does not mean to be a white person…. To be genuinely American means to be part of the whole, an indispensable section of a beautiful mosaic, or a vital ingredient that makes a tossed salad tasty. We must aim for that indispensable portion of the whole that helps our nation evolve to a full pluralism of ethnic Americans. If we, as Asian-Americans, are asked to be like the Caucasian-Americans who reject us, we cannot be true Americans. We will become aliens placed in-between. However, we don’t have to become like the historically dominant group who rejects us, it is possible for us to be both Americans and Asians at the same time. From the perspective of an expanding cultural and racial pluralism, the white center will not be the norm of the North American to be.92

These two approaches to marginality are the result of a historical development influenced by the various changing sciences. All these changing factors, along with the rapid growth of different ethnic groups and with their own internal network support systems, have contributed to the effective search for new affirming mechanisms to allow the survival of their ethnic identity. This process, however, has produced mixed results. There have been polarizations within some ethnic communities while searching for economic opportunities. Consequently, not all groups have been successful in maintaining and passing on their cultural traditions, values, and ethos of life to the new generations with clarity and fidelity. Some segments of the Latino community are a great example of this polarization. In their effort to provide the basic sustenance to their new generations, some Latinos have lost many of their values, traditions, and ethos of life that keep and nourish the family. The formation and nourishment of their personality, identity and worldview, which ultimately affects their capital investment in all aspects of their future life has been greatly damaged.

The presumption here is that although the United States claims and prides itself on its racial and cultural diversity, a true pluralistic society is still in the making.93 Although this topic will be revisited later in the

92 Ibid., Marginality, 52.
93 The claim is based on the actual understanding between «Ornamental» and «Structural» plurality. The first type can be illustrated in the «sense of having restaurants that offer “ethnic” foods or places of entertainment where the music, art, and literature of different cultures is showcased. In such a society people may appreciate these differences without being deeply affected by them.» The latter type pertains to «society’s institutions, such as its courts, the different organized ways of producing material life, the practices that comprise government, and the institutions of education…
dissertation, it is mentioned here to furnish the dynamic, constant and creative tension being experienced within the present cultural liminal (transitional) period. In this understanding, the actualization of such pluralistic reality will depend upon the exercise of an affirming marginal perspective. For as long as one racial and ethnic group is considered and identified as dominant, there will continue to be a need for affirmation of the other marginal groups in the pursuit of true identity. They will seek to demand their rightful representation and opportunities, and be accepted with co-equal dignity and relevance. In addition, this marginal approach creates a very inclusive environment that destroys the evils of ethnocentrism and opens up the possibility of embracing and appreciating the differences of others.\footnote{94}

It is well to note that this perspective of positive marginality neither denies the negative characteristics of marginality nor exclusively dwells on its positive ramifications. Rather, it opens up the dynamic consideration of the existence of both, sometimes contradicting realities of marginality, but as coexisting together within the still incomplete and maturing pluralistic process. The dynamic and inclusive approach of simultaneously considering both perspectives has been called the «in-beyond» marginality.

9. In-Beyond Marginality

This perspective of «in-beyond» marginality was developed from the premise that «every marginal person experiences the negative and positive traits of marginality,» thus demonstrating and confirming that both experiences are in fact «two different aspects of one reality.»\footnote{95} When these

\footnote{The members of such a society will also be multicultural: their ways of making decisions, perceiving, valuing, desiring will be deeply and complexly informed by several cultures. Drawing the contrast between \textit{structural} and \textit{ornamental} is central to the understanding of cultural domination. Ornamental cultural pluralism not only is compatible with cultural domination, but it is its product.» M. LUGONES and Joshua Price. «Dominant Culture: El Deseo por un Alma Pobre (The Desire for an Impoverished Soul).» \textit{Multiculturalism from the Margins: Non-Dominant Voices on Difference and Diversity.} Ed. D. A. HARRIS. Connecticut (1995) 103.

\footnote{\textit{J. Y LEE, Marginality}, 49-51.

\textit{95} When referring to these contrasting marginal perspectives, Lee states that people from the centrist point of view might find it too contradictory or even illogical to accept both definitions as co-existing together at the same time. He attributes to their exclusivist position their basic belief and embrace of the Aristotelian Logic of the Excluded Middle, which has been «used by the dominant group as an intellectual tool to}
two aspects are properly and thoroughly understood and dealt with, one enters into the more holistic «in-beyond» marginal state of being. This understanding follows the already stated notion that marginality has no independent place or existence in society. In this sense, the transcendence of marginal people «is possible only in their immanence. In other words, to be in-beyond means to be in-between and in-both…the interpenetration of both.»

In this new perspective, without giving up either one, the marginal person accepts and learns from the reality of their «in-between» condition yet affirms more their experience as living «in-both» worlds. Consequently, the person enters into a new and liberated state of marginality. Lee mentions that it is «no longer the margin of centrality, the margin defined by dominant groups, but the…margin of marginality, [in which] the conflict between the margin and the center disappears, and a reconciliation… takes place.»

Along with this perspective arises an objective and realistic understanding of marginality that provides a more balanced experience. This experience can be negative or positive; nonetheless it is an experience that can offer a more realistic, promising and futuristic view of life. This common-sense approach provides and maintains a clear and intentional consideration of the challenges that marginal people face, allowing them to recognize their struggles as more than obstacles, but instead as opportunities for change, growth and fulfillment. This relational dynamic offers an opportunity to confront the present with realism, yet it commits to building a future upon shared cultural characteristics and values.

To better understand this marginal approach, a few illustrations have been considered. Charles Willie, in his important book, *Oreo: On Race and Marginal Men and Women*, defines the marginal person as «the one who rises above the social or cultural groups, freeing the different groups to work together.» He uses Martin Luther King, Jr., to illustrate his definition, portraying King as «one who found his identity neither among blacks nor among whites, but in the synthesis of the two races.» However, J. Y. Lee manifests difficulty agreeing with the second part of Willie’s definition as well as with Dr. King’s portrayal as a «synthesis.»

maintain strict categorical distinctions of all things for an efficient control and domination of marginal people.» Ibid., *Marginality*, 59, (notes #1) 183.

96 Ibid., 60.

97 Ibid., 61.

For him, they appear to be «misleading and a misunderstanding of marginality.» Lee says that Dr. King, «as a marginal individual, was not a person of a new race, not a hybrid of the black and the white, but an authentic black American.» This clarification has essential implications to this discussion. To be in this «in-beyond» marginality does not mean to be liberated in the sense of being completely separated or even insulated from the influences of the in-between and in-both experiences of marginality.

Lee deepens his position by discussing the coexistence of those two types of marginality as a paradox. By being in the «in-beyond» marginal experience, it does not mean that the previous two marginalities eliminate each other and the person then ceases to exist as a marginal being. In other words, just because a racially and ethnically marginal person comes to believe that he or she has found the proper identity and sees himself or herself transformed into a new person does not necessarily mean that such a person is a marginal person. David Riesman includes this understanding in his notion of a «secret marginality.» According to Lee, a secret marginality is the illusion of self that the mainstream perspective intends to instill through the advocacy of its exclusive thinking. For him, it does not matter how strong and clear their self-esteem and identity might be, because «as long as a dominant group exists and classifies them as a subordinate American group, they cannot be free of marginality.» An illustration of this idea is found in two powerful and prominent marginal examples of individuals who live and act within the mainstream. Despite their loyalty and distinguished accomplishments, they were still considered and victimized as marginal people by the dominant group, as well as by their own racial and ethnic group. They are examples of people experiencing the negative manifestations of their «and» or «both» states of marginality.

The first illustration is that of Senator Daniel Inouye, second-generation Japanese born in the U.S. He was recognized with a Distinguished Service Cross for his outstanding service as an American soldier during World War II. As a U.S. Senator, he co-chaired the committee that investigated the

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100 Riesman refers to this «secret marginality» to the subjective individual perception, because of success or embarrassment that refuses to recognize their expected identities based on their racial or ethnic background. D. RIESMAN. *Individualism Reconsidered and other Essays*. Glencoe, Ill., (1954) 154.
Iran-Contra scandal in 1987 during the presidency of Ronald Reagan. Official documentation shows that the committee received thousands of phone calls and telegrams telling the senator, to «go to Japan where he belonged.» Among other insulting and demeaning ethnic expressions. This exemplifies that, despite the fact he was born, educated, formed by, and embraced the American mainstream philosophy of life, and served the country with fidelity and distinction, he was still considered a marginalized person. The Japanese community, in turn, also saw the senator as one who identified with, and embraced the mainstream society. He was considered different from them, and therefore, was marginalized.

The second illustration is that of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, an all Japanese American unit of the U.S. Army that fought in World War II. During this time, because of the Japanese participation in the war against the United States, Japanese descendents in the U.S. were punished, persecuted, even separated from their communities as they were placed in internment camps. Many of them were American-born citizens. This unit is considered one, if not, the «most decorated in the United States military history.» The Japanese community, in turn, also saw these soldiers as different, perhaps more like members of the mainstream society, and therefore, marginal.

The above illustrations represent the experiences of many marginal people. The norm of living within this new understanding of marginality, as «in-beyond,» must not be understood as pursuing a life of unity as uniformity, but the experience of the «harmony of many differences.» Accordingly, «to transcend or to live in-beyond does not mean to be free of the two different worlds in which persons exist, but to live in both of them without being bound by either of them.»

During the first quarter of the twentieth-century William Edward Du Bois (1868-1963) was already describing the suffering of experiencing ambiguity as having a «double consciousness,» from an African American

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103 Ibid., 402. This is the listing of their war accomplishments: «18,143 individual decorations, including one Congressional Medal of Honor, 47 Distinguished Service Crosses, 350 Silver Stars, 810 Bronze Stars, and more than 3,600 Purple Hearts. They gave life and limb to prove their loyalty to a nation and people that rejected them.» J. TATEISHI. *And Justice for All: An Oral History of the Japanese American Detention Camps,* 161. Also in TAKAKI’s *Strangers from a Different Shore,* 402-403.
104 J. Y. LEE. *Marginality,* 63.
perspective. He also expressed the need to better understand and appreciate the cultural duality of their personality, to capture the richness of their marginal state, as well as their normal longings for a constructive and creative reality. His perspective can be considered an «in-beyond» desired manifestation of marginality. Du Bois said that the Negro man is,

... born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, -- this longing to attain self-conscious manhood to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In the merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for man to be both Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face. This, then, is the end of his striving: to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture, to escape both death and isolation, to husband and use his best powers and his latent genius.¹⁰⁵

A contemporary example could be found in the president of the United States of America, Barack Hussein Obama. Born of a white American woman and a black Kenyan man,¹⁰⁶ categorizes Mr. Obama as a racial and cultural hybrid, causing him to experience both positive and negative marginalization. The color of his skin has led him to experience negative marginality from some members of the white mainstream society; and as a half white man, he has also encountered negative marginality from some members of the black community who do not find him «black enough». These contradicting experiences created an uncertainty to his identity. However, positive marginality also came from both communities, as the

encountered struggles helped him realize that although the color of his skin was black and he was raised in a white home, they better equipped him to relate with his environment, finding purpose and fulfillment in his life, and transcending him through self-reaffirmation. He describes the process well:

…we have all seen too much, to take my parents’ brief union – a black man and white woman, an African and an American – at face value. As a result, some people have a hard time taking me at face value. When people who don’t know me well, black or white, discover my background … I see the split-second adjustments they have to make, the searching of my eyes for some telltale sign. They no longer know who I am. Privately, they guess at my troubled heart, I suppose – the mixed blood, the divided soul, the ghostly image of the tragic mulatto trapped between two worlds. And if I were to explain that no, the tragedy is not mine … it is yours … so that you need not guess at what troubles me, it’s on the nightly news for all to see, and that if we could acknowledge at least that much then the tragic cycle begins to break down…

President Obama appears to represent the characteristics of the in-beyond experience of marginality as he affirms the conditions of living in both worlds, while acknowledging the marginalizing existence of both forces. Upon understanding his identity, along with his position, offers Mr. Obama the opportunity to engage the nation and the world in better acknowledging and appreciating the uniqueness each individual encompasses, allowing for differentiation to occur in their surrounding societies.

The chapter has presented an anthropological development of secular human marginality with a special cultural emphasis on the characteristics of the human person as a sociopolitical individual. The discussion started considering anomie as a source and manifestation of marginality, and it considered how the theory of total social integration has helped with understanding and overcoming its negative consequences. In this vein, the process of ritual passage with its state of liminality was considered to show the creative power of transformation and transcendence within the tense state of marginality. The discussion then considered the contextual reality of immigrants in the United States and how the suffering and the

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107 Ibid., xv. [bold is mine for emphasis]

108 Differentiation is being yourself although partaking within the group without losing yourself, but in the same time contributing.
ambiguities of marginality impact the development of their identities. This consideration serves as a reference for the main target group of the dissertation – the Second-Generation Latino Youth. Furthermore, three main aspects of socio-cultural marginality have been presented: negative marginality, positive marginality, and the «in-beyond» experience of marginality. Here it is offered a framework to understand the state and effects of marginality along with how it plays out in people’s lives. The reader can in turn ponder the reality of marginality and how it manifests within his or her life and society.

To conclude this chapter, it is helpful to include Gino Germani’s contrasting consideration of structural marginality, as presented in his book, *Marginality.* He points out that there are individuals and groups in society, which are members of mainstream society, thus expecting clear access to goods and services, yet are denied and excluded from such benefits. They are marginalized as a consequence of their inability to acquire and advance through normative education, employment, and expectations, etc. These individuals are not able to develop and cultivate personal and social abilities in the form of behavioral patterns, attitudes, motivations, knowledge, etc., that are considered successful and acceptable to the mainstream society. Consequently, these people enter a marginalized condition not by personal choice, but fall victim to «structural marginality» caused by outside socio-economic-political forces. Fittingly, scholar Dennis Duling refers to this type of marginality as «involuntary marginality.»

On the other hand, Duling also discusses «voluntary marginality,» highlighting Victor Turner’s differentiation of hierarchical sociopolitical «structure» and «anti-structure» systems. As the term suggests, «Structure» systems are determined by «polito-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation» that clarify «relationships between statuses, roles and offices.» In addition, «anti-structure» systems are characterized by a lack of structure in the sense that it emphasizes and

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110 Ibid., 49.
113 V. TURNER. *Ritual Process,* 96, 131.
encourages spontaneity and concreteness in response to immediate needs and demands of a community. This latter system is «freely chosen» and an alternative system to the structured status quo, «either as temporary experience or organized as a way of life, or envisioned as a form of human existence, but with a clear egalitarian social vision for the common good of individuals and/or their communities.»¹¹⁴ Warren Carter articulates this dual dimension as «Over-Against» marginal experience, because,

These worlds exist in tension with different values and commitments. The dominant center excludes the marginal group from the «normative scheme» («involuntary marginality»), or the group chooses to exclude itself by its own ideology, commitments, and visions of reality («voluntary marginality»). To be marginal is to exist out of the center, on the edge, at the periphery in an antithetical relationship in which groups live in some opposition to the dominant or central reality (structure/anti-structure).¹¹⁵

These manifestations and forms of marginality influence the cognitive, emotional, socio-political, biological, cultural, religious, etc., aspects of a person’s life. They are uniquely experienced, individually and collectively, within the secular world as well as the structured Church. The topic pertaining to religious marginality will be discussed in the following chapter titled «Situations of Marginality: A Religious Consideration.» Marginality within this religious context will consider the opportunities for creativity, transformation, renewal, reconciliation and transcendence encompassed in this arena. It will also view the destruction of faith and hope it can have on people’s lives. One should remember there is always the presence of the creative tension and conflict between and within what it is, what it could be, what will be, and religiously, what fails to become God’s desired reality for individuals and communities within the Church and in this world.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 129, 132. Also briefly discussed by Warren Carter. Matthew and the Margins, 44.
CHAPTER II

Situations of Marginality: A Religious Consideration

Throughout the centuries people have been pushed to the margins by normative social and religious structures. Even people of faith can end up as marginalized victims within and outside their own religious structures, where they are considered unimportant and insignificant. Consequently, they can feel religiously displaced, excluded, unwanted, rejected, and unable to experience and share the gift of God’s presence with and in the midst of their own communities and institutions. Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler positively describe religion as the interactive practice and sharing of faith, «the concrete expression of man’s infinite transcendence, as the expression of the absolute worth of his hopes, his genuine needs and his limitless desires.»¹ Whenever people are not free, consciously or unconsciously, to express and share faith and a desire for transcendence, they become religiously marginalized.

This chapter offers a Christian anthropological treatment of religious marginality, individual and collective, with an emphasis on the importance of its particular cultural manifestations. In this Christian inculturated approach, the vision of the human person is based on and determined by the

¹ K. RAHNER - H. VORGRIMLER. Dictionary of Theology. New York (1988) 437. Religion as a system of beliefs, values and practices is a constitutive dimension of culture. C. Geertz describes it as «(1) a system of symbols, which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the modes and motivations seem uniquely realistic.» C. GEERTZ. The Interpretation of Cultures, 90.
understanding and appreciation of three traditional theological tenets: the human being’s origin in God; the Fall; and the new humanity in and through the person of Jesus Christ.² In this context, the chapter discusses how theological and ecclesiological approaches are springing up and offering great opportunities for renewal, fulfillment and a transcendent life. This presentation will portray the tense environments in which faithful people are trying to overcome sinful personal and collective marginalization in religious structures, as well as how God continues to illumine and inspire people with creative faith. It will also discuss how many marginalized people continue to need assistance and affirmation for their renewal and active re-incorporation into God’s creative work on earth.

With this in mind, the presentation will consider Christian hope, plurality and historical consciousness as necessary elements for the survival and positive transformation of marginalized people within the demeaning reality of *adikía* (unrightfulness). Soon after, different manifestations of marginalities are presented, namely, the chosen (voluntary) and the given (involuntary) marginality, along with the reality of marginality as a “state of being,” from the perspective of a God who not only commits to marginalized people but also identifies with them because he shares

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² This theological triad recognizes in faith that: (1) the human being is «created in the image of God,» as presented in the Genesis story. Such belief and understanding portrays a clear, active and special ongoing relationship between the human creature and the Creator, characterized and manifested by many essential abilities uniquely given only to human beings, thus distinguishing them from the rest of creation, such as *Responsibility for the Earth*, *Conscience*, *Self-Transcendence*, and *Relationality*. (2) The Fall – humans are considered as «fallen,» «deformed,» thus in a «condition that is against that which is good in and for them.» This sinful condition is shared personally but also structurally. (3) A New Humanity and a New Earth in and through Jesus Christ. On the one hand, the certainty of Jesus’ transforming and redeeming power, and on the other, that human beings are «transformable, restorable, healable creatures.» This anthropological and Soteriological understanding is clearly Christological in purpose “because the healing and healed *humanum* has traditionally been represented by Jesus Christ.” Nonetheless, it is essential to note here that «the divine act of creation is not complete until the redemptive work is experienced by humanity.» M. LEWIS-TAYLOR. *New and Enlarged Handbook of Christian Theology*. Nashville, TN. (2003) 29-34. Along comes the image of the New Earth in the proclamation of the «Kingdom of God,» which is «an entire dynamic event of God coming in power to rule his people» from within their lives and circumstances. But this image «is a tensive symbol, a multifaceted reality, a whole mythic story… that cannot be adequately be grasped in a single formula or definition.» J. MEIER. *A Marginal Jew*. Vol. II. New York, 252.
everything from within their particular lives and circumstances. In addition, from an ecclesiological point of view, the Basic Small Christian Communities are highlighted, as first developed in Latin America and then as developed in the United States under the heading of Intentional Marginal Communities. These small communities are experiential locations of creative marginality. The chapter ends with the consideration of the «book metaphor» as an effective tool for the proper hermeneutical interpretation of tense yet creative religious marginality, thus recognizing marginalized people as subjects and agents for renewal and transcendence.

The chapter aims to provide information essential to understanding the current pastoral circumstances posed by a great number of Latino youth in the United States, who are socially, culturally and religiously marginalized. Many of these Latino youth are not practicing their faith due to the socio-cultural environment they currently occupy, which confuses and destroys their ancestors’ Catholic Christian value system, ultimately affecting their commitment to participate in the communities that have traditionally nourished them. They are experiencing a cultural and religious crisis accompanied by a lack of sharing and appreciating God’s gifts in a renewed and transcendental Christian life.

1. Developmental Religious Marginality

Biblical revelation shows that God has disclosed his very self to this world in Jesus Christ to and through the marginalized people, demonstrating that the centers of God’s presence cannot really be fixed. Although such marginal spaces are always available to the individual and the community, their manifestations are changing and redefining themselves just as centers of power might be forming. Therefore, every person has the opportunity to find and experience the transforming and liberating force of God in his or her life. It does not matter how difficult and obscure life might be, God always provides the tools necessary for new beginnings. Felix Wilfred helps situate the presentation of this reality. He identifies three essential positive elements given to religious marginal people by God to survive, grow, and transcend.

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3 This refers to Jesus’ kenotic testimony as described by St. Paul, i.e., Phil. 2:7-8: «he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on the cross.»
The first element is hope. Wilfred says that, «no people can survive without hope. Cynicism, despair and defeatism would wipe them from the face of the earth.» Marginalized people are illumined and kept alive through a hope that is nourished by culture and tradition, which in turn clarifies their ethos and identities. Interestingly, Wilfred sees hope as «something that breaks the framework of causality.» This idea contrasts with the «creative tension» that forms Victor Turner’s *communitas*, because the effect of hope cannot be calculated. The normative centers usually form a structure of systems and order precisely calculated, leaving an absence of space for hopeful surprises. Within marginal life, in contrast, God is always transforming and creating the potential for an experience of amazement, wonder, and awe through divine hope.

The second characteristic is in the reality and the challenge of plurality, which Wilfred calls «the language of God and the language of people.» Some people dislike and avoid the experience of plurality because they see it as a threat to their unity and security. Ever since the Pentecost event, God has been speaking to the world precisely in the language of diversity and portraying it as a bearer of creativity. The Spirit of God not only creates and nourishes differences seen as uniqueness, but it is itself the one creative source for the fulfillment of God’s «communion and mutuality» for his people. Marginal people tend to love plurality because they find it to be a refuge, a zone where they can be themselves, acknowledged, and even affirmed, leading them from a survival state to a proactive and fulfilling state of being.

A third characteristic is the acknowledgement of the proper historical consciousness. Since the majority of recorded history has been written by and from the normative centers’ point of view, marginal people need to reinterpret and even rewrite their historical consciousness. This reinterpretation should not only be made from the perspective of the victims, but also from their understanding of being in the process of becoming agents of their own future. This approach tells the truth of «God making people out of non-people, the story of raising lowly persons from the dung heap.» This consciousness offers marginalized people a

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5 Ibid., 137.
6 Ibid., 137.
7 Ibid., 138.
8 Ibid., 138.
continuous reaffirmation that God is the giver of their true identity and ultimate purpose.

In *Lumen Gentium*, #41, one is reminded that, «Every person should walk unhesitatingly according to his own personal gifts and duties in the path of a living faith which arouses hope and works through charity.» To intentionally renounce and/or obstruct this religious process is akin to denying an individual the opportunity of experiencing God’s desire to be known and realized. The intentional participation in such obstructive process is the marginalizing sinful act of *adikía*.

2. **Marginality as Adikía**

The term «*adikía*» is of Greek origin, (α = not, and δικέ = right), denoting a general condition of not being right, neither with God nor with man. In the social and legal sense, *adikía* was considered as an act of injustice, lawlessness, transgression, and untruthfulness. In the moral sense, it was considered an act of unrighteousness and falsehood.⁹ In the religious sense, the reality of *adikía* demonstrated a «neglect of duty toward the pagan gods.» Furthermore, the Septuagint (LXX) uses *adikía* to describe «social sins, those deeds which violated human relations or the political order of society. Among these injustices were deceit, fraud, and lying.»¹⁰

Originally, *adikía* was used to refer to unethical actions and circumstances. In the Old Testament, *adikía* is defined as «guilt» derived from a sin against God.¹¹ These descriptions are also characteristics of the social concept of anomie. Hence, both terms, anomie and *adikía*, are to be seen as equivalent to sin.

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Durkheim, from a sociological point of view, used the term anomie as the secular «counterpart of sin, which is to say, as an incorrect arrangement of individual and collective representations, as the treatment of the sacred as if it were profane, and vice versa.»\textsuperscript{12} Stanislaus Lyonnet, in his study, \textit{Sin, Redemption, and Sacrifice}, treats anomie as sin, from the understanding that it is an act of «rebellion against God» in the form of having «acted lawlessly.» as a «moral disorder.» In this sense, when anomie enters the moral and religious realms, it becomes a sinful experience of \textit{adikía}, whereby the human being rejects God and «man rises against what unites human society.»\textsuperscript{13}

Furthermore, Robert Mosher, writing from his Chilean perspective, believes that marginal religious movements arise from within and in response to anomic conditions. He uses the term \textit{adikía} theologically to describe the marginal social condition of the poor. Mosher reasons that since society has allowed the creation of anomie in the form of social «divisions and inequalities» to benefit special interests, society also shares the sinful situation of \textit{adikía}. For him, \textit{adikía} «refers to the sinful state of inequity in society, illustrated by the existence of poverty and wealth, misery and privilege, and extremes of powerlessness and prestige in a single social grouping.»\textsuperscript{14} Mosher places the «creation of an alternative culture, a sub-culture within a culture» by the marginalized poor people as a response to their anomic circumstances. This culture reflects the condition of \textit{adikía}. He sees this as a revitalizing and regenerating process of «new values, meanings and beliefs» benefiting the marginalized as well as the entire society.\textsuperscript{15}

However, \textit{adikía} is a human creation that can be transformed and/or transcended only with and through God. Mosher offers a proposition for liberating marginalized people and transcending their circumstances out of and through their experience of \textit{adikía}. He sees it happening in Chile through the process of three liminal phases within the transforming

\textsuperscript{13} S. LYONNET. \textit{Sin, Redemption, and Sacrifice}, 25.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 9.
The experience of «inculturation,» which can be paralleled to the negative, positive, and the in-beyond aspects of marginality.

The first stage is described as the experience of «Logos Inculturation.» This is a stage of raising consciousness. Through God’s Word and revelation, society must recognize the reality of adikía with all its personal and collective ethical implications. Then comes the second phase, «Covenant Inculturation,» in which adikía is recognized as a sinful and broken relationship with God. Therefore, the marginalized people consider themselves as God’s sacramental locations, where God’s direct and active transformation in society takes place. The example and ethos of the anawim of Scripture is an effective inspiration and model to follow. The third stage is «Paschal Inculturation.» Herein, Mosher reasons, that in the Passion of Jesus, God becomes one with the marginalized. He takes their marginality through death on the cross in order to transcend them into a new social order, which will ultimately be characterized by forgiveness, reconciliation, and solidarity. At this point, the marginalized not only have a glimpse and a taste of God’s redemption, but also offer it to the rest of society.

In Mosher’s proposition, there is a symbolic significance of three determining elements: the role of the «Cross,» the on-going marginalization by the people, and the actual state of «crucifixion» of all marginalized people in the experience of adikía. The realization of «inculturation as the Incarnation of the Word» takes place within the experience of adikía, thus purifying and transforming sin. Broadly put, Mosher’s logical conclusion is the reaffirmation that through the Inculturation of the Word—Jesus Christ—and the experience of his Paschal Mystery, the marginalized people are raised to new life. The novelty in this approach is that Mosher

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16 Mosher follows Pedro Arrupe’s understanding of inculturation and applies it to his particular pastoral circumstances. Inculturation, then, is a cultural dimension of evangelization, which goes beyond the mere «adaptation» of the Gospel to a culture. Arrupe defines inculturation as, «the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular local cultural context, in such a way that the experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would not be more than a superficial adaptation), but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming and remaking it so as to bring about “a new creation”.» Ibid., 8-9; also in P. ARRUPE, «Epistola in Documento Studii de Inculturatione,» Acta Romana Societatis Iesu 17 (1978) 257.

17 Mosher, 10.

18 Mosher has adapted Ignacio Ellacuría’s theological proposition that today’s marginalized poor people are experiencing the consequences of a historical ongoing
believes in Paschal Inculturation a «new cultural center» of power and authority are to be born.\textsuperscript{19} By considering the state of marginality as the sure locus of creativity and transformation, there is also a differentiation being made between a temporary and a permanent notion of the state of marginality, between being marginalized and being marginal.

3. **Voluntary and Involuntary Marginality and the Marginal State**

Theology, as a reflection of an act of faith, helps the understanding of people’s religious relationship with God and with one another. Generally, theology has traditionally been made in the «center» of the Church, that is, mostly from authorized academia. This theology has enjoyed the approval and acceptance of the Church’s mainstream. However, theologies also have been made in the margins of Church and society, characterized by the state of crucifixion, thus implying that they are in fact the continuation of Jesus’ historical ongoing crucifixion, which not only uncovers and exposes the current evil acts and actors, but also the victims within the process of a transcendental state of purification and liberation. In this sense, the marginalized people are not, or cannot be, just victims but also agents of redemption in Jesus’ person and kingdom. Ellacuría developed his proposition from four theological approaches: (1) The Passion of Jesus seen from the position of the crucified people and the crucifixion of the people seen from and through the death of Jesus. The emphasized point here is the historicity of the Passion of Jesus and the salvific character of the crucifixion of the people. (2) The theological significance of the cross in salvation history. The point of emphasis is in the recognition that the Announcement of the Reign of God in history comes as necessary before the actual arrival of the death on the cross. (3) The crucifixion and death of Jesus and the crucifixion of the people are historical, not natural, acts. Ellacuría emphasizes three important points here: (a) that the death of Jesus happened due to historical reasons, thus implying that Jesus did not look for death nor resurrection, but only to announce the Reign of God until death, which ultimately brought with it the resurrection; (b) it is Jesus’ life that gives ultimate meaning to his death, as consequence of the initial meaning of his life does his death give meaning to life; (c) there is a need, therefore, to accept a trans-historical dimension of Jesus’ sacrificial saving acts, thus emphasizing that Jesus’ historical continuity is not purely mystical and sacramental. (4) The death of Jesus and the crucifixion of the people through the reality of the Servant of Yahweh – the oppressed people are the historical continuation of the crucifixion and of the crucified. The point is that there is no salvation as consequence of the mere act of the crucifixion and death: only the one who lives because he is resurrected from an imposed death can become a means for salvation of the world. I. ELLACURÍA. *Conversión de la Iglesia al Reino de Dios: Para Anunciarlo y Realizarlo en la Historia.* San Salvador, (1984) 25-62. [Translation is mine].

\textsuperscript{19} Mosher, 10.
determinant of «liberation,» such as: Latin American Liberation Theology, Black theology, Feminist theology, Indigenous theology, Chicano theology, etc. These theologies, out of marginalized contexts, have considered God as visiting and opting to help the marginalized and poor. A point of departure for all these theologies has been the understanding that God, after hearing the clamors and recognizing the injustices and pains of the people «out there», decides in compassion to help them. God, therefore, volunteers to be marginalized, in an act of love, in order to assist the marginalized victims. Traditional, conservative, progressive and liberal theologians alike have used this theological approach.

In this regard, Marcella Althaus-Reid offers a very intriguing and challenging theological proposition in her essay «Divine Exodus of God: Involuntarily Marginalized, Taking an Option for the Margins, or truly Marginal?» Her proposition considers the understanding of marginality from the location and intention of God, and that of the marginalized people. Althaus-Reid suggests that the classical understanding of a God who chooses to leave his center of comfort and power to go to the needy and despised human margins, has been determined, manipulated, and conditioned by wealth and power in Church and society. She claims that such an understanding of God reflects and justifies ideological systems of oppression that have misused theologies of consolation and resignation to protect and defend their power center. In other words, God has been made «involuntarily marginalized.» She reasons that the issue of the permanent presence of God in the demeaning marginal state of being is avoided, because it suggests that God visits the margins only temporarily, «to explain how and why margins existed and fitted into creation theology. The margins were a necessity in the order of life by God.»

Marginality in this perspective is definitively negative—spiritually and otherwise, a sort of an «in-between» experience.

Furthermore, since the margins have been presented as places of great need and ambiguity, Althaus-Reid argues that Liberation Theologies, through their venting and making theological sense of injustice and corruption, have walked «the path from the marginalization of God by traditional theologies which created the margins in the first place, to the God at the margins, which challenge why those margins existed. … The

subversiveness of this praxis came from the eventually pushing God to the margins out of their central identity.»

This type of marginality is positive, for Jesus opts to help the marginalized by first going into their circumstances, a sort of «in-both» experience of marginality. Althaus-Reid reasons, however, that this process, though some people have understood it as taking God away from one location to another more legitimate location, has not provided a «re-discovery of an original God at the margins.» Her reasoning, therefore, recognizes a theological exodus of God in three phases:

From a marginal God, a God who was a mere good excuse for the justification of economic and cultural systems of exploitation, to a God at the margins that … differs from the first in the fact that it is a **God assuming the margins.** That is a God reclaiming a place, more than a displacement … [And then] from a **God at the margins** (still partaking of central definitions) to a more radical **marginal God**… as one who does not deal with central discourses or identity processes.²²

According to Althaus-Reid the move from the «God at the margins» to the «marginal God» is the main objective of post colonial theology. The presumption here is that in Church and society, our understanding of God is not completely free of manipulation. Therefore, our concept of him needs to be liberated. This way, God can be anywhere and everywhere, «free of central constructions», permanently within the experiences, hopes and feelings of people. This God will be able to manifest himself in the true spirit of inculturation, transforming and transcending people from within their lives and circumstances. God will not be a visitor but a permanent resident in their earthly lives. God, in this proposition, destroys the understanding of «an exodus God» that needs to depart from a central location in order to help the needy at the edges of their lives and societies.²³ This understanding claims to be more faithful to the reality of the Incarnation of the Word in Jesus, as he is permanently present among people and within their lives.

Within the notion of God departing from one location into the marginal life of people lies the created and defined dualism of center and marginality. For Althaus-Reid the point is that, «the margins are not somehow “out there” all the time. There are margins inside all of us, —

²¹ Ibid., 29.
²² Ibid., 30. [Bold is mine for emphasis]
²³ Ibid., 30.
manifested in difficult borders of, for instance sexuality and identity.»
Thus she concludes that the real longing and need of marginalized people is not the finding of a «God who sympathizes with the margins, but who belongs to them.»24 This type of marginality can be likened to the «in-beyond» notion of marginality, for it truly has the marginalized circumstances that people experience, confront and sometimes transcend.

These approaches and understandings of God are reflected and translated into social action within religious and social relationships in communities. Such communities live in continuous dynamic tension, letting the Holy Spirit radically challenge and transform the normative way of life in Church and society. In this sense, their life of faith does not remain static, but becomes an act of continuous love. They create new life as a response to new human longings.

Although there are many different kinds of liminal communities that live on the margins of both Church and society, such as New Tribal Religious Movements, Women-Church, etc., for the purpose of this dissertation, Basic Ecclesial Communities will be considered next. They, for many decades, have operated throughout the Latin America Church in the form of «spontaneous communitas, syncretisms of Iberia in Catholicism and Aboriginal religiosity.»25 They have much to teach, model and challenge our current missionary evangelization efforts.

4. Basic Ecclesial Communities

The Basic Christian Communities,26 commonly known as Comunidades Eclesiales de Base (CEB), sprang from Latin America in the early 1960s.27 They are commonly composed of faithful people who might have fallen victims of «structural» and «cultural» marginality, and also experience «religious» marginality.28 These marginalized people choose to gather in

24 Ibid., 31.
26 The Basic Ecclesiological Communities are composed of about twenty people, usually family and neighbors, who gather to pray, study the Scriptures, share responsibilities within the Church, and respond to spiritual and social issues that pertain to their livelihood, such as schools, health clinics, etc.
27 M. C. AZEVEDO. Basic Ecclesial Communities in Brazil: The Challenge of a New Way of Being Church. Washington, D.C., 36. [Italic in original]
28 Through the influence of Brazilian educationist, Paolo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, who taught that existential, concrete situations of people’s lives – reflecting
small groups, actively sharing and putting their faith into action as they confront, understand, and work through their marginality. They find a sense of reconciliation, and transcendent liberation with and through God within their parish community. Their conscious and chosen association is an expression of «ideological» marginality. These communities are initiated and accompanied, as much as possible, by a member of the clergy. Often times, when there is not an ordained person available, a well-trained and officially delegated layperson facilitates the community’s meetings. These gatherings are not understood as a parallel to the Institutional Church. In Latin America, the clergy usually works closely with and among the people, sharing their daily struggles, sufferings, and hopes. There is a rather significant «unity and collaboration» between these small communities and the leaders of the official Church. However, due to the general crisis of vocations to the priesthood, ordained ministers are often stretched out to the limit, which prompts the blessing of a «creative pastoral imagination» as manifested within these small communities. They have been empowered and entrusted to become prophetic communities of faith, communities returning to the basic ecclesial-building dynamic of the first Christian communities,

Their hopes, struggles and aspirations – must be the fundamental elements of any humanistic organization; these small communities discerned that their human development and education are fundamentally linked to their active life and worship in the church. «This linking of faith and life, of Scripture and social commitment, of theology and praxis, has been crucial to the basic Christian communities from the beginning.» M. HEBBLETHWAITE. «Base Communities and the Parish: 1 – A Rebirth of the Church.» The Tablet Vol. 242 (April16) 436. P. FREIRE. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. London, 1972.


30 V. ELIZONDO. «The Pope’s Opening Address: Introduction and Commentary.» in Puebla and Beyond. Eds. John Eagleson - Philip Scharper. New York, 51. In addition, Santo Domingo Documents #61, states, «The Christian Base Community (CBC) is a living cell of the parish which, in turn, is understood as an organic and missionary community…[They] must always be characterized by a decisive universal and missionary thrust that instills in them a renewed apostolic dynamism» (OA 25). «These communities are a sign of vitality within the Church, an instrument of formation and evangelization, and a solid point for a new society based on a “civilization of love” (RM51).» Santo Domingo & Beyond: Documents and Commentaries. Latin American Bishops’ Conference. Ed. A. T. HENNELLY. New York, 92.
described in the Acts of the Apostles. These communities are «a new experience of church, of community, of communion of persons within the more legitimate (in the strict sense of the word) ancient tradition.»

In addition, Marcello Azevedo indicates three important elements of these small communities that reflect their ecclesiological significance.

Theologically, they explicate biblical elements and aspects of the Church’s tradition and doctrine, revealing their value in a new light. Pastorally, they create and facilitate a process of evangelization, and of growth in faith and the Christian life, that answers to the needs of the majority of the nation’s population. Institutionally, they represent a paradigm of ecclesial organization that is quite distinct from pre-existing models and that is having an ever increasing impact on the whole institutional life of the Church.

The basic Ecclesiological communities recognize in Scripture and the tradition of the Church that as God has empowered the poor and marginalized people in the past with the proper discernment and transformation, God is ready to do the same in the present. Therefore, they come to understand that, with God’s help, they must actively and physically work together for an integral change in their lives. Such an understanding presupposes that because of their faith demands, they must organize to confront and transform the unjust social conditions that intrinsically affect their spiritual and religious lives. Accordingly, these communities organize cooperatives and other organizations for community development, which ultimately enables them to become agents of their own destiny.

While these small faith communities are present within the entire society, they are more prominent among the poor and marginalized. They experience social disregard and exclusion, and, therefore, need a

31 In this sense, the qualifier «basic» is essential because it refers to the «beginning of evangelization by the apostles, in the footsteps of the Great Master, Jesus…the apostles were the first basic Christian community – the community of Jesus himself…So the base community is really fundamental – it was there in the beginning, before the Church settled down with the threefold ministry.» By emphasizing the «basic» element, they are following and using the apostle’s model as their pattern. M. HEBBLETHWAITE. «Base Communities and the Parish: 3 – Christian Cells.» The Tablet. Vol. 242 (April 30) 498–499.

32 L. BOFF. Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church. New York, 1.

33 M. C. AZEVEDO. Basic Ecclesial Communities in Brazil, 1. [Italic in original]

34 P. LERNOUX. «The Long Path to Puebla,» in Puebla and Beyond, 19.
community’s horizontal relationship and solidarity. Accordingly, life within these «basic communities is characterized by the absence of alienated structures, by direct relationships, by reciprocity, by a deep communion, by mutual assistance, by communality of gospel ideals, by equality among members.»  

Pope John Paul II, in *Redemptoris Missio* (51.1, 51.2, 51:3), describes Ecclesial Basic Communities well.

These are groups of Christians who, at the level of the family or in a similarly restricted setting, come together for prayer, Scripture reading, catechesis, and discussion on human and ecclesial problems with a view to a common commitment. These communities are a sign of vitality within the Church, an instrument of formation and evangelization, and a solid starting point for a new society based on a «civilization of love.»

These communities decentralize and organize the parish community, to which they always remain united. They take root in less privileged and rural areas, and become a leaven of Christian life, of care for the poor and neglected, and of commitment to the transformation of society. Within them, the individual Christian experiences community and therefore senses that he or she is playing an active role and is encouraged to share in the common initial task. Thus, these communities become a means of evangelization and of the initial proclamation of the Gospel, and a source of new ministries. At the same time, by being imbued with Christ’s love, they also show how divisions, tribalism and racism can be overcome.

Every community, if it is to be Christian, must be founded on Christ and live in him, as it listens to the word of God, focuses its prayer on the Eucharist, lives in a communion marked by oneness of heart and soul, and shares according to the needs of its members (cf. Acts 2:42-47). … «They are thus cause for great hope for the life of the Church.»

Much has been written about *Comunidades Eclesiales de Base*, including their lights, shadows and challenges, as developed in developing countries. Among the excellent works on the subject are: M. HEBBLETHWAITE. *Basic is Beautiful: Basic Ecclesial Communities from the Third World to First World*. London, 1993; J. MARINS - team, *Basic Ecclesial Communities: The Church from the Roots*. (Quezon City, Philippines: 1983; P. HANSON, *The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible*. New York: 1986; R. BANKS, *Paul’s Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in Their Historical Setting*. (Homebush, Australia, 1979.)
the world, including the United States of America.\textsuperscript{38} Because of the social circumstances of structural poverty and injustices, these small communities have reacted to the urgency of their oppressive economic conditions. In the United States, the socio-economic circumstances are different, but to say that there are no groups who feel socially, economically, religiously, ethnically oppressed, alienated, and marginalized would be unfounded. One would suspect that within the Institutional Church, immigrant and ethnic groups, while practicing their faith, might consciously feel challenged to react and confront their oppressive and unjust conditions.

There are also in the United States Small Christian Communities that organize and gather together due to their dissatisfaction with the lack of effective ministering of the Institutional Church. Most of these communities form as a protest, but there are differences among them regarding how they choose to react and become proactive agents in the future of their ideal and fulfilling faith community.

5. Intentional Marginal Church Communities

The socio-cultural changes caused by secularization, sciences, technologies, immigration, etc., have double-edged consequences for religious institutions. Such sources of change can either help the Church realize its mission more effectively, or cause it to become more marginalized. In modern times, the institutional Church has suffered a great decline in its credibility and relevance. Furthermore, organized religion as a public influence is becoming more insignificant and trivial in many parts of the world. This phenomenon has prompted a stir within the Church’s structures. Whatever the circumstances, religious people have to confront the challenge of marginality from outside and/or within their own churches. Some people have chosen to leave their religious institutions either to find a renewed vision or spiritual fulfillment elsewhere. Others simply become indifferent, distraught and therefore inactive in their faith. Still others have chosen to remain within the structures, hoping to find a way to refocus and revitalize their own faith and communities.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{38} Azevedo states that in the United States, France and Italy, Small Christian Communities also developed in the 1960s, yet «quite different in nature and thrust when compared to those in Latin America.» M. C. AZEVEDO. Basic Ecclesial Communities, 8.

\textsuperscript{39} Some excellent experimental works on Intentional Christian Communities in the United States are: P. J. BRENNAN, Re-Imagining the Parish: Base Communities,
Perhaps providentially, as mentioned earlier, Small Church Communities have become promising expressions of communal life in developing countries, especially in Latin America, Asia and Africa. In those geographical areas, faith and the institutional Church have truly come alive. In the so-called first world, however, churches are experiencing a great polarization within their structures. Their evangelizing efforts and missionary vision have been greatly challenged and scrutinized. There have been, however, promising developments in the emergence of what might be called «Small Base Communities with a twist,» that is, similar to those in the developing world but sprung from different circumstances.

In this regard, Terry Veling examines «Intentional Christian Communities» as developed in the United States and Australia. These communities emphasize their «intentional» characteristic to point out their conscious choosing and commitment to their function.

Intentionality reflects the need for a continually focused awareness and critical engagement with the social, cultural, and ecclesial systems that shape our lives. Intentionality also highlights the commitment and endurance required of small-community members to create and sustain new patterns of Christian community as an alternative expression to existing church structure and as a means for public engagement. These Intentional Communities are composed of ten to twelve families that meet once or twice a week to «seek genuine ways of being together as Christian communities: committed to mutuality and inclusiveness, attuned to the sacred texts and rituals of their tradition, and engaged in the world as communities of public presence in culture and society.» Such communities operate from within two purposed locations: the «mainstream,» which functions from within the dominant structure, and the «marginal,» which operates from outside the normative structures. Both are considered marginal since they experience different forms and degrees of marginality. Veling’s use of hermeneutics offers a very positive consideration and appreciation of marginality, as it seeks to emphasize its creative potential for growth, anywhere and everywhere within society and

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\(^40\) T. A. VELING. Living in the Margins: Intentional Communities and the Art of Interpretation. Eugene, OR., 2.

\(^41\) Ibid., 3.
not just in an excluded, pushed out space, rejected from the center by the center.

Hermeneutics provides an alternate way of looking at marginality; the space of the margins is the site of vital creativity, a creativity that is generated in the ongoing interplay between belonging and nonbelonging, attachment and alienation, tradition and innovation. Rather than seeing marginal space as typically narrow, withdrawn, alienated space, we need to allow the margins to breathe, to be the very life and breath of the book — to make wide the margins. I believe Intentional Communities can purposefully claim this marginal space as their own and become intentionally marginal rather than peripherally marginal.42

Clearly, Veling explores the marginal nature of these intentional communities from three interconnecting viewpoints. First, the tension between mainstream and marginal communal identification as a consequence of the choice to operate within the normative structures, and at times they may manifest confrontational and prophetic gospel convictions and deliberations. The second is the socio-theological contrast between margin and center with its tensional creativity — here there is a clear desire and commitment for structural change. The third viewpoint is a hermeneutic perspective regarding potential for growth anywhere in society. The difference in character and purpose of these communities will now be receiving further clarification.

5.1 Marginal Communities in the U.S.A

These are «ideological» marginal people who share the «willed desire to affiliate with a non-normative group.» 43 Though these marginal communities choose to exist and operate from outside the normative religious structure, they maintain a strong relationship with the Christian community at large. The study and reflection of Holy Scripture, and the celebration and reception of the Eucharist nourish these marginal communities. Due to their unwavering desire to participate in the transformation and renewal of the Church and society, these communities develop a critical character. They see and treat the Church as God’s community but also as a human institution with many distortions and difficult missionary challenges. They believe that the Church needs their

42 Ibid., 2.
participation to renew her vocational identity and to fulfill her purpose for existence. They share the understanding that they, as God’s community, must actively engage in efforts to take on and transform unjust social situations in order to be true to themselves. They discern this social call as a demand from their faith. Therefore, these marginal communities emerge out of tense dynamics created by dissatisfaction with the Church’s ministries and vision. In reality, these people lose confidence in the effectiveness of the internal structures of the Church, and they become convinced that the parish community can no longer function as a primary locus for religious belonging, and they see little hope in the efforts made to renew parish life from within its structures.  

This descriptive testimony taking from an active member can be helpful for the reader to understand the ecclesial dynamics of these Christian communities.

Interacting with other Christians with whom I can pray and dialogue and break bread has re-energized me and rekindled my hope for church. It has enabled me to reclaim a Catholic identity, which, at the present time, is important to me. I see much that is of value in the Catholic tradition, and because it is the tradition that nurtured me, I have a sense of rootedness in it and loyalty to it. I see my present position (i.e. outside the mainstream) as a valid statement to the church institution that all is not well, and as a witness to others that we can trust our experience and create options. We have stepped out of tradition in order to be true to that tradition which has formed us.

A critical point is that the small marginal community itself replaces the determining role that the normative Church traditionally used to play in the lives of its members. In other words, the small community becomes part of «the Church.» This has serious ecclesiological repercussions and connotations in regard to their belonging to a larger faith community. Veling says that, «these communities are determined to see themselves as communities living within the margins of mainstream Church, neither cut off nor attached, but rather claiming an alternative space for renewed, vibrant, and liberated ecclesial expression.»

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46 Ibid., 10.
5.2 Mainstream Christian Communities

Mainstream Christian Communities emerge and operate strictly within the Church’s structural boundaries, particularly within the parish, which is regarded as the ideal and proper context for revitalization and renewal. This approach is rooted in the belief that in order to avoid contention, polarization, confrontation, and/or unproductive conflict, change and renewal should be triggered and must occur from within, not outside the Church’s structure. For this reason, these communities are not generally seen as troublemakers, political agitators, or a threat to the internal peace and unity of the community. These communities frequently “take the form of “faith-sharing groups” and represent a somewhat tamed, watered-down version of the more full-bodied concept of small Christian community.”

Veling suggests that though this approach is soft and not overly confrontational, it is nonetheless realistic and challenging to the local structures. This is important because when these communities are not seen as a threat; other parishes welcome their lead for restructuring their own local structures. In this way, these intentional communities are seen and appreciated as examples for building a community that nourishes and strengthens internal mechanisms for transformation for the individual and community’s harmonious unity.

5.3 The Interaction of Margin and Center in the Intentional Marginal Communities

Socially and religiously, the state of marginality can be recognized as a creative locus from which transformation emerges. This transformation can be challenging, complementary, and revitalizing. Consequently, the marginal state is clearly a symbolic location for rendering, renewing, and offering a visionary hope. It is a creative dynamic energy that emerges from “the gaps and margins but also arises amid the dissolving possibilities of an order that can no longer be maintained.” Marginal communities, therefore, provide a necessary and “creative critique of the established ecclesiastical order, supported by a living proposal of alternative models.” Leonardo Boff refers to this marginal creative tension as the true “spirit of

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community» that freely wills to «impregnate the institutional organizational aspect of the church...with its vitality.»

The overriding logic throughout this religious marginal approach agrees somewhat with Victor Turner’s anthropological conclusion of liminal creative tension. In this regard, the marginal communities and the normative institutional Church must live in a dialectical tension with each other if they want to be continuously transformed and renewed. They are not in contradiction to each other because they need each other. They interact as opposing poles to allow God’s divine freshness to germinate in them a genuinely new future. Veling concludes that no religious person or group can be sustained over time without an ongoing interplay of this tension. He says that «religious groups require both centralizing and decentralizing movements. The former is a structuring, ordering, conservative movement; the later a destructuring, renewing, transforming movement.»

6. The Marginal Hermeneutical Approach and the Book Metaphor

In general, hermeneutics is most commonly recognized as «the theory and practice of understanding and interpreting texts, biblical or otherwise.» Here it is presumed that within the interpretation of such texts are included symbols, events, traditions, and people, including the interpreters themselves. In looking at the book metaphor, marginal hermeneutics is «what happens when the twin events of belonging and nonbelonging, faith and doubt, trust and suspicion, the written and unwritten, presence and absence, when these “unresolved two” burst into life in the thin, interpretative edge that both joins and separates them.»

50 L. BOFF. Ecclesiogenesis, 7.
51 T. A. VELING. Living in the Margins, 13.
53 Veling tries to clarify the concept of «marginal hermeneutics» by using W. Down Edgerton’s The Passion of Interpretation suggestion that it transpires in the signs of Hermes, the god of boundaries, doors, and roads, «Under the sign of Hermes interpretation we discover a magic theater of desire performed at the place where boundaries meet: the past and present, present and future, inclusion and exclusion, the fixed and the open, poverty and wealth, privileged speech and unprivileged speech, fiction and chaos...lie and truth, possible and impossible, living and dead, wild and tame...one person and another, what I have done and what I will do. That is, it is a theater of desire – hungry for a different future, which does not transmit, but transforms
Furthermore, hermeneutically, the understanding and interpretation of one’s life in relation to other people and institutions in society can be better accomplished using the «book metaphor» as a tool. Terry Veling uses this book metaphor to decipher the multiple ramifications of marginal life. He was greatly influenced by the works of the Jewish poet Edmond Jabès (1912-1991), who, while in exile, away from his own community, was prompted to confront and appreciate his own marginal ethnic and religious identity. As he developed and used this concept of book as a metaphor to approach his personal marginal dilemma, Jabès stated, «This may seem paradoxical, but it is precisely in that break—in that non belonging in search for its belonging—that I am without doubt most Jewish.»

Veling, in turn, used the book concept, and applied the issues of «belonging and non-belonging» in the context of Christian marginality. He reasons that if Christianity is an open book, then,

We belong to this book not as the latest chapter added to an already long and dated text. Rather, we belong as those who continue the thread of questioning that runs through every page of the book in which we both write and are written. As Edmond Jabès says, «we always start out from a written text and come back to the text to be written.» In this sense, tradition is the conversation and writing that it generates, or as Gadamer says, it is «the conversation that we are.»

This book metaphor also includes the paradoxical experiences of absence and exclusion, the experiences of alienation and exile of people who are part of the history of tradition but are not recorded, acknowledged, and/or interpreted. In this regard, marginal logic reminds one that tradition and our stories are a continuous reality. They are developed from the past, yet renewed in the present. This is what it means to live in the cutting edges of tradition, both immersed and alienated, inside and outside, valuing belonging yet experiencing a sense of non-belonging. It is in this context that marginal religious criticism and realism takes on a life of its own. It acknowledges that «tradition also contains many distortions, that it can tend to exclude and repress, that it has as much to do with power and

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– performed at the place where the gods and humankind meet.» T. A. VELING. Living in the Margins, 136.
54 E. JABÈS - M. COHEN. From the Desert to the Book. Barrytown, 64.
55 T. A. VELING. Living in the Margins, 17.
domination as it does with truth and disclosure, and, as such, that it demands both critique and suspicion.»

Marginal Christian communities live in these paradoxical worlds, yet they all share the challenge to discern the creative, redeeming and transcending elements within their marginal condition. Through marginal hermeneutics, one recognizes that power, creativity, energy, and the spirit of God are at work in the lives of people. Veling summarizes this marginal hermeneutics well when he says,

Marginal hermeneutics recognizes how much we belong to the book of tradition, how much we are written into existence by this tradition that has shaped us and claimed us. It also recognizes how much we are «outside» the book, that there is much in our experience that is not written into the book’s pages, that there is much new writing and rewriting to be done. This rewriting happens in the margins of the book, between the text to which we belong, the text that does make a claim on our lives, and the place of non-belonging, where we cannot find ourselves in the pages of tradition, where something of our contemporary experience and questions and concerns has not been taken into account.

It is well to note here that the element of deconstruction in this proposition is most relevant, and it manifests the postmodern theological imagination for the construction of the future. As David Tracy notes, «the hope of the present is in the reality of otherness and difference—the otherness alive in the marginalized groups of modernity and tradition alike.» The state of marginality in the Christian communities is thus presented in positive terms. It encourages a rediscovery and appreciation of its creative and transcending potential and significance in one’s limitations.

Also, the development of social tensions and conflicts, as also described by Turner in the form of «communitas and structure,» are not foreign to religious life. Carl Starkloff contends that their presence can consistently be traced from Old Testament times to the historical Jesus and into the development of the Christian tradition of the Church by stating,

...the tension is even historically observable throughout the Old Testament and especially within the Judaism of the Maccabean period when Israel was

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56 Ibid., 18.
57 Ibid., 20.
under Greek domination. In turn, the spontaneous Maccabee movement developed into the normative *communitas* of the Pharisees, who had to contend with the later dominant structure of the Roman Empire. It is well to know too how such apocalyptic forms of *communitas* as the Essenes grew up in that period. In turn, the Pharisees and the Scribes transformed the Jewish *communitas* into a structure within a structure, which itself produced the *communitas* of John the Baptist and then of Jesus…. The Pharisaic structure, let alone that of the Roman Herodian rule, was unable to tolerate this *communitas* in its midst. Hence the radical break that involved first the execution of Jesus and then the expulsion of the Nazarean *communitas*. Without delving here into deeply scholarly sources, it does seem safe to suggest, however, that the history of the Church has consistently reflected tension between *communitas* and structure.  

This chapter has presented a religious consideration of marginality to show its understanding, development and approaches within the institutions. Marginality contains many ambiguous experiences, which cause a great deal of insecurity and hopelessness. It can also provide an opportunity and a process for growth. The Church must find new ways to reaffirm current and future generations that God is indeed with them until the end of time. The youth especially need to trust and truly believe that Christianity has a future for them because it exists for the service of God’s promises and kingdom. This kingdom has been revealed to the marginalized in clear and concrete ways. By presenting a socio-scientific development of marginality, this chapter has demonstrated the concern, relevance and potential of the presence of structural, cultural, ideological, and religious marginality in society. These manifestations of marginality were vividly present in Jesus’ stories about the outcast:

Forced laborers, day laborers, slaves, tenant farmers, the poor, the destitute in need of alms, eunuchs, ritually unclean, lepers, a woman with a hemorrhage, women who follow Jesus, the diseased and infirm, the blind, the lame, the deaf, the dumb, the deformed, paralytics, demoniacs, epileptics, bandits and prostitutes. The parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matt 25:31-46) offers a paradigm.

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The reality of how God targeted and assisted marginalized people throughout the Old and New Testaments will be considered in the next chapter. The biblical and theological consideration of marginality will offer evidence of God’s active presence in the life of people of faith and how he has helped them become active agents in their own future.
CHAPTER III

Marginality in the Face of God: A Biblical Consideration

The aim of this chapter is to present a modest treatment of the biblical development of marginality, emphasizing the action of God as the claimer, defender, affirmer, and enabler of those unjustly deprived from God’s given gifts. One of the principal emphases will be on how people in the Bible experience, endure, and respond to their marginalized state. It is from humble communities of faith that we have received biblical wisdom and directives, which «mostly originate in social locations of weakness and cultural marginality, among a minority, from the poor.»¹ This presentation will help to better understand and appreciate the existence of biblical marginalities as it reaffirms the ongoing promise of God’s proven and transforming presence within the marginalized. This notion is important because the way people live their marginal realities manifests either their true reconciliation and transcendental liberation in God or their continual enslavement and deprivation of God’s given gifts in this world. Furthermore, marginal biblical stories affirm people of faith that marginality and «poverty need not, in and of itself, crack the human soul open to realizing its radical dependence on God.»²

The first major section of this chapter discusses the development, understanding, and role that poverty has played as a marginalizing biblical reality in the Old Testament. Special attention is given to the development

² W. E. REISER. Into the Needle’s Eye: Becoming Poor and Hopeful Under the Care of a Gracious God. Notre Dame, IN., 47.
of attitudes, approaches, and understanding of poverty and its spirituality as a condition and manifestation of one’s true communion with God, as experienced by the remnants of Israel, the anawim, and the poor of Yahweh.

The second major section of the chapter begins with a discussion on how Jesus embraces and enlightens the Old Testament’s understanding, meaning, and challenges of poverty and marginality. Marginalized people can become «sacramental encounters» and active «agents/builders» in the kingdom. In addition, Mary of Nazareth is viewed as a marginalized, faithful, obedient mother and disciple of Jesus and the Church. Hence, special attention is given to how the Old Testament’s marginal conditions are embraced in her person and mission. In this light, Mary is presented as a prototype example of «in-between,» «in-both,» and «in-beyond» cultural and spiritual identity. The Marian section concludes with an introduction of how she has been consistently present in the most significant events in the life of Jesus and the Church. The chapter looks into Jesus’ redemptive mission, including his kenotic condition in his becoming poor and marginalized, culminating in his death on the cross. This consideration aims at showing how Jesus confirmed that marginal circumstances could be creative opportunities and processes with redemptive potential.

The chapter concludes by offering various biblical examples of marginalities. Each represents different types of marginalities present in any given society. Thus one of the objectives of this chapter is to help the reader realize that the current Latino youth in the U.S. can be identified as falling into the realm of the biblically marginal. The second objective lies in the recognition that the kingdom of God is more effective and tangible when the marginalized persons allow God to help them acknowledge, understand, and act upon their own marginalities.

3 The «in-between» state of marginality refers to the negative experience of marginality associated to two or more cultural worlds; the «in-both» state refers to the self-affirming experience of being part of two cultural and religious worlds, realizing a positive view of life based on the relational aspects to such worlds, creating thus a fulfilling experience; and the «in-beyond» state of marginality is the experience of recognizing that positive and negative aspects of marginality are two parts of the same reality, creating an inter-relational yet unique state of being. A more detailed explanatory presentation was developed in chapter one of this dissertation.
1. Marginality and Poverty

In the Scriptures, marginality is best appreciated in the context of poverty. The biblical understanding of the «poor» refers to a social reality rather than an economic one, thus including those victims of economic, social, political, cultural, gender, and geographical factors, etc. Justin Meggitt notes that «the word “poor” is redolent with a variety of possible meanings, and many of these are not strictly “economic” at all.»⁴ In this regard, Leslie Hoppe observes that, «The biblical view of the poor, of course, centers on their economic deprivation but it embraces much more. For this reason, the biblical response to poverty is not merely charity but justice.»⁵ Feminist Theologian Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza remarks that the reality of marginality must be included to the concept of poverty, «because the healing stories, as well as the descriptions of other persons in the Jesus traditions, indicate that Jesus and his movement were open to all, especially to the «outcast» of his society and religion.»⁶ In addition, Gustavo Gutierrez, from Latin American Liberation Theology perspective, states that, «The world of the poor is a universe in which the socioeconomic aspect is basic but not all-inclusive.»⁷ Given these understandings, the terms «marginality» and «poor» are used interchangeably throughout this dissertation.

In the Old Testament, one cannot speak of marginality without dealing with the reality of poverty in all its forms and shapes. Poverty was a shocking and undesirable social phenomenon for the Israelite people, as suffering, confusion, and pain demonstrated an unjust reality that God did not want. Depending on the different circumstances of people, poverty was experienced in various ways, «Sometimes poverty is a curse; other times it is a blessing. Sometimes the text is exclusively about material poverty; other times poverty becomes a metaphor for another reality.»⁸ These experiences were understood and defined based on the different

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⁵ L. J. HOPPE. *There Shall Be No Poor Among You: Poverty in the Bible*. Nashville, TN., 15.
⁸ L. J. HOPPE. *Being Poor*, 1.
philosophies of thought, which were developed to explain, attack, justify, and even to accept poverty with its real and crude consequences.\textsuperscript{9}

To help contrast those biblical circumstances with the present state and process of marginalization in our societies, the work of pioneer Albert Gelin, \textit{The Poor of Yahweh}, is helpful as it touches on (1) the covenantal identity and solidarity for the common good; (2) the negative belief that the sinful acts of the person make him/her poor; and (3) the balance approach, which teaches that poverty and riches are equally dangerous.\textsuperscript{10} Though the causes and approaches to poverty vary, the clear and consequential reality is marked by a profound deprivation, which can steal the true identity and potential of any person in their relationship with God and the community. It can clearly push people into a helpless marginalized state of being. They can justify, negate, accept, or nourish their personal involvements and responsibilities to the spiritual and social life of their communities. Nonetheless, people struggle to engage or disengage in the creation of social realities, as shown in an intriguing discernment process by these mentioned three lines of thought.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{10} (1) The covenantal approach, based in Moses’ desert experience in exile, is centered on identity, solidarity, and the common good. Poverty was to be attacked by unselfishly sharing all the burdens and blessings in the community. A. GELIN. \textit{The Poor of Yahweh}. Collegeville, MN., 15-16. (2) Poverty considered as the result of the individual’s own sinful acts. This negative reasoning portrays poverty as a condemnation, or a punishment, for committing sins, explaining why not all people were successful in this world and thus justifying the anomic social divide. It led to the teaching that God rewards or punishes people as a consequence of their actions. However, a critical problem arose when this principle was interpreted to justify premeditated behaviors that caused marginalizing injustices to innocent victims. Gelin, 23. It can be seen as «a reproach in a view of the world which is more optimistic about what human beings can achieve through their efforts, and so it becomes axiomatic that the poor are in some way to blame for the condition in which they find themselves.» R. J. COGGINS. «The Old Testament and the Poor.» \textit{The Expository Times} 99 (1987-88), 12. (3) This line of thought, developed in the tradition of wisdom, portrays poverty and riches as «equally dangerous: the poor man is easily tempted to be dishonest; the man who has everything is easily tempted to be proud …. The ideal is an intermediate state befitting men of virtue.» Ibid., 12. See Proverbs (30:7-9).
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2. Identity and Mission: Vocation for Transcendence

Marginalized and poor people can discern and develop spiritual qualities and values that help them transcend their physical suffering and despair. The proper encounter with the reality of marginality can become a vehicle for conversion and transcendent liberation for everyone in the society. The dynamic of recognizing and appreciating one’s true identity in God, which is coupled by obedience, trust, and even suffering, leads toward the realization of a transcendental vocation of service.

Since poverty is created, defined, and manifested in a variety of ways, one can find that «in the Old Testament as elsewhere poverty is better understood in relative rather than absolute terms.» The experiences of the Israelites during and after the desert clearly illustrate this multi-faceted dynamic. These experiences share the social destruction, suffering and marginalization of people. Some people, however, were able to find ways to transcend these limiting experiences. The recognition of who they truly were in God helped them understand their call to live bonded as one family, rooted in one divine identity, which in turn, demanded clear and sustainable acts of dependence, obedience, and service to the divine mission.

The prophets pointed out the dynamic of believing who God is as well as how to respond to God’s interventions. In this vein, by the very virtue of their vocation, prophets become marginal people. Their experience of suffering, worldly uncertainty, abandonment, isolation, and alienation represented the community’s condition of the marginalized of the time and also pointed to alternative possibilities of hope. Despite their marginalized circumstances, the prophets were able to discern and maintain an affirming missionary vocation in God to the very end of their lives. By extension, they inspired and challenged Israel to do the same.

For instance, the prophet Jeremiah was called to be a prophet in the midst of very troubling times, amid political, economic and religious upheavals. Those circumstances made his ministry difficult and dangerous. Accordingly, when the prophet prophesized the future fate of Judah as filled with punishments and wars, he was abused, disrespected, and further marginalized by his own people. He was even «regarded as traitor

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11 Ibid., 12.
12 J. J. MEGGITT. Paul, Poverty and Survival, 5.
and was condemned and isolated.»¹⁴ Jeremiah lived through his ongoing state of marginality with dignity, though filled with profound suffering and personal anguish, as he confronted the bitter ideological conflict. Even though he appears to have died as a failure, in reality he completed his ministry in the creative power of God. He was able to testify that a «true conversion to Yahweh was humanly impossible; Yahweh himself had to change the very heart of a person, and only then could the new covenant bind forever the people to its God.»¹⁵

Job offers another excellent example of suffering and of perseverance through a time of dreadful marginality with integrity and faithfulness. He testifies to the unprecedented resilience and embrace of multiple marginalities experienced by one person. Despite his challenging trials, he did not give up on realizing God’s embrace of multiple marginalities. His taste of death introduced him to the new experience as a social outcast. In the midst of a common belief that misfortunes, poverty, and sickness were punishments due to personal and family sins, Job was able to maintain his interior consistency and exemplary attitude in faithfulness to, and dependence on, God. At the end, he regained what was already his, namely, his health, wealth, family, and blessed future.¹⁷

2.1 The Remnants of God

As the prophets experienced profound disappointments in the people’s acceptance, attitudes, and commitments, they talked of the need to form a core group of serious and committed disciples to teach, protect, conserve, and testify to God’s covenantal presence. Accordingly, the idea of the «remnant of Yahweh»¹⁸ became central to the prophetic preaching, which

¹⁷ For thorough analysis, please see, G. GUTIÉRREZ. Job: God-talk and the Suffering of the Innocent. New York, 1989. Also HOPPE, Being Poor, 98.
¹⁸ The remnants are understood as the people who remained faithful to Yahweh, despite their marginal circumstances of poverty and suffering. They were tested and
in turn was connected to the eschatological expectation for a new Israel in a new covenant. The prophet Isaiah provides a clear example of this distinct religious group of people and its formation. This remnant discipleship was to help the community visualize and experience God’s future reign. However, their choice to be open to the prophets’ teaching and formation caused them to become more marginalized, as they set themselves apart from the rest of their community. In this way, they were clearly personifying and exemplifying how God truly and effectively works, redeems, and empowers people through their marginality.

The emphasis is on the required and conscious understanding of their marginal state of being, with its causes, limitations and challenges, and their confident and proactive embrace of God’s promise and creative hope. Their engagement in this process testifies to the reaffirming and inclusive invitation God gives to all marginal in the society.

Herein is an illustration of the process of liminality through which the chosen Israelites were filtered to become the future remnants. They were to testify to the life of God’s covenantal presence in and through their marginal lives. The process involved the appreciation and affirmation of their identity in God, in order to develop a true sense of vocational belonging. They, in turn, took on a transcendental mission despite their many suffering and trials. The prophet Zechariah (13:8-9) would refer to this process as follows:

In all the land, says the Lord, two thirds of them shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left. I will bring the one third through fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and I will test them as gold is tested. They purified people who would be the new Israel and who would in time provide the Messiah Creator of the New Covenant. The centrality of this idea of the remnant can also be appreciated in Isaiah (4:3; 6:13; 7:3), Ezekiel (34:30-31; 36:26-28), Nehemiah (1:3), Zechariah (13:8-9).

The prophet Jeremiah 31:31-34: «The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah... I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.»

GELIN, 28-29. Isaiah 8:16-18 – clearly speaks of his disciples: «The record is to be folded and the sealed instruction kept among my disciples. For I will trust in the Lord, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob; yes, I will wait for him. Look at me and the children whom the Lord has given me: we are signs and portents in Israel from the Lord of Hosts who dwells in Mount Zion.»

The process of liminality here refers to a process of tests and trials where the poor in the midst of suffering are purified and redeemed in their faith in God.
shall call upon my name, and I will hear them. I will say, «They are my people,» and they shall say, «The Lord is my God.»

This liminal process provided a true encounter with God that nourished and solidified the commitment to their redemptive participation. In this process, «the hour depended on God alone, but the dynamism of faith activated the preparations, overcame disappointments, and preserved tensions. The “poor” sing the praise of the era of deliverance before its arrival …»  

Those who were clear on their true identity were also clear on their missionary vocation.

2.2 The Anawim

The prophet Zephaniah deepened the understanding and expectation of the future remnants by pointing out essential vocational characteristics to their future missionary identity. He writes of God saying, «I will leave as a remnant in your midst a people humble and lowly, who shall take refuge in the name of the Lord; the remnant of Israel,» (3:12). These characteristics denote a spiritual meaning which would also describe the ‘anawim of God. In this way, the term poverty acquired a spiritual connotation, thus marking the beginning of its metaphorical meaning. The prophet portrays a fair and balanced approach for the sake of the common good. He invokes the need of spiritual poverty for all people as a precondition for encountering God.

The psalms contain the innermost feelings of the Israelite people as well as the religious attitudes and commitments of the anawim. From within the suffering marginalized people, those who faithfully surrendered to God

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22 GELIN, 75.
23 Anawim is a Hebrew word used to describe the poor of Yahweh, who are characterized by a tested religious attitude of confidence and dependence on God. Ibid., 52.
24 This is seen as «a turning-point in history,» when the «poor» as a concept began to be used as a spiritual metaphor. Ibid., 31. The prophet Isaiah speaks of the poor metaphorically thus emphasizing the waiting «in faith and confidence for the coming day of salvation.» HOPPE, 81-82.
25 HOPPE, Being Poor, 76. Zephaniah 3:1-5: «Jerusalem is doomed, that corrupt, rebellious city that oppresses its own people. It has not listened to the Lord or accepted his discipleship. It has not put its trust in the Lord or asked for his help… But the Lord is still in the city; he does what is right and never what is wrong. Every morning without fail, he brings justice to his people. And yet the unrighteous people there keep on doing wrong and are not ashamed.»
became the *anawim* of God. Their actions and attitudes became an example of how the physical condition of poverty can generate in people a transcending spiritual meaning and commitment to a life that God blesses, nourishes, promotes, and transcends. They, in turn, became the future spiritual hope for the whole nation. In this sense, the poor and marginalized became «processes» of divine encounter, a sacramental experience in this world.

The psalms of lament particularly describe poverty as a marginalizing «socio-economic conflict within the Israelite community» that must be resolved within the present social institutions. God assists and embraces all people who seek his help, including «those that are not poor in a material sense [but who], of course, desire the same sort of divine protection, (109:22).»

### 2.3 The Suffering Servant of God

The *anawim*, tested and reaffirmed within their marginality, were able to offer up their suffering and trials for the common good of the community. They provided a clear example of how worldly limitations can ultimately be overcome through faithful trust, dependence, and service to God. In

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26 The *anawim*, therefore, because of their attitude and confidence in God do not let the marginalizing and destructive reality of physical poverty paralyze them. Consequently, they become the suffering servant of Israel who would live and build up a life in God despite the evil done to them by others. In this sense, they become living recipients of God’s liberating hope.

27 This consideration of the poor and marginalized as «sacrament, a divine encounter» finds its culmination in Jesus and by extension in those who were the principal focus of his proclamation of the Reign of God.

28 Hoppe, *Being Poor*, 116. These psalms of lament describe the causes, consequences and the intervention of God on behalf of the innocent people suffering marginalization. Some examples of psalms of lament showing the social conflict and God’s intervention are: 3, 5, 6, 9, 35, 37, 44, 65, 79, 83, 86, 109, 132, 149.

29 There was not a shared common belief «in another world where the injustices of this present age would be put right.» People, therefore, were challenged to actively participate in a solution-making process in the here and now. R. J. COGGINS. «The Old Testament and the Poor,» in The Expository Times 99 (1987-88) 14.

30 Hoppe, *Being Poor*, 119. A similar interpretation of God’s inclusive embrace is manifested in the various views and approaches of the wealthy toward the poor as «Some of the “rich” might find poverty an inconvenience; some might see “the poor” as an object of charity. Still others might choose to ignore the question altogether.» T. R. HOBBES. «Reflection on “The Poor” and the Old Testament,» in *The Expository Times* 100 (1989) 293.
turn, they showed that the locus of God’s transforming and redeeming work in this world is efficaciously experienced and shared in the marginality of people’s lives.

The prophet Isaiah powerfully describes God’s suffering servant generously being offered up on behalf of the sinful and, by association, for the common good of all people. For, “it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured.... If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendants in a long life, and the will of the Lord shall be accomplished through him” (Is. 53:4a,10). Furthermore, Psalm 22/23 deepens and personalizes that process when the marginalized poor endure worldly injustices with complete confidence and hope in God, in order to transcend humanly imposed limitations. In the midst of terrible human experiences, this suffering person manifests his sense of identity and dependence on God. Communion and service in the Lord are, therefore, in clear relation to poverty and marginality. This correlation is evident as marginalized poor people “become religious more easily than the rich, because they are less likely to be self-sufficient and consequently closer to God.”

Although there are some exceptions, the poor in Hebrew texts are generally in direct experience with the concrete subhuman situations caused by material poverty. The experiences of marginality and poverty, as denigrating and difficult as they are, can become an opportunity for discernment of one’s transcendental identity and mission, personally and collectively. This provides the opportunity of experiencing and considering the reality of marginality and material poverty as a spiritual metaphor of another reality. When this occurs, it becomes clear that spiritual poverty could not possibly exist without the voluntary or involuntary experience of material poverty.

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31 Psalm 22/23, which Jesus later makes his own, presents a bold and graphic description of all the limiting misfortunes, sickness, troubles, persecution, imprisonment, humiliation and even a sense of abandonment from God, as in verse 1, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”

32 “You have been my guide since I was first formed, my security at my mother’s breast. To you I was committed at birth; from my mother’s womb you are my God. Be not far from me, for I am in distress; be near, for I have no one to help me,” (Ps. 21/22: 10-12).

33 GELIN, 112.

34 Fr. Gelin put it thus: “These two poverties, effective poverty and spiritual poverty, are concretely connected. Historically, the second is rooted in the first. As a matter of
Material poverty, however, cannot be divorced from the fact that it is the result of sinful and immoral acts of people. This understanding of poverty must lead to a shared commitment to destroy its dreadful existence. Poverty is not just described to illustrate the past degrading circumstances of the poor, but most importantly to protest and to beg the future abolition of its existence. In other words, «they are not limited to description; they take a stand.»

The New Testament embraces these challenges and shows clearly how God willed to show the marginal state of people as the liberating, transforming, and transcending locus of his loving power. It shows how God, by sending his Son as marginalized and poor, identifies with the condition of all marginalized people, thus dignifying them as divine encounters of attainable hope and transcendence.

From images of Mary of Nazareth and Jesus’ life and ministry, along with testimonies of his disciples, emerges the realization that their mission was to share a new beginning to the marginal life situations of all people. Accordingly, the marginalized circumstances of all people are considered as the locus for God’s transforming power to actualize his kingdom on this earth. Thus, the understanding of poverty and marginality in the Old Testament is shown to be carried into the New Testament times while furthering its fulfillment in the person and mission of Jesus Christ and his followers. This dynamic process considers how using the values and attitudes born and developed within the marginal experience facilitates a better acknowledgement and appreciation of God’s transcending redemption.

3. Poverty and Marginality in the New Testament

The New Testament displays continuity in its understanding of poverty and marginality from the Old Testament, yet is naturally influenced by the Greco-Roman culture. The Roman culture greatly contributed to the

fact, to enable spiritual poverty to nourish, the Essenians bound themselves by a vow of poverty. And Christ confirmed what tradition had discovered.» Ibid., 112.

35 G. GUTIÉRREZ. A Theology of Liberation, 165.

36 «Because the Jews had been politically dominated by the Roman Empire since 63 B.C., and although they had enjoyed some political and religious tolerance, as they were very protective of their religious and national traditions, it was, nevertheless, impossible to completely insulate their culture from the pervasive Greco-Roman influence. There was a need to learn the Greek language, governmental statutes, and other cultural
marginalization of people within the Jewish social structures with its attitude of showing concern and generosity, primarily for those among the needy who were their immediate family, friends, supporters, and/or their country people. As a result of this exclusivist cultural attitude, they showed little concern and care for all Jewish subjects. The Jews, for their part, had also created a dysfunctional and sinful structure with deep roots in their religious system, which, though based on the «system of purity and holiness,» caused a great deal of marginalization to their people. It was within this environment that Jesus came to exercise his ministry.

Jesus picked up where the prophets had left off and brought their mission into a new realm. On two counts, the New Testament depicts Jesus of Nazareth as a marginal poor man. First, as the Son of God, powerful and perfect as he was, he chose through his kenosis to be poor and marginal, identifying with the marginalized poor of this world. Second, as a man he

features to move ahead on the social ladder, and with it naturally came negative influences.» R. P MCBRIEN. Catholicism. Volume I. Minneapolis, MN., 424.

37 HOPPE, There Shall Be..., 145.

38 The marginalization of Israel was primarily caused by the Jewish theocracy and its particular interpretations of the Law. Segundo notes that declaration to the people «is a way of offering the ideological reason for their poverty, of hiding and justifying it. Here we find ourselves right in the middle of a political conflict, and the power of one of the groups lies in its interpretation of the law, in its religious conception.» J. L. SEGUNDO. The Historical Jesus of the Synoptics. New York, 90. In this regard, W. Brueggemann made an important observation: «The Law had become in his days a way for the managers of society, religious even more than civil, to effectively control not only morality but political-economic valuing that lay behind the morality.» W. BRUEGGEMANN. Prophetic Imagination. London, 84.

39 Fuellenbach, with the help of A. NOLAN, God in South Africa (1988), puts it boldly, «This system of purity and holiness determined the entire social structure of economic and political domination, ensuring that those who had privileges would not lose them. It was a total system and not merely a religious system. To act against the system or to rebel against it meant to commit sin. To be outside the system meant to be a sinner... [such as,] pagans, lepers, prostitutes, tax collectors, shepherds, people of mixed race, and all the lower classes of people who were dirty and ignorant of the Law. ... Jesus rejected this entire system. For him this had never been the intention of the Law and the prophets.» J. FUELLENBACH. The Kingdom of God. New York, 136-137.


41 «Christ Jesus, though he was by nature God...emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave,» (Phil. 2:6), and, «For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that
belonged to a family that was not poor in the sense of extreme material poverty. However, although «his legal Father, Joseph, was a tektōn—a builder, a contractor, a skilled laborer … Jesus left his family and occupation,» in order to accomplish his mission with authentic credibility. This is commonly known as «Christian poverty,» a first-hand experience of material and spiritual poverties. In this respect, Jesus was offering the footprints for his future disciples to follow.

Jesus portrays anthropological knowledge of the reality of poverty and marginality as experienced in a positive or negative manner, depending on the circumstances and beliefs of people. Through his personal testimony, Jesus intended to erase all the socially and culturally constructed misconceptions, in hopes of illumining a new path. He offered an integrated and embracive universal message that «God’s intention is not merely the restoration of Israel but the transformation of the whole human society.»

Nevertheless, whatever the influences, approaches, and understandings of poverty and marginality, its reality was displeasing and unacceptable to Jesus, due to its cruel suffering and denigration of the human person. The evident destruction of people in their communion with one another and with God had to be addressed with a new way of life. This new life would offer a sustaining process for God’s gifts to be effectively shared. In this regard, Jesus preached a message with eschatological hope, yet aiming at the «restoration of the covenant people in their relationship to Yahweh and their relationship toward each other on the social-economic-political levels…which in turn would lead to the transformation of all human structures in favor of justice…»

Certainly, Jesus came to offer an integral redemption to humanity. He centered his preaching and teaching on the proclamation of the Kingdom of

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42 This conclusion is based on the definition of the poor as «those living at or near subsistence level, whose prime concern it is to obtain the minimum food, shelter, and clothing necessary to sustain life, whose lives are dominated by the struggle for physical survival.» J. J. MEGGITT. Paul, Poverty and Survival, 5.
43 Hoppe, There Shall Be…, 144
44 N. F. LOHFINK. Option for the Poor. Berkeley, CA., 74.
45 J. FUELLENBACH. The Kingdom of God, 69.
his Father as having arrived with him. In this kingdom all people would be welcomed, renewed, and fulfilled, as shown through his symbolic and messianic signs, such as his defining «table fellowship» with his disciples, with tax-collectors and sinners, as well as his healings and exorcisms. Jesus’ ministry in the midst of marginality offers directives of empowerment for a transcendent discipleship. In this context, Jesus called his future disciples from all walks of life and formed them to use their many marginalizing challenges to counteract their current marginalizing life’s experiences.

The beatitudes offer a unifying and systematic set of teachings, which embraces the identity and purpose of Jesus’ life on behalf of all marginalized. For the purpose of this discussion, three aspects of the Beatitudes need to be emphasized. First, the marginalized and the poor are direct addressees as beneficiaries of his teaching. Accordingly, they are blessed for the kingdom of God is theirs. Second, Jesus is showing how and where the kingdom will be realized and shared. Since that kingdom had not yet reached its destination and culmination, Jesus makes his kingdom present through and in the marginalized people. Thus, he

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46 By using the multifaceted and complex symbol of the «kingdom» as the center of his preaching, Jesus opened up a whole new world of possibilities, expectations, and meanings in the minds and hearts of people. Fuellenbach believes that because Jesus was a «man of his time and culture,» he purposely used such a symbolic image to trigger its prophetic, apocalyptic, and ethical ramifications. The «Kingdom of God» was seen at the time of Jesus as: (1) «The national-political expectation – «within history» (prophetic-eschatological); (2) The apocalyptic expectation – «beyond history» (apocalyptic eschatological); (3) The ethical expectation – «present realization» (realized eschatology).» J. FUELLENBACH. The Kingdom of God, 26-50, 53.

47 Jesus’ Table Fellowship is a determining and missionary symbolic event. Fr. LaVerdiere points out that meals preceded nearly every essential missionary teaching and action of Jesus, and they show major and transcendental situations in Jesus’ life and that of his disciples. E. LAVERDIERE. Luke. Wilmington, DL., xlii-xliii.

48 McBrien writes that Jesus «gathered a group of disciples around him, without regard for sex, status, or background, and celebrated their unity through the sharing of meals. He, therefore, set himself and his followers at odds with the more sectarian, excommunicating mentality and practice of contemporary Judaism.» R. P MCBRIEN. Catholicism. Volume I, 435.

49 The Beatitudes prove that the Reign of God is here for/in the current marginalized people, and «those who turn toward it will receive the power to live its demands... like the Lord’s Prayer, the Sermon on the Mount must be seen in the eschatological context of the “already” and the “not yet”.» J. FUELLENBACH. The Kingdom of God, 118, 120-121.
dignifies and empowers them to be active agents in the building of his kingdom. Third, because it is in and through them that the power of the kingdom is best realized, they become not just beneficiaries, but bearers of good news for others,\textsuperscript{50} thus manifesting their evangelizing potential.\textsuperscript{51}

An essential missionary reality is that in Jesus’ model, what is embraced and experienced must be shared, if it is to have any transforming and transcending meaning. In this light, the beneficiaries of the kingdom must become, in the spirit of Jesus’ \textit{kenosis}, an inviting revelation to other people, so that they may participate in the ongoing liberating process.\textsuperscript{52} In this manner, the gospel teaching would bring about the intended hope, compassion, and empowerment to all marginalized.

The kingdom of God is ultimately considered as the revelation of God’s unconditional love for all marginalized of the earth, and Jesus became the tangible and visible presence of that love. Pope John Paul II in \textit{Redemptoris Missio}, #18 states that the kingdom is, «a person with a face and name of Jesus of Nazareth, the image of the invisible God. If the Kingdom is separated from Jesus, it is no longer the Kingdom of God which he revealed.» The \textit{Catechism of the Catholic Church}, #544, summarizes this presentation well: «Jesus shares the life of the poor, from the cradle to the cross; he experiences hunger, thirst and privation. Jesus identifies himself with the poor of every kind and makes active love toward them the condition for entering his kingdom.»\textsuperscript{53}

\textbf{4. The Marginalized Poor as a Divine Encounter}

The most enduring biblical promise is the continuous active presence and ready disposition of God to transform and liberate people’s lives from the enslavements of this world. The manifestation of God within the social and personal lives of people reveals an inward movement of his future

\textsuperscript{50} J. SOBRINO. \textit{Jesus the Liberator: A Historical-Theological View}. New York, 126-128.

\textsuperscript{51} Puebla Documents, #1147: «Commitment to the poor and oppressed … has helped the Church to discover the evangelizing potential of the [marginalized] poor.» \textit{Puebla and Beyond: Documentation and Commentary}, 265-66.

\textsuperscript{52} The poor and marginalized «are not just builders of the Kingdom, but that they bring good news … they are an \textit{eu-aggelion}.» J. SOBRINO. \textit{Jesus the Liberator: A Historical-Theological View}. New York, 128.

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Catechism of the Catholic Church}. Città del Vaticano, #544, 123.
FOLLOWING JESUS CHRIST TO THE MARGINS

revelation. God has progressively offered himself to people, presenting countless opportunities for encountering his divine dwelling presence in the midst of their marginal circumstances.

There were certainly different places for divine encounters throughout the Old Testament, but worship was centralized in the ark and the temple of Jerusalem for political and religious purposes, embracing and identifying with the past, present, and future of the people of Israel. In turn, it successfully unified, nourished, and protected the identity and security of the Jewish people. Solomon would later express this reality through prayer. The prophets portrayed positive attitudes and opinions about the temple and its worship. They also expressed mistrust in their criticisms of the ministry of priests, who did not challenge and nourish an interior conversion and the need for concrete acts of mercy and justice. Herein, the transcendent self-revelation of God began to radically expand from the mere material building structures to the interior personal dwelling of God in people’s lives. Thus, the focus switched to the dignified recognition and obedience to that presence.

54 Yves Congar, describing the purpose and dynamic manifestations of God, says that, «they move from things to persons, from fleeting moments of God’s Presence to a Presence that is lasting, from the simple presence of his action to a vital gift, inward communication and the joy of communion.» Y. CONGAR. The Mystery of the Temple. London (1962) xi.

55 «Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who has now fulfilled in act the promise he made to my father David. So many years since he had rescued his people from Egypt, and never a city among all the tribes of Israel had he chosen to be the site of his dwelling-place or the shrine of his name; but a man he did choose out, to rule his people, king David. And when he, my father, would have built a house in honour of the Lord God of Israel, the Lord told him that he had done well to conceive such a purpose in his heart; but it is not for thee, he said, to build me a house. A house shall he built in my honour, but by thy son, the heir of thy body. That promise of his the Lord has fulfilled...(3 King 8. 15-21...).» Cited in CONGAR, The Mystery of the Temple, 31.

56 Congar notes that «Prophets ... are the men who attack the roots of things. They bring a message which goes counter to the status quo, whilst priests are men who follow a policy of give-and-take, are willing to compromise and are attached to tradition and the status quo.» Ibid., 57.

57 The prophets «demanded that there should be a religion and sanctity based on morality ... [with God] as the sovereign ruler of men’s hearts, for Yahweh is a living God.» Ibid., 59.

58 Ezekiel (36:26-27; cf. Jer. 31:33) illustrates this progression well when he has Yahweh say, «I will take the heart of stone from your body and give you a heart of
Just as the symbolic temple of Solomon embraced all the traditions and wisdom of the «mountain, tent, and the ark,» Jesus embraces such biblical significance and promises in his person. He, in turn, manifested himself as the dynamic temple of God, which was to empower people with an inner-force capable of liberation and transcendence. This way, God manifested himself in history, and through Jesus, all humanity would encounter its dignity and purpose.

It is well to note that Jesus and the prophets had respect, appreciation and devotion for the temple itself, and what it represented to all Jewish people. Yet they also criticized the abuses and injustices committed in it and on its behalf. In that light, Jesus challenged the very root of the problem by absorbing the original meaning and purpose of the temple to his own person. Accordingly, the dynamic incarnate Word, «of God himself…the new temple and the new worship are the final reality, the very substance of our highest hopes. This is the new regime of the new messianic era, which is characterized by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit promised by God.»

Furthermore, Jesus affirmed that whoever loves him and listens to his words, he and his Father would love and make their dwelling place in that person (cf. John 14:23). Thus, St. Paul preached that each member is a temple of the Holy Spirit, «Surely you know that you are God’s temple, where the Spirit of God dwells» (1 Cor. 3:16). Hence, a natural conclusion comes in that one encounters God when in active relationships with others, especially the marginalized believers who can become sacramentalized.

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59 Thus, Jesus made the challenge, «Destroy this temple…and in three days I will raise it again.» Yet, St. John clarifies: «The temple he was speaking of was his body,» (Jn. 2:19, 20).

60 «On the one hand, there is a universalization of the presence of God: from being localized and linked to a particular people, it gradually extends to all peoples of the earth (Amos 9:7; Isa. 41:1-7; 45:20-25; 51:4; and the entire Book of Jonah). On the other hand, there is internalization, or rather, an integration of this presence: from dwelling in places of worship, this presence is transferred to the heart of human history; it is a presence which embraces the whole person. Christ is the point of convergence of both processes. In him, in his personal uniqueness, the particular is transcended and the universal becomes concrete. In him, in his Incarnation, what is personal and internal becomes visible. Henceforth, this will be true, in one way or another, of every human being.» G. GUTIÉRREZ. A Theology of Liberation, 109.

CONGAR, The Mystery of the Temple, 112.
belongers. Jesus dignified and legitimized the marginalized and poor, as he chose them to be the ongoing revelatory encounters of his presence. Therefore, in actively encountering the world of the marginalized people, one is entering into the potential locus of God’s dynamic force that transforms and redeems the world. Albert Gelin notes that,

Jesus has taught us to look on the poor as a sacrament of His own presence. In poverty’s various countenances we can have a mysterious encounter with Him. … It is He who, having chosen poverty as a means of the redemption, consecrated it as a value. Henceforth, each poor man, with his own special kind of poverty, is a reminder and, as it were, a sacrament of the great Poor Man proclaimed by the Second-Isaiah.

In this light, if one is to know God, one must first love Him in the service of the marginalized persons in need. Such love must be shared and made concrete in compassionate and visionary acts of justice that clearly recognize the right of the marginalized people to be treated with respect. This way, the marginalized faithful individuals would become tangible, radical, and concrete opportunities for the realization of his reign on this earth.

It is important to consider Mary of Nazareth, for she is the mother of Jesus and the first obedient and faithful disciple, as well as a true dynamic temple and sacrament of God. Mary as theotokos – the bearer of God – carried in her womb the Spirit (Lk. 1:35), and Jesus, makes her the very precise definition of her title «Holy Temple,» as endowed with liberating, transforming, and transcending life. Mary, therefore, as a marginal woman of history, has contributed to the sacramentalization of all faithful marginalized people of the world.

62 «Come, you that are blessed by my Father! Come and possess the kingdom…» (25:34). For I was [marginalized] hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, in prison, and you assisted me; «I tell you, whenever you did this for one of the least important…you did it for me! … Whenever you refused to help one of these least important ones, you refused to help me,» (Mt. 25:40,45). Norbert F. Lohfink interprets Matthew 25: 31-41 in these lines, «It is read in reference to all the poor of the world, and it follows that every person in the world is seen as a kind of epiphany of Christ.» N. F. LOHFINK. Option for the Poor. Berkeley, CA (1987) 77.

63 A. Gelin. The Poor of Yahweh. 100, 112.

64 Congar stated that «the prophecies are fulfilled,» in Mary who, «is truly the temple as it was described by the long line of the prophets, for according to them, the true temple is the living, faithful Israel, obedient to the sovereign will of God, an Israel pure and consecrated.» Congar, The Mystery of the Temple, 258.

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5. The Marginalized Mary of Nazareth

The identity and role of Mary in the plan of Salvation connects the rightful, inclusive, and teachable location of God’s participation in and through her marginal «in-between,» «in-both,» and «in-beyond» human experiences. This three-stage concept of Marginality shows a liminal process of maturation and growth: the «in-between» phase refers to the negative experience; the «in-both» phase refers to the developed positive experience; the «in-beyond» phase is the experience of the first two phases yet transcending them without being independent from them. That is to say that, «Their transcendence is possible only in their immanence. In other words, to be in-beyond means to be in-between and in-both.»

Mary’s life demonstrates that «this world is the dwelling place not only of those who «live in history» but also of those who «live in God,» exulting her as being one with the people while being true to God.» By being a poor woman in her culture, she was marginalized, and for accepting – and being faithful to – her son and mission, she was further marginalized. Thus, Mary allows the marginalized people to realize that she in heaven is neither distant nor unreachable as she continues to participate in their struggles for transcendental liberation and reconciliation. In this sense, Mary ideally becomes an effective symbol for the Church as «mother, virgin, pilgrim of faith, prophet, and disciple, all of which ultimately deliver awareness of the graced life and calling of the people of the ekklēsia.» Mary not only points towards God’s renewing reality, but participates in it. Moreover, she embodies the experience of accepting,

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65 J. Y. LEE. Marginality, 60. This concept of Marginality will be later considered and applied more thoroughly to the Latino Youth experience in the U.S. At this point, the reference highlights the fact that Mary of Nazareth, as a Jewish woman citizen and as a disciple in her «journey of faith,» went through the whole process of marginality, experiencing each stage fully. As such, she became the prototype for the current disciples in marginal circumstances.

66 I. GEBARA - M. C. BINGEMER. Mary, Mother of God, Mother of the Poor. New York, 174.

67 Mary is seen as «a symbol with a structure of double intentionality which carries the human subject beyond the literal intent of an image or word into a surplus of meaning conveyed by it...unlike a sign, a symbol participates in the reality it signifies.» E. A. JOHNSON. Truly Our Sister: A Theology of Mary in the Communion of Saints. New York, 98.

68 E. A. JOHNSON. Truly Our Sister, 98.
responding, and actualizing an encounter with the transcending God though she was human.

5.1 Mary: A Historical Presence

As a Jewish woman, Mary is representative of the social and spiritual longings of Israel, all marginalized, poor, powerless, and humble people in their journey towards redemption. Her identity and mission are intrinsically connected to the identity and mission of her Son Jesus Christ, because «She is the instrument by which everything has become possible, not only in what concerns the birth of the individual Christ, but also “the body of Christ which is the Church,” the mystical Christ.» For this reason, Mary has been called, «the First Church.» De la Potterie considers Mary to be essential to the future Christian discipleship because «the profound structure of the mystery of Mary is the very structure of the Covenant, [but] seen from the side of humanity, whom Mary represents. … Mary thus becomes the image, the figure, the total people of God in its

69 The title «Woman,» was a term not normally used at the time of Jesus to address one’s mother, yet Jesus first used it at the Wedding Feast of Cana (Jn. 2:1-12), and then at the Calvary event (Jn. 19:27). In the earlier event, «Jesus ‘begins’ to manifest himself as Messiah and, by that very fact, the relationship between him and Mary is no longer the same… he involves her in his mission which is beginning,» de la POTTERIE, 202. [Italics not mine]. Jesus’ first messianic sign at Cana will find its culminating fulfillment on the cross, and Mary will be there actively present in both events. The relationship of Mary with Jesus is one that goes beyond the normal physical maternity. They share a spiritual relationship and partnership for the sole intention of serving God’s kingdom. In addition, then Cardinal Ratzinger wrote of Mary’s spiritual motherhood as the act that «constantly gives birth to Jesus,» thus becoming the symbol of the continuous «hearing, keeping, and doing of his word.» J. RATZINGER. «The Sign of the Woman: An Introduction to the Encyclical ‘Redemptoris Mater’,» in Mary: God’s Yes to Man: Pope John Paul II Encyclical Letter Mother of the Redeemer. San Francisco, 34.

70 «This union of the mother and the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ’s virginal conception up to his death… By reason of the gift and role of her divine motherhood… and with her unique graces and functions, the Blessed Virgin is also intimately united to the Church.» LG VIII, no. 57, 63.

71 I. De la POTTERIE, SJ. Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant. Trans. Bertrand Buby, SM. New York, 266.

relationship with God.» In a sense, Mary embraces the «state of marginality» in people’s lives as God’s «acting location». Many biblical events reveal Mary’s covenantal relationship to God, showing that «Mary is present and performs a principal role in the decisive moments of Salvation.» In this role, she has inspired a great number of symbolic perceptions and interpretations of her divine active presence throughout Christian history. This symbolic aspect of Mary has been very meaningful because it «has always transcended its meager historical foundation to provide insight into the lives, hopes, and aspirations of Christians in every century.» Consequently, Mary has been identified with the «Daughter of Zion,» thus linking her identity and mission with the marginal history of her ancestors as well as that of future generations. The then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger describes Mary’s continuous presence well,

Mary dwells not just in the past or in the lofty spheres of heaven under God’s immediate disposition; she is and remains present and real in this historical moment; she is a person acting here and now. Her life is not just a reality that lies behind us, nor above us; she precedes us. …She offers a key to interpret our present existence, not in theoretical discourse but in action, showing us the way that lies ahead. Within this framework, indeed, we also recognize who Mary is, who we are, yet only by considering the dynamic aspect of her role. 

73 de la POTTERIE, Mary in the Mystery, 265.
74 In Mary’s time, a woman was considered more a thing, than a person. Man was more her owner and master than the husband and/or the father. Clearly, her gender made her inferior. Her physical body was considered impure by reasoning that sin had entered this world because of a woman (Gen.3): Her body had value only for reproduction purposes, and thus when virginity, widowhood, and/or sterility existed they were considered as divinely cursed. Moreover, within the immediate family, she was considered second to the boys. Her education was limited to the household tasks. Therefore, Jesus raised women through and from their marginality against the cultural practices of the day. Women, in turn, began seeing themselves beyond objects, and became active agents in Christ’s kingdom. I. GEBARA - M. C. BINGEMER. Mary, Mother of God, Mother of the Poor. New York: Orbis, 33-53.
75 de la POTTERIE, Mary in the Mystery, XXI.
77 Mary «stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord, who confidently hope for and receive salvation from him. After a long period of waiting the times are fulfilled in her, the exalted Daughter of Sion, and the new plan of salvation is established.» The Catechism of the Catholic Church # 489.
78 J. RATZINGER. «The Sign of the Woman,» 21. [Italics in the original].
Furthermore, Mary becomes an efficacious conduit for the coming of God’s kingdom, which places her «at the beginning of the salvation-event.» Mary’s unwavering faith and trust were tested in and through her many difficult struggles, providing future disciples with the opportunity to visualize God’s assistance within their reach, when they trust and empty themselves in God, as she did. John Paul II saw Mary’s whole life in a «pilgrimage of faith» and «on this road, in an eminent and truly heroic manner – indeed with an ever greater heroism of faith … “in hope believed against hope”» Her journey of faith was a journey from, through, and beyond the margins of society.

As Mary becomes the «first to believe» and the «first disciple» of her Son with her «fiat» to her «mysterious pregnant virginity,» she sets on a difficult journey to bring hope and new life from and to the margins of society. Thus, she entered in full partnership with the Holy Spirit, becoming the first to receive the fullness of the Spirit long before the Pentecost event. Mary is a unique human being in that she is like any other person – in need of the Holy Spirit’s guidance and the redemption through the service of her Son.

The Virgin Mary’s trust in the Holy Spirit clarified the unity of her identity with her transcending missionary vocation. This enabled her to

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79 Nolan, 13.
80 Redemptoris Mater, #14.2.
81 In her «pregnant virginity» she understood the message that the Son begotten in her was of a divine origin. As such, her pregnancy opened the horizon to the new life as the seed to the new faithful people, of which «Mary is figure and symbol…Mary’s virginity is about the glory of the almighty God made manifest in what is poor, impotent, and disdained in the eyes of the world…God’s preference for the poor becomes clear and explicit when God becomes incarnate in a virgin’s womb. Hence, Mary sings the great things that the Powerful One…has done in her.” I. Gebara - M. C. Bingham. Mary, Mother of God, Mother of the Poor, 103-104, 107.
82 «Enriched from the first instant of her conception with the splendor of an entirely unique holiness, the Virgin of Nazareth is hailed by the heralding angel, by divine command, as «full of grace» (cf. Lk. 1:28, and to the heavenly messenger she replies: «Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to your word» (Lk 1:38). LG VIII, no. 56.
83 In the Judaism of this time, bearing children secured the survival of their lives, a sort of a security for immortality. Generally, though there were some rare exceptions, virginity could be equated with sterility, thus pointing to their risk for mortality. In this vein, virginity and sterility were considered marginal states of being. But it was in those circumstances that the Holy Spirit raised some women to a valued, respected and productive life, such as, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Hanna, and Elizabeth. In the
experience God’s regard for the marginal innocent people, prompting her to experience a true spiritual sense of humility. In this regard, «Her humility gives her insight into the humility of God revealed in Jesus Christ,» disposing her in God’s grace, and affording her the needed transformation and empowerment for the future «missionary journey of service.» Elizabeth Johnson summarizes how Mary’s partnership with the Holy Spirit can offer energy, support and empowerment to today’s disciples:

In all her difference, Miriam of Nazareth abides in the circle of disciples as our sister, a poor woman of the people to whom God has done great things; a young Spirit-filled Jewish woman finding her joy in God; a woman vulnerable to violence in a patriarchal setting; a friend of God who made her own difficult choices with courage; a prophet whose word announced the awesome changes God’s coming would bring about in this world; a God-bearer who had divinity dancing under her heart in developing human flesh; a married woman who with her husband toiled hard to provide for her family; a woman with a questioning mind who pondered what God was doing in the midst of her life; the mother of the itinerant preacher Jesus, terribly worried about his ministry; a middle-aged woman whose agonized grief over the public execution of her firstborn connects her with legions of bereaved women; an elder in the budding community of the church. She kept faith. We remember her. We connect her story with our own amid the searching narrative of the human race

marginality of these women God would bring life, not for an individualistic and exclusive privilege, but for the benefit of the community. In this sense, God would bring an abundant life in service for the common good, beginning with the poor. I. Gebara - M. C. BINGEMER. Mary, Mother of God, Mother of the Poor, 101-108.

84 Nolan believes that Mary developed a solid «healthy self-image» due to this experience of humility, for it was until then that she was «able to claim that all generations would call her blessed.» NOLAN, 46.

85 Mary manifests an integrated sense of humble attitude of the anawim, the marginalized servants of Yahweh in the Old Testament, who had experienced a complete lack of resources and of total dependence on God with gratitude and hopeful confidence. In the New Testament, «the disciple of Jesus, faced with the reality of the loving condescension of God – expressed initially in creation and then, when the fullness of time had arrived, in the Incarnation of the divine Word.» W. H. SHANNON. The New Dictionary of Spirituality. Collegeville, 517.

86 Thomas Merton captures Mary’s own experience of humility well. It is the realization that «the very depths of our being and life are meaningful and real only insofar as they are oriented toward God as their source and their end.» T. MERTON. Contemplative Prayer. New York, 70. Also quoted by NOLAN, 46.
in its history of suffering and hope. We therefore find courage to enact the critical dream of God for the world.\textsuperscript{87}

Mary becomes an inspiration and an invitation for all marginalized people, particularly those who have been robbed of their true sense of identity and purpose in life. Her message nourishes people’s self-esteem and prompts them to begin seeing their real selves in God, thus renewing and refocusing their self-understanding and purpose. In this sense, Mary becomes a prototypical example for future disciples in the margins of society, as assists them to discern, reaffirm and embrace a new worldview and pathos in light of God’s covenant.

5.2 Mary’s Contemporary Presence

People in the midst of cultural, social, political, and religious experiences have acknowledged the continuity of God’s special regard to their marginal reality through their many devotions\textsuperscript{88} to Mary. These devotional manifestations are most clearly represented in the phenomenon of popular\textsuperscript{89} Marian apparitions\textsuperscript{90} throughout the world. Moreover, «it is worth noting that the messages of the Marian apparitions have most often been entrusted to the poor and marginalized of society.»\textsuperscript{91}

Mary’s apparitions as divine encounters have reaffirmed people of faith that their marginal realities are the current locus for God’s intervening transformation. Moreover, in the midst of their marginal circumstances, Mary commissioned them to be messengers for seemingly impossible

\textsuperscript{87} E. JOHNSON. \textit{Truly Our Sister}, 112.
\textsuperscript{88} Devotions here are understood as religious observances and forms of prayer in response to the gift of faith. Devotion to Mary is an «acknowledgement of the mystery of Christ in her human life, and an act of thanksgiving to God for what was achieved in her through grace.» Some popular devotions are considered «good worship but not liturgy, and are left to flourish freely, unhampered by liturgical legislation, with much room for development and local adaptation.» They, therefore, are open to symbolic interpretation. C. DEHNE. The \textit{New Dictionary of Theology}. Collegeville, 283, 285.
\textsuperscript{89} The word «Popular» refers to the unsophisticated faith expression of the people in local environments as opposed to the faith expressions learned out of theological education in the academia and/ or in the environment of religious communities.
\textsuperscript{90} The Church supports and recommends only those apparitions that are compatible with the gospel mission and Christian tradition. M. DODD. \textit{The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality}. Collegeville, 1007-1008.
\textsuperscript{91} M. E. HINES. \textit{The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality}. Collegeville, 642.
tasks.\textsuperscript{92} Such is the case in the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe (1531) in Mexico. Mary, as a sign of an inculterated message, appeared as an Aztec Indian girl to the humble Indian Juan Diego. She commissioned him for a mission that appeared beyond his imagination. Juan Diego consistently responded to the entrusted mission, and in the process found his real self, dignity, and purpose for life.

Marian apparitions are, however, very complex due to their symbolic nature. They have had much influence on the transformation of diverse social, political, cultural, and religious circumstances across the globe. Mary has in fact responded to and accompanied people from within their cultural traits, facilitating their better understanding and identification with her message. Mary has been seen as an inclusive missionary and compassionate mother, offering refuge and empowerment to the marginalized.\textsuperscript{93} For this reason, John Paul II recognized Mary of Guadalupe as «an impressive example of a perfectly inculterated evangelization.»\textsuperscript{94}

6. The Marginalized Jesus and the Marginalized of the World

Jesus came into this unjust and limiting world through Mary of Nazareth, denoting his marginalized condition. Pope John Paul II stated that, «Jesus Christ came to share our human condition through his suffering, difficulties, and death. … he knew how to speak to the heart of the poor, liberate them from sin, open their eyes to a light on the horizon, and fill

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{92} For example in Lourdes, France (1858), Mary appeared to a young girl Bernadette and requested penance and prayers on behalf of all the poor. In Fatima, Portugal (1917), she appeared many times to the children Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta, and entrusted them with three secrets. In Medjugorje, Yugoslavia (since 1981), Mary is claimed to have appeared to young teenage girls Mirjana Dragicevic and Ivanka Ivankovic and asked for an increase of faith, fasting, and reconciliation on behalf of peace. The description and interpretation of «all» these apparitions are not in the scope of this thesis. They are being broadly presented to highlight the «locus operandi» of Mary. The Guadalupe event is highlighted to emphasize the role it will take later in this thesis.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{93} She has been perceived as black for black people, Portuguese for Portuguese, Italian for Italians, French for the French, Mexican for Mexicans, etc. In addition, «she not only speaks the language of the people…but she even speaks in the same way, or in the dialect, or with the same accent they have…she comes as their mother because that is what she is.» R. FARICY. «Foreword» in Meetings With Mary: Visions of the Blessed Mother. J. T. Connell. New York, xix.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{94} JOHN PAUL II. Ecclesia In America. Vatican City, no. 11.}
them with joy and hope.» \(^{95}\) Moreover, Jesus confirms God’s effective locus for the transformation of this world in the least expected places and marginal circumstances. \(^{96}\)

The synoptic gospels present the marginal condition of Jesus unequivocally. For example, the narrative of the Annunciation describes the marginal environment in which the conception of Jesus was to take place. Jesus shared in the marginal condition of Mary and Joseph, even before his physical birth. It is present within the unusual relationship between Mary and Joseph, and how the angel Gabriel came to point out their divine mission. Were it not for the angel’s visit, Joseph would have abandoned Mary. As the story unfolds, they were unable to find a suitable place to stay for Mary to deliver the child, thus forcing her to give birth in a manger. \(^{97}\) Furthermore, because Herod wanted to kill the baby, the angel directed Joseph to escape to Egypt, thus forcing them to live as immigrant political refugees. The baby Jesus was seen as a threat to the political kingdom of Israel. The Holy family lived an ongoing state of marginality, as they were somewhat irrelevant in their social status.

Before entering into his desert experience, Jesus identified with John’s marginal preaching, asking John to baptize him before he was to initiate his own public ministry. This act further marginalized him as he decided to associate with those outside the mainstream. Jesus then went to his hometown of Nazareth, and on the first visit of his public ministry, he proclaimed in their synagogue the first of two key texts commonly known as the «Gospel of the Poor.» \(^{98}\) The message was addressed to and for the marginalized people. The townspeople questioned, «Isn’t he the Son of Joseph, the carpenter?» (Lk 4:22). Their questioning, says Raymond Brown, «is meant to stress the ordinary origins of Jesus,» \(^{99}\) thus revealing Jesus’ own marginal, small-town condition and reputation. These passages

\(^{95}\) Cited in, \textit{Puebla and Beyond} #1153, 266.

\(^{96}\) For, «it is exactly where the glory of humanity is least obvious that he appears in its true power.» F. HERZOG. \textit{Liberation Theology: Liberation in the Light of the Fourth Gospel}. New York, 53.

\(^{97}\) Nowadays, the «manger» has been romanticized due to the commercial environment of our Christmas celebrations; the manger, however, was an unpleasant and inhuman place, for it was for animals.

\(^{98}\) «The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor…» Then, Jesus states as fact, «Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.» (Lk 4:18-21).

demonstrate how Jesus used his marginalizing experiences to proclaim the universal characteristics of his prophetic mission. It was a mission that would go beyond the confines of the marginalized Jewish world and into gentile territory.  

6.1 The Forming of Disciples by Jesus

Jesus formed a marginal community of disciples to carry out his mission into the future. Jesus invites his listeners to follow him into the mystery of God’s presence within and through their own marginalities. It was a voluntary marginal way of life whereby «mission to, love for, and tension with the surrounding society [would] mark their participation in this society.» This process would in turn solidify their personal and collective identity and way of life, by becoming the transforming and transcending images of «Salt of the earth» and «Light of the world,» (Mt. 5:13-16).

Jesus’ new way of life offered a contrasting social and religious visionary ethos that was seen as a threat to the social, political, and religious status quo. The marginalized conditions endured by Jesus were based in relation to his lack of «noble or priestly birth, wealth, specialized religious training, social standing, authority and social vision.» Subsequently, the Jewish and Roman leaders, in order to silence and undermine his teachings and prove his disciples as irrelevant, would put Jesus to death, thus delivering his ultimate public humiliation and human marginalization.

The positive and negative perceptions of marginalities depended on the identity and intention of the persons considering them. John P. Meier, in his study of the historical Jesus, has articulated six initial descriptive

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102 Ibid., 2.
103 Meier reminds his readers that, «the “historical Jesus” is not to be naively identified with the total reality of Jesus of Nazareth, i.e., all that Jesus thought, said, did, and experienced during his lifetime, or just his public ministry. The totality of Jesus’ life, or even simply a reasonably complete account of his life, is impossible to reconstruct today, given the vast gap in time and the sparse sources available. In contrast to the “real Jesus,” the “historical Jesus” is that Jesus whom we can recover or reconstruct by using scientific tools or modern historical research. The “historical Jesus” is thus a scientific construct, a theoretical abstraction of modern scholars that coincides only partially with the real Jesus of Nazareth, the Jew who actually lived and
aspects of marginality in the life and ministry of Jesus. Within them, Meier enlightens and deepens the broad consideration of biblical and theological marginality.

From the viewpoint of the Jewish and pagan literature of the century following Jesus, the Nazarene was at most a «blip» on the radar screen…. Josephus gives more space and praise to John the Baptist. … The Roman historian Tacitus is briefer still. … the fact is that Jesus was simply insignificant to national and world history as seen through the eyes of Jewish and pagan historians of the 1st and early 2nd centuries A.D. If he was seen at all, it was at the periphery of their vision.104 Any person declared a criminal by the highest authority of his or her society and accordingly put to death in a most shameful and brutal way at a public execution has obviously been pushed to the margins of that society….In Roman eyes, Jesus died the ghastly death of slaves and rebels; in Jewish eyes, he fell under the stricture of Deut 21:23: «The one hanged [on a tree] is accursed by God.» To both groups Jesus’ trial and execution made him marginal in terrifying and disgusting way. Jesus was a Jew living in a Jewish Palestine directly or indirectly controlled by the Romans. In one sense, he belonged to both worlds; in the end, he was ejected from both. To a certain degree, Jesus first marginalized himself. At age of roughly thirty, Jesus was an ordinary carpenter…[yet] he abandoned his livelihood and hometown, became «jobless» and itinerant in order to undertake a prophetic ministry….Relying basically on the good will, support, and economic contributions of his followers, Jesus intentionally became marginal in the eyes of ordinary working Jews in Palestine… Some of Jesus’ teachings and practices…were marginal in the sense that they did not jibe with the views and practices of the major Jewish religious groups of his day. His marginality as a teacher was only increased by the fact that, as

worked in Palestine in the 1st century A.D.» In this regard, Meier affirms the understanding of the «real Jesus» that moves in the «theological and Christological rather than the historical.» Meier has no problem, for example, with the statement, «the "real Jesus” for Christian faith is the resurrected Jesus…» as found in L. T. JOHNSON, The Real Jesus. San Francisco, 146. The limitation in the research for the «historical Jesus» is that «there are very few sources beyond the four canonical Gospels.» J. P. MEIER. A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus. Vol. III. New York, 8,15,10. 

104 «Marginal Jew» is not a set definition of Jesus; in that vein, Meier refuses to give a definition. The term «Marginal Jew» is used here to open up questions about Jesus, as in the title term «Son of Man.» What must be stressed in these and other possible meanings of «marginal» is that in no way is the term intended to deny, attenuate, or call into question the essential Jewishness of Jesus. Ibid., 8.
a poor rural Galilean, he had never attended any scribal school or studied under a noted teacher. Yet...he proclaimed his own teachings with sovereign authority whose basis was by no means clear to his opponents. Jesus’ style of teaching and living was thus offensive to many Jews. It pushed them away from him, and so pushed him to the margin of Palestinian Judaism... One reason Jesus met a swift and brutal end is simple: he alienated so many individuals and groups in Palestine that, when the final clash came to Jerusalem in A.D. 30, he had very few people, especially people of influence, on his side.

Jesus, the poor layman turned prophet and teacher, the religious figure from rural Galilee without credentials, met his death in Jerusalem at least in part because of his clash with the rich aristocratic urban priesthood. To the latter... [he] was marginal both in the sense of being dangerously antiestablishment and in the sense of lacking a power base in the capital. He could be easily brushed aside into the dustbin of death.

The gospels present Jesus through the prism of his teachings, words, and actions. Accordingly, one can see how the experiences of his marginality were creative sources and instruments for the development, clarification, projection, and realization of his identity and mission. In the same manner, the communities ministered by the evangelists shaped and developed a different and deeper understanding of their identity and mission based on their own marginalities. In this sense, the gospels also function as an «identity forming» resource. They help people acknowledge and commit to Jesus’ mission by creatively working through their social and religious marginal realities.

By actively and consciously living in the margins, the followers of Jesus are able to exercise their ministry «as participants in the wider society, but in tension with, over against, as an alternative to its dominant values and structures,» thus manifesting the fact that «to follow Jesus to the margins is to live on the margins seeing life in ways that is not seen at the center.»

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106 Christology, the study of the person of Jesus Christ (who he is) is inseparable from soteriology, the study of the realized purpose for his coming (his redemptive work).
107 In this light, it has been pointed out that the gospel of Matthew «legitimates a marginal identity and a way of life for the community of disciples.» W. CARTER. Matthew and the Margins, 43.
108 Ibid., 45.
In this sense, a conscious marginal life becomes an effective embrace of Jesus’ transforming and redeeming way of life.

7. Some Examples of Marginality in the New Testament

The ministry of Jesus was characterized by an inclusive identification with, and response to all marginalized people. In effect, the beneficiaries and instruments of Jesus’ messianic work were clearly those living at the margins. Some of them are direct recipients of his compassionate benevolence, and others have been transformed through their service and association in his ministry. There are numerous biblical examples of marginal people that correspond to, identify, and associate with prophetic, gender, geographical, cultural, physical, and economic happenings of marginality in the present Church and society. The gospel of John presents a paradigmatic map for future marginal disciples of Jesus, which includes,

...those who are made marginal because they do not know the law (7:49), those who are marginal because they are not Jews, but Samaritans (4:4-42), those who are marginal because they are chronically ill (9:1-41), those who are marginal because they are women. In each instance «the marginal» person is being judged by some norm and found to be «outcast,» «inferior,» «of lower status.» Thus, for example, the people of the land are inferior to the religious leaders who know the law (7:49); the Samaritan woman is inferior on two counts at least, for she is not from Judea and is a woman.\footnote{R. J. KARRIS. Jesus and the Marginalized in John’s Gospel, 11-12.}

Some prominent illustrations of biblical individuals are now presented in the context of their marginalities, to deepen a better appreciation of the extensive existence of biblical marginality. The emphasis of these biblical cases is not just to illustrate their background, but also to highlight their initiative, reception, and response to Jesus’ teachings and directives despite the perception and treatment they received from the dominant mainstream society.

7.1 John the Baptist

The narrative of Matthew 3:1-12 presents John preaching in the wilderness to the fringes of society and away from the centers of power, thus emphasizing the marginal location of his ministry. In his prophetic role, he passionately expresses the urgency for radical change on the personal and collective level. Consequently, John challenges everyone to
repent, and criticizes the religious and political establishment who naturally reject his message. His prophetic features, therefore, such as behaviors, location of action, preaching content, diet, and clothing, clearly denote his marginalized identity and mission. John is like other prophets of the past, who always were in the margins.\footnote{Here are some marginal examples of how some prophets have manifested their marginality. Hosea enacts his message in marrying a prostitute and in the naming of their children (Hos 1). Isaiah is naked for three years (Isa 20:1-4). Jeremiah does not marry or have children (Jer 16:1-4). Ezekiel eats a scroll (3:1), makes a model of the siege and fall of Jerusalem (4:1-3), lies on one side for 390 days and on the other for 45 days to symbolize punishment (4:4-8), shaves his head (5:1-4), and does not mourn his wife’s death (24:15-27).}

7.2 St. Paul

All the apostles of Jesus were or became marginalized by virtue of their active participation in the ministry of Jesus. St. Paul was a marvelous testimony to this point. He was considered in society to be of high status, yet he took a voluntary marginality and poverty for the success, respect, and credibility of his mission. Hoppe says that «this enabled him to speak with integrity to Christians who were people of means as he urged them to be content with what they had (Phil. 4:4,11), to be generous in need (2 Cor. 8:7-15), and to live more simply (1 Cor. 7:30-31). He also could speak with authority to Christians of lower status.»\footnote{HOPPE, There Shall Be., 159.}

7.3 Mary Magdalene

In the gospel of John (20:1-18), the Resurrected Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene first. This is an extremely significant event because Christ reaffirms her dignity and worth despite her «double» marginalization. Her conviction to the proclamation of the risen Christ is manifested in her act of running to the disciples with the words of the apostolic commission, «I have seen the Lord.» In addition, she is one of the three women that Jesus addresses under the title «Woman,» thus embracing all the theological and historical symbolism behind the term. Mary Magdalene becomes the exceptional disciple who faithfully seeks the Lord until she finds him, in order to proclaim him with enduring perseverance and undying resolute. Elizabeth Johnson describes Magdalene’s testimonial discipleship thus:
...following Jesus on the roads of Galilee, using her resources to support his ministry, going up to Jerusalem on his last trip, keeping vigil by the cross while he died, being part of the burial party, leading the other women to the surprisingly empty tomb, encountering the risen Christ in her grief, and preaching the good news to the disbelieving, ridiculing male disciples. Without her courageous initiative and witness and that of the «many other women» (Mk 15:41) with her, there would be no continuity in the story surrounding the end of Jesus’ life, no paschal narrative.... Addressed as «Woman» by the risen Lord, her commission to preach this good news to others was carried out so powerfully, and her words «I have seen the Lord» (John 20:18) bore so unmistakable the technical formula of revelation as the basis of one’s witness, that centuries later the Church was still calling her apostolorum apostola, the «apostle of the apostles.»

7.4 The Samaritan Woman (Jn 4:4-42)

Because the Samaritans were considered outside the boundaries of God’s chosen people, they were geographically marginalized. The Samaritan woman is particularly marginalized not only because of her ethnicity and geographic location, but also due to her religious and gender factors. It is relevant to note that she was the other person Jesus addresses as «Woman,» reminiscent of the way Jesus addressed his mother at Cana and from the cross. This Samaritan woman, conscious of the strained relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans, asked Jesus, «How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?» (Jn 4:9). She becomes an essential part of the mission of Jesus to break down barriers that marginalize the outcast of society. Furthermore, she, on her own initiative, becomes an instant missionary as she carries the revelatory news to her

112 E. JOHNSON, Truly, 100,292.

113 For the purpose of this discussion it is sufficient to note that the Jews marginalized the Samaritans; though the causes of their animosity are complex. In this regard, J. A. Fitzmyer confirms the reality of such marginalization in his comments that Samaritan «(Greek Samaritēs) was originally a geographic term, an inhabitant of Samaria (Hebrew someron), the capital of the northern kingdom, founded by Omri ca. 870 B.C. In time it became an ethnic and religious name for the inhabitants of the area between Judea and Galilee, west of the Jordan. The origin of the split of the Samaritans from the Jews is shrouded in mystery and explained differently in each group...» J. A. FITZMYER. The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX). Garden City, NY., 829. In addition, Josephus offers his own historical explanation of the root cause for the split and animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans in his, Jewish Antiquities, (XX, 118); quoted by KARRIS, Jesus and the Marginalized, 68.

114 E. JOHNSON, Truly,291.
people. Consequently, the Samaritans «believed in him because of the woman’s testimony» (Jn 4:39). Through this encounter, this woman grew in faith and in active missionary ministry, becoming a symbol for future disciples. According to Karris, as «a person who is doubly marginalized because she is both a Samaritan and woman, [she] is presented to us readers as a model of faith and mission.»

Due to our sinful human condition, we are either perpetrators or victims, as we unjustly break communion with God and one another. The realities of human hunger and suffering, as well as the desperate and universal longing for absolute fulfillment, are reminders of a marginality crying for God’s creative transformation and transcendence to take place in the here and now.

This chapter has presented a modest theological and biblical development of poverty and marginality from Old Testament times up to the primitive Church. Clear examples have been offered to illustrate how people of faith, especially the humble and trusting poor, have successfully used their marginalities and worked through them with unselfish spiritual attitudes and commitments for service in the kingdom of God. Furthermore, the aforementioned biblical stories also provided solid affirmation to any marginalized person in society, because such stories represent and could be compared with any current type of marginal encounters. In this regard, God’s inclusive and universal message is for everyone, although those who consciously and wholeheartedly recognize their marginality and their dependence on God are better positioned to allow God to transform, reconcile, and liberate them. For it is within the creative struggle through one’s marginalities that God enlightens the victims with the recognition of their true identity, empowering them for a liberating mission. Therefore, it transforms them into divine encounters for others as they become active agents in building in the kingdom of God.

The presentation of Mary of Nazareth as a marginalized faithful and obedient woman, mother, disciple of the kingdom, and Daughter of Zion, is thus representing all suffering marginal people. This in turn places her as a prototypical example of having an «in-between,» «in-both,» and «in-beyond» identity. In addition, the presentation of Jesus of Nazareth, who voluntarily chose to incarnate as a marginal person in order to redeem the marginalized of the world, provided the greatest of all affirmations. Jesus’ ongoing kenosis and determination to fulfill his mission from within

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115 R. J. KARRIS. Jesus and the Marginalized, 70.
marginal circumstances showed that indeed Christ and his Church have a promising and fulfilling future for all the marginalized people of the world. The chapter concluded by presenting liberated, reconciled, and fulfilled biblical examples of marginality, with cases that represent different types of worldly marginalities. This offered information should not only leave the reader with a promising affirmation, but also with a special challenge to recognize God’s creative presence in his or her own marginal circumstances.
CHAPTER IV

Latino Youth in the United States: A Socio-Cultural Consideration of Marginalization

This chapter considers the socio-cultural conditions of Hispanics in the United States, with a particular focus on the youth. It looks at current demographics, growth, cultural composition, impact on different institutions, and the reception by the normative American society. Moreover, the conditions and ramifications of migration are considered to demonstrate how issues such as social assimilation, integration, multiculturalism, language, the role of family, and social mirroring influence the formational process of identity, patterns of behavior, and the development, or lack of human capital. The purpose of this presentation is to help situate the source of the youth’s marginality in order to better understand their current circumstances for any possible pastoral response by the Catholic Church.

The Hispanic community in the United States has historically experienced denigrating discrimination and racist attitude from the mainstream society, generally manifested in negative stereotypes, misrepresentation, rejection, and exclusion. Consequently, Latinos have been living under disproportionate levels of limited education, income, housing, employment, and health opportunities. Hispanics have not had the proper socio-political representation in most decision-making processes. Moreover, they have fallen victim to cultural depreciation and alienation, which has deemed them inadequate, as people who do not belong, and therefore considered a problem. These negative circumstances have generally conditioned U.S. Latinos, particularly the youth, to live in a state
of being where their primary concern is survival. Their positive identity, contributions, and growing presence in the country have been generally overlooked and disregarded. Therefore, the new generation of American Latino youth is marginalized, and they project its consequences through their behaviors and attitudes toward their future, family, Church and society.

1. Current Hispanic\textsuperscript{1} Community

By June 2003, the Hispanic/Latino community in the United States had officially become the largest ethnic minority in the Union. The U.S. Census Bureau Population Clock shows, as of September 7, 2011, the general population to be 312,155,000.\textsuperscript{2} The Latino U.S. population is estimated to be 50.5 million, comprising 16.3% of the entire population, with a median age of 27.2 years, as opposed to 36.4 years in the general population. The Bureau states that the «youthfulness of the Hispanic

\textsuperscript{1} The term «Hispanic» refers to the larger ethnic group of people that identify themselves with cultural traditions that include the Spanish language and local customs from their Latin descendent countries, which could be anywhere in North America (especially the U.S. and Mexico), Central America, South America, the Caribbean Isles (such as Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic), and/or from Spain. Census Bureau, American FactFinder. http://www.factfinder.census.gov/home/en/epss/glossary_s.html. The designation of this term «Hispanic» for this diverse ethnic minority is somewhat awkward on different counts. The U.S. Census uses the term for the «purposes of public policy.» The term also carries an identity shaped by historical discrimination that still persists. However, since the Latinos have not had a single «immutable marker, like skin color, that reinforces» their identity, such as the Blacks or the White Europeans, the term and concept «Hispanic» is being «stretched to embrace both a large native Latino population with a long undeniable history of discrimination and immigrants who are just starting out here.» Such designation, which embraces different generations of Latino immigrants’ descendents, has become important because it recognizes that Latinos have become active «players in the old and unresolved dilemma of race in America, and because they do not fit any of the available roles, they are a force of change.» R. SURO. Strangers Among Us: Latino Lives in a Changing America. New York, 9, 10. Since the term Latino is preferred by a great number of Hispanics, both terms «Hispanic» and «Latino» will be used interchangeably throughout this dissertation when referring to the individual or larger ethnic group.

population is reflected in its population under age 18 and its median age.»³ If this growth continues at the same rapid rate,⁴ it can be expected that the population of the United States will reach 438 million by the year 2050; the U.S. Hispanic population will comprise 29% of the total population.⁵ At present, the United States has the second largest concentration of Hispanic/Latino heritage people in the world,⁶ excluding Puerto Rico.

The growth of the Hispanic population has highlighted the «concentrated and dispersed» characteristics of their settlements across the country. It has been noted that «As of 2000, 57% of all Hispanics were dispersed, while 43% were living in Latino majority neighborhoods. By this measure, the Hispanic population is somewhat less concentrated than the African-

³ «While 25.7 percent of the U.S. population was under 18 years of age in 2000, 35.0 percent of Hispanics were less than age 18.» U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder. «Demographic Profile Highlight–Hispanic-Latino.» http://www.factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFIteratedFacts?event=&geoid=01000US.html. Furthermore, it is important that «Among the Hispanics, only 5.2 percent were over the age of 65, but this figure conceals a great deal of heterogeneity. Among Cubans, 17.9 percent are over the age 65, but among Mexican-American and Central and South Americans only 4.3 percent are over the age of 65.» T. A. SULLIVAN. «A Demographic Portrait.» In Hispanics in the United States: An Agenda for the Twenty-First Century. P. S. J. CAFFERTY - D. W. ENGSTROM, Eds. Brunswick, NJ., 12.

⁴ The Latino immigrants, «most of them young adults in their prime child-bearing years, have proved highly fertile, with birth rates twice as those of non-Hispanics. Consequently, Latino population growth in the next few decades will be driven primarily by increases in the second generation.» The Pew Research Hispanic Center – Trends 2005. «Hispanics: A People in Motion.» (Washington D.C.: 2005), 2. Available from www.pewhispanic.org. (Accessed on 03/20/06). In addition, Anthony E. Healy states that «the rapid Hispanic increase results from both immigration and high birth rates…most (but not all) Hispanics come from cultures where larger families are the norm…religion is their key to cultural reproduction.» CARA Report. Vol.4; No. 3, 1999. Washington D.C.: Georgetown, 1, 5.


⁶ This year (2011), the five countries with the largest populations with Hispanic/Latino heritage in the world are: (1) Mexico with 112,336,538; (2) United States 50.5 Million, (3) Colombia 46,145.00; (4) Spain 46,125.00, and (5) Argentina with 40,091,359. http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/populations/ctypopls.htm (Accessed on 9/7/2011)
American population.» U.S. Latinos are impacting and creating spatial meaning and a renewed cultural identity all across the country. A recent research on spatial-perspective identifies three types of U.S. Latino communities. They are: (1) the Continues communities, which are those that have always been predominantly Hispanic, (2) the Discontinues community, which is the community that was originally founded and dominated by Hispanics but has now become Anglo-dominated, and (3) the New community, where Latinos are newly arrivals and recent residents, and therefore just beginning to acquire recognition and influence.

Latinos no longer are concentrated only in the Southwest and along the U.S. Mexican border, as has been the case for the last four centuries. Almost half of the entire Latino population now resides in ten of the largest cities of the country, and with significant numbers also living in suburbs of midsize to small cities in the South and Midwest. Hence, correcting the popular misconception that Hispanics in general live only in rural areas.

The growth of the U.S. Latino community has changed the way the country classifies the different racial and ethnic minorities. In this regard, the director of the Pew Hispanic Center, Roberto Suro, has commented that, «If you consider that the black-white divide had been the basic construct in American history for 300 years, this marks a change. This is the official reminder that we are moving into new territory.»

What this means is that the Latino population defies «basic assumptions about culture
and class because they undermine the perspective that divides the nation into white and nonwhite, a perspective that is the oldest and most enduring element of America’s social structure.»^{12} Latinos can actually be of any race, as they tend to identify and represent many national ancestries.^{13} For instance, a contrast of extremes can be appreciated in that a large number of Latinos identify themselves as whites, while there is also a black Hispanic community of more than 1.7 million in New York and Florida.^{14} The U.S. Census Bureau, which uses 28 categories to classify and/or identify Latinos based on ancestry, nationality, or country of birth, acknowledges that they are difficult to classify because they most often resist customary racial categories.^{15} Such growth and diversity create challenging socio-political implications to the country.

Latinos are being accused of stirring and triggering a systematic «intertwining of ethnic differences, prejudice, and poverty; the social impact of a low-wage workforce resulting from corporate transformations; and public policy questions dealing with economic development, taxation, and welfare payments.»^{16} Their presence is affecting the very structural dynamic of society. For instance, Hispanics now provide 13 percent of the entire national labor force;^{17} in the school system, by 2001 they were

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^{15} Census Bureau. [http://www.factfinder.census.gov/home/epss/glossary_s.html](http://www.factfinder.census.gov/home/epss/glossary_s.html)
^{16} A. V. MILLARD - J. CHAPA. *Apple Pie and Enchiladas: Latino Newcomers in Rural Midwest*. University of Texas Press, 2004), from the back cover. This book expands on the national migration of American born people, the impact of the global economy in local rural communities and the tension among long-time local residents, farmers, big corporations, and victimized workers.
^{17} In terms of the agricultural workers, «during a Senate Judiciary Committee testimony on July 26, 2005, in support of comprehensive immigration reform, Bishop Gerald Barnes, chair of the Committee on Migration of the U.S Catholic Bishops Conference, noted that over half the agricultural labor force is undocumented and subject to abuse and exploitation.» *America Magazine*. «Editorial: Immigration Reform on Hold.» Eds. D. CHRISTIANSEN - R. C. COLLINS, (May 8, 2006), 4. In general, Latino immigrant workers take all the different jobs that local residents and/or other Americans are not willing to take because they are «back-breaking,» low paying
already 16 percent of grades K-12, and 19 percent in kindergarten alone. The greatest Latino growth increase is manifested in the second generation, who as «native-born, English-speaking, U.S. educated Hispanics will have a very different impact on the country than their immigrant parents had. That impact is still to be fully felt, as half of the offspring of Latino immigrants are 11 or younger.» An overlooked figure in most national discourses is the fact that native-born amount to 64% of the Latino population and «approximately half of the remaining 36 percent arrived here legally.» These circumstances are raising many issues that local residents and government leaders find alarming. Social, cultural, economic, and religious change can be very dramatic and even threatening to some people.

2. Migration

Large-scale migration is an unprecedented contemporary social event. Such movements of human masses are strong marginalizing factors tainted by political, economic, class, culture, ethnic, and/or religious special interests due to corruption, selfishness, indifference, exclusion, and absolutisms. They create different types of migrant movements. There are those who leave their countries voluntarily and/or motivated by the hope and search for better economic prospects. These people are generally known as «economic» migrants. There are others who emigrate from their home countries due to political and/or religious unrest, and are actually

and most dangerous jobs and with few benefits. In a 2004 Associated Press report on accidents in the workplace revealed that Latino workers «often take the most hazardous jobs, they are more likely than others to be killed... Workers are impaled, shredded in machinery, buried alive... Deaths peaked at 420 in 2001.» R. MONTEMAYOR - H. MENDOZA. Right Before Our Eyes: Latinos Past, Present & Future. Temple, AZ., 87, 88.


20 Migration is considered here as the process of moving from one country, region, or place to another. This is the product of a double activity, that is, the act of departure (emigrate), and the act of coming in (immigrate) to a new location or country. People leave a whole life behind in order to come to a new location of hope. K. MINDER. The Right to Migrate: Considerations from the Magisterium and the Natural Law. Dissertatio ad Licentiam in Theologia Morali assequendam Rome: Pontificia Universitas A. S. Aq., 5.
escaping their lands in search for freedom. These people are commonly known as «refugees» or «asylum seekers.» Some refugees can be members of «upper-status political elites (such as the early wave of Cuban refugees in Miami), members of an oppressed ethnic group (such as Kosovo Albanians), or the poor and disenfranchised,» 21 who fall victims of corrupt political anomic.

Although these types of migrants have well-marked differences, they also have significant common characteristics. In the legal realm, migrants and refugees share a common condition in that they might be living in their new country legally, in the process of legalizing their status, or plainly living illegally. On the human level, they both have families they love that might have stayed behind in their own or a third country. Naturally, they both are inclined to want to be reunited with their families, and, therefore, might want to bring such family members to join them, especially if life in their new country is promising, stable, and secure. Some of these migrants might intend to reside permanently in the new country, and still others might plan to return to their home countries when circumstances allow it. In any case, when they bring their children temporarily or permanently, or have children born in the new country, their migrant condition creates powerful experiences in their children’s lives. The development of the youth’s cultural ethos and values is influenced by many uncertainties and confusions, 22 denoting their state of marginality.

The U.S. Hispanic population is representative of most types of migrants, in addition to those Latinos that have been permanently living in the country for decades and centuries past. However, the current increase of the Latino population, as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau, has

21 C. - M. SUÁREZ-OROZCO. The Children of Immigration. (Cambridge, Mass., 20. The migration phenomenon is unquestionably influenced and regulated by governments. In the last decades, the United States has legally accepted about a million people to enter the country annually. It is estimated that «every year, 250,000 to 500,000 undocumented immigrants enter the United States.» Ibid., 31-32. However, since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack, and the continuous terrorist threat against the U.S., the enforcement of the borders and other ports of entry has taken greater priority to ensure national security.

22 In this regard, it is important to note that children of these immigrants must live a very complex challenge while becoming competent members of the new society and reconciling the cultural values and ways of life of their parents. SUÁREZ-OROZCO. The Children of Immigration, 20.
surprised the whole country. The people who have positive interests in the future of this ethnic population have welcomed such results. Latinos are beginning to gain more recognition, relevance, and representation across the social, economic, and political institutions. It is argued that «Now the Latinos stand at the gate, looking for a place in American society, and the conflict that will inevitably attend their arrival is just beginning to take shape.» Those who are alarmed and disturbed by this development adamantly have tried to portray Latinos as a negative presence. They believe the economy and the national unity will be affected with irreversible consequences, due to the Hispanic’s difficulties assimilating in the classical cultural sense.

3. The Process of Assimilation: A Developmental Background

Traditional cultural assimilation is generally understood as a process whereby an ethno-cultural group, particularly immigrants and minorities, are absorbed by a mainstream society, impeding them from reaching differentiation. It is broadly described as a process of becoming «alike.» It denotes an activity in which «one set of cultural traits is relinquished and a new set acquired… The change is gradual and may take place in any degree.» In the United States, cultural assimilation has taken an intended and determining role in the formation of the so-called «American» culture. From the very beginning in the history of the Republic, the government,

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23 The U.S. Congress has calculated that there are 11 million immigrants already residing and working in the country without legal permanent documents. This reality has prompted some members of the U.S. congress to conclude that the nation’s immigration system is in a serious crisis, which desperately needs fixing. The greater numbers of these immigrants are Hispanics. C. LOCHHEAD. «Immigration Dilemma divides Senators – Judiciary Panel begins tough debate on Future of Border.» Available from http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=c/a.htm. (Accessed on 03/03/06).

24 The purchasing power of the U.S. Latino population in 2004, when they were calculated to be only 40 million people, was estimated as «$ 1.33 million per minute – that translates to $ 80 million per hour, $ 1.9 billion per day, or $700 billion per year… researchers are projecting that by 2008, U.S. Hispanics’ purchasing strength will bulk up to about $ 1 trillion per year.» This is more than Mexico’s purchasing power with 653 billion per year, though with more than double the inhabitants, and Spain with 637 billion per year. R. MONTEMAYOR - H. MENDOZA. Right Before Our Eyes: Latinos Past, Present & Future, 61, 62.

25 R. SURO. Strangers Among Us, 8.

composed by white European immigrant descendents, considered conventional wisdom that the culturally diverse immigrants would become prosperous, only if they abandoned their individual ancestries’ cultural traits, including any language that is not English. They were expected, sometimes forcefully, to embrace the new cultural features of the then considered mainstream culture. This process is described as «classical assimilation,» and is clearly illustrated by the metaphor of the Melting Pot.

The proponents of this theory, known as assimilationists, are characterized by their refusal to provide basic or special privileges that would help immigrants and minorities reach the same level as the mainstream society. Their reasoning centers on the belief that only by complete assimilation, the society can form and maintained one national identity. They contend that,

27 A clear example for initiation into this process of assimilation is the ritual at Ellis Island where «The renaming ceremony took place, when immigration officers – sometimes carelessly and sometimes purposefully – gave new arrivals more anglicized names in a sort of cultural baptism. Others chose to change their names because of racism, anti-Semitism, or simply to blend in. Hence, Israel Ehrenberg was reborn as Ashley Montague, Meyer Schkolnick became Robert Merton, and Issur Danielovich Demsky has a new start as Kurt [sic] Douglas.» L. J. FRIEDMAN. Identity’s Architect: A Biography of Erik H. Erikson. New York: 1999. Cited in SUÁREZ-OROZCO’s Children of Immigration, 63.

28 The Classical Assimilation Theory assumes that the only acceptable path that leads to upward mobility for immigrants is the abandonment of their ethnic-cultural ways and to totally embrace the culture of the mainstream society. This understanding has been challenged in unprecedented ways by the Hispanic immigrants who are determined to show that discarding the good ethnic-cultural traditions and specially the language is detrimental to the proper development of immigrants’ identities as well as their social and human capital.

29 «Its basic idea presents the whole notion as one large pot. Anyone who enters the United States is automatically thrown into this “pot” where, for the following years, a process of assimilation into the American belief systems is taken place. All the cultural aspects that one brings into are blended together, or melted, to form a new culture. The outcome of this massive procedure is the “melted” version of a culture, which is described as characteristically “American.” It is notable that in this assimilation, the identities of each original culture are extinguished to bring out a complete new mixture.» As found in, The Melting Pot Theory. http://cc.kzoo.edu/~k03hk01/melting_pot_or_salad_bowl.html (Accessed on 01/23/2012)
Separating citizens by ethnicity or race and providing immigrant groups «special privileges» can harm the very groups they are intended to help. By calling attention to differences between these groups and the majority, the government may foster resentment toward them by the majority and, in turn, cause the immigrant group to turn inward and shun mainstream culture. Assimilationists suggest that if a society makes a full effort to incorporate immigrants into the mainstream, immigrants will then naturally work to reciprocate the gesture and adopt new customs. Through this process, it is argued, national unity is retained.\textsuperscript{30}

Israel Zangwill, a British-born Jew, has been very influential in promoting this perception of America as «God’s Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming!»\textsuperscript{31} He has been accurate in pointing out that the original purpose of this theory was to primarily place the white European descendants as the ideal normative people in the country while everybody else would work to maintain its stability. Stanford Lynman put it rather boldly when he said, «essentially the decision was made – but only gradually worked out in piecemeal fashion – that America was to be a white man’s country.»\textsuperscript{32} In other words, the dream of «the melting-pot concept was valid only if one was white. Blacks were kept out entirely and other nonwhites were invited in gingerly so as not to disturb the basic mix.»\textsuperscript{33} However, researchers have recently concluded that even «the offspring of earlier European

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{31} Brainy Quotes. From, \url{http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/i/israel_zangwill.html}. (Accessed on 2/3/2006). Zangwill compares, in beautiful poetry, the melting pot as the realization of the kingdom of God. I. ZANGWILL. \textit{The Melting Pot: A Drama in Four Acts}. New York, 184-185. Also, in J.Y. LEE. \textit{Marginality}, 36. Also Hecto St. John de Crevecoeur illustrates the new American as a mixture of «only European blood,» when he says: «I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons now have four wives of different nations.» H. S. J. de CREVECOEUR. \textit{Letters from an American Farmer}. New York, 39. Cited in J. Y. LEE’s. \textit{Marginality}, 37. Also in A. MEIER-SCHLESINGER’s «The American – a New Man,» in \textit{Children of the Uprooted}. Ed. O. HANDLIN. New York, 193-194.
\textsuperscript{32} S. M. LYMAN. \textit{The Asian in North America}. Santa Barbara, CA., 26.
immigrant groups often did not fully assimilate until the third or fourth generation.\textsuperscript{34}

The participation in this process of assimilation can be voluntary or involuntary, that is, chosen or forced upon a group. African-Americans were forced to embrace a foreign way of life, and after centuries of slavery and segregation, they were able to partially enter the national identity through the benefits and struggles of the civil rights era. However, the racial and skin color divide has affected most of them to this day.\textsuperscript{35} In addition, there is also the story of the intended cultural annihilation of the Native Americans by the U.S. government. It is argued that they preferred, even though they were forced, to live marginalized lives in reservations than to betray their ethnic cultural principles and values.\textsuperscript{36} The natives felt


\textsuperscript{36} The Native Americans were seen as a vanishing race with the Euro-American expansion, and «the federal policy of forced assimilation, which even most supporters of Indian people believed to be the only hope for Indian survival in the new century...Under the guise of Richard Henry Pratt's famous dictum to "kill the Indian and save the man" the federal government, through an aggressive policy of forced assimilation, attempted to destroy Indian cultures and arts, tribal societies and governments, and Native religions and families in order to "help" Indians join what was at the time believed to be the melting pot of American culture and society. Between the late 1880s and the mid 1930s this philosophy and effort formed the central basis of federal Indian policy. Under this policy, communal land holdings were individualized and tribal governments were systematically undercut...The contradiction of federal policy was problematic on another level as well. The insidious nature of racism in America worked to ensure that even those American Indians who succeeded in white terms--giving up their connections to their homelands and communities, and learning trades and professions in the American educational systems--were frozen out of the larger American society on the basis of skin color and perceptions of lack of intelligence, and forced to the fringes. Indians who stayed on reservations were largely believed by the dominant society to be representatives of a rapidly passing way of life, while those who left the reservations became largely invisible in American society.» D. R.M. BECK. «The Myth of the Vanishing Race.» Native American Studies, University of Montana (February, 2001). http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award98/ienhtml/essay2.html (Accessed on 1/25/2012)
somewhat redeemed and dignified by hanging on to their commitment of keeping their ethnic identity and identification.  

Accordingly, many cultural scientists and theologians argue that the theory of total assimilation has not really worked in the United States.  

In this regard, Yinger concludes, «those who have become members of a society as a result of coercion are most likely … to retain their ethnic identity, to resist assimilation.»  

J. Y. Lee, from the Asian perspective, puts it well when he states that such theory was unrealistic precisely «because of the pervasive racism and cultural bias of Caucasian-Americans… If the vision of the central people was for unity for purposes of control, the vision of the marginal people was that of harmony for co-existence.»

### 4. Mestizo Assimilation

The recent increase of immigration has intensified a renewed challenge to the melting pot theory. Its proponents continue to stereotype «new immigrants» as inassimilable, unresourceful, and inferior.  

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37 Sociologist David Hayes-Bautista understands «ethnic identity» as «the internal process by which a person comes to feel like a member of a specific ethnic group,» and «ethnic identification» as «the social process wherein ethnic membership is ascribed to an individual based on a perceived set of traits.» Cited in SUÁREZ-OROZCO. *Children of Immigration*, 19.  

38 Reflecting on the 1960’s European ethnics in New York, it has been concluded that, «the American ethos is no better perceived than in the disinclination of the third and fourth generation of new comers to blend into a standard, uniform national type….the point about the melting pot is that it did not happen.» N. GLAZER - D. P. MOYNIHAN. *Beyond the Melting Pot*. Cambridge, Mass., xcvi. What this meant is that the «enduring and important differences characterized the respective ethnic communities and that, contrary to the desires and predictions of assimilationists, they were not all in a process of dissolution… the Italians, the Jews, Irish, and Puerto Ricans of New York City became something quite different from what their migrant forefather had been. They each became American in their own way as a product of the interaction between what the group brought by way of skills, traditions, and language and what it encountered in the big metropolis. This was the melting pot that *did* not happen.» R. G. RUMBAUT - A. PORTES. *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America*. Berkeley, CA., 302.  


41 The following outburst of disappointment of forceful assimilationists illustrates the stated point well: «If the United States is the melting pot, something is wrong with the heating system, for an inconveniently large portion of the new immigration floats
American journalist Peter Brimelow, in his book *Alien Nation*, portrays these immigrants, particularly Hispanics, white and nonwhite, as not being of much value and intentionally destroying the Anglo-American ethnic traditions. He says, «These new comers are less educated, less skilled, more prone to be in trouble with the law, less inclined to share American culture and values, and altogether less inclined to become American in name and spirit.»

This anomic marginalization is driven by forces from the mainstream as they continue to push the new immigrants into the margins of society.

In his book, *Mestizo Democracy*, John F. Burk suggests that Brimelow’s proposition is an example of a flawed presumption that a cultural identity is «a possession that separates one culture from another, and therefore to assimilate means giving up one’s culture ... and not [seeing it] as a fluid relationship in which a culture is both affected by constant new influences and, reciprocally, affects or shapes those influences.» Burk believes that the future of a creative and nourishing pluralistic democracy, which he calls *mestizo*, must intentionally include the «engagement with diverse “others” as intrinsic to cultural formation.» He states, «This intersubjective rendering of cultural transformation then provides a basis for articulating a democratic political theory that integrates the assimilationist’s emphasis on

around in unsightly indigestible lumps. Of recent years, the contents of the melting pot have stood badly in need of straining in order that the refuse might be removed and deposited in the customary receptacle for such things. The fear was that America has largely become the dumping ground for the world’s human riffraff, who couldn’t make a living in their own countries.»


Burke considers the cultural dynamic of *mestizaje*, as «the long-standing heritage of the U.S. Southwest, which illustrates how cultures can combine without one necessarily becoming dominant or hegemonic.» This reality can be valuable help to the «challenges posed by growing interception of multiple cultures throughout the United States and across the globe.» Initially, however, *mestizaje* was and continues to be used to refer «the mixing of the African, indigenous, and Spanish peoples during the Spanish conquest of the Americas.» Burk’s research «focuses on how the normative recasting of mestizaje in Latino Theology as a lateral mixing of multiple cultures – a mixing that does not culminate in assimilation – offers a basis for realizing a democracy that articulates and practices collaborative multicultural relations.» Ibid., 9, 5.
unity with the separatist’s concern with cultural integrity.» This is a democratic sharing of an «and/both» and not an «either/or» philosophy.

Interestingly, Geoffrey Fox, in his book *Hispanic Nation*, notes that the problem with Brimelow’s scheme is that it is based on a faulty belief that the country «has always had a specific [white] ethnic core.» In reality, he says, «what has been at the center of this country’s history is not any one ethnic group but the struggle over rights … the creation of a solidarity group based on partly invented, partly real ethnic distinctions as a way to confront perceived injustice or simply to get ahead.» The point this dissertation wants to emphasize is that the Latino population is in fact emulating much of the old American tradition, although its process might appear different or too slow. Latinos will ultimately assimilate, but through a process not marked by race. Fox has concluded that:

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45 J. F. BURKE. *Mestizo Democracy*, 9. Burk refers to the American multicultural character as he contrasts the positions of Assimilationists, who «contend that multiculturalism treads upon the very ideals of Western civilization [and] maintains that there has to be a universal American identity held by everyone for the sake of political civility and order,» and Separatists, who «contend that there is little hope for constituting and sustaining a substantive common ground among different cultural grounds, that our cultural identities are so autonomous that the best we can do is guarantee the integrity of each enclave.» He suggests that «both outlooks suffer from the same epistemological problem: an inability to envision how the concepts of universal community and particular cultural groups can be complementary, not antithetical to each other.» Burke envisions «a set of democratic relations between diverse cultural groups that culminates neither in the predominance of one culture over all others in the name of assimilation nor, conversely, in utter separatism and stark antagonism between cultural groups.» Ibid., 19, 5.

46 Geoffrey Fox. *Hispanic Nation*. Tucson, 238-239. He goes on to say that «The forming of the American nation did not end with the English settlers at Jamestown and Plymouth; it has been a very violent and conflictive process in which people of all races that make up this country played parts. Very large parts of our country’s present territory, the whole Southeast and Southwest, were once Spanish, and their populations were already mixed with indigenous nations and with African Americans by the time they were incorporated into the United States.» In addition, G. Fox points out the formation of ethnic groups and movements «based on pragmatic alliances that may have only dubious historical precedent, have been formed often in the American history.» The Italians, as in the Tuscans, Lombards, Calabreses, and/or the German-speaking from Jewish and non-Jewish descendents, from Austria, Switzerland, etc. who «spoke fervently of creating a Deutschtum (Germandom) on U.S. soil to preserve their language and traditions.» These ethnic groups through some resistance were able to negotiate their ongoing insertion into the mainstream that was in formation. Ibid., 238-240.
Many Hispanics are people who could never become «Americans» if the racial criteria proposed by some were to prevail, even if they dropped their Spanish surnames. Because of their skin color or hair texture, they could forever remain no more than pochos, «tailles ones,» or socially inferior beings. Others who are white enough to pass could do so only by abandoning their darker friends and relatives. And this is something most of them do not want to do. Becoming «Hispanic,» then, is the only way open to them to be Americans, real authentic Americans with dignity.\textsuperscript{47}

Yu Xie and Emily Greenman in their research have also noted, without denying that there are some similarities in the assimilation trajectories, «It is a truism, though a trivial one, that the new immigrants are different from the old immigrants.» Such differences are found in two determining dimensions: «changes in the immigrants themselves and changes in America as a host society.»\textsuperscript{48} The socio-economic and cultural background of recent immigrants is much more extensive than the early immigrants, thus naturally «suggesting that different groups will start out on different “rungs” of the American class system. This makes any single, uniform model of immigrant incorporation into the United States inherently less appropriate than it may have been for earlier, more homogeneous groups.»\textsuperscript{49}

4.1 \textit{Segmented Assimilation and the Latino Youth}

Hispanics experience a diverse and gradual incorporation into the American mainstream because of the diversity of their ethnic and national backgrounds, times of arrivals, human capital (age, education, language knowledge, wealth, occupational skills), and social capital (networks and

\textsuperscript{47} G. FOX. \textit{Hispanic Nation}, 240-241.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 2. They point out that the economy has also changed drastically, which in turn affects the «incorporation of the new workers due to the advent of a service-based postindustrial economy.» What this means is that in this new and fluctuating economy, there is «a relatively large demand for both college-educated professional workers at the top and low-pay and low-skilled service workers at the bottom, but not much in between.» When these determining circumstances are coupled with the «the continual replenishment of immigrant communities with new unassimilated first-generation members,» it is only natural that the immigrant adaptation is continually affected and challenged to created new models, therefore, demonstrating that «complete cultural assimilation [is] less likely for contemporary immigrant groups.» Ibid., 2-3.
This diverse and complex reality has inspired the development of the «theory of segmented assimilation,» which argues that «different groups are available to which the new immigrants may assimilate, and that as a result they may take divergent assimilation paths.»  

Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, in their thorough research on the Immigrant Second Generation, offer three different manifestations of Latinos' assimilation.

There are groups among today’s second generation that are slated for a smooth transition into the mainstream and for whom ethnicity will soon be a matter of personal choice. They, like descendants of earlier Europeans, will identify with their ancestry on occasion and when convenient. There are others for whom their ethnicity will be a source of strength and who will muscle their way up, socially and economically, on the basis of their own communities’ networks and resources. There are still others whose ethnicity will be neither a matter of choice nor a source of progress but a mark of subordination. These children are at risk of joining the masses of the dispossessed, compounding the spectacle of inequality and despair in America’s inner cities. The prospect that members of today’s second generation will join those at the bottom of society – a new rainbow underclass – has more than a purely academic interest, for it can affect the life chances of millions of Americans and the quality of life in the cities and communities where they concentrate.

The segmented assimilation of Latinos is not necessarily the product of any malicious and/or destructive purpose against the unity and common good. They have already proven that their cultural identity and adaptation pattern do not affect their sense of patriotism, work ethic, national security and/or unity. For instance, one often forgotten, yet most relevant, record is the presence of young Latinos in the United States military. Since the American Revolution, «Hispanics have participated in virtually every U.S. military conflict,» thus demonstrating lived patriotism, honor, and duty on behalf and in defense of the nation. To those critics of Hispanic fidelity,
For 228 years of American history, the Hispanic has always been there. We have fought in wars and served during peacetime. We have died for this great nation. We have suffered tremendous losses and countless wounded. We have won the highest honors that Congress can bestow on heroes. And yet our place in history will never go down as that of other groups. It could be because we are so patriotic – if there is such a thing. It could be because our work ethic and our values teach us to go from being an individual to working within a collective sphere of teamwork that we don’t concern ourselves with the record of what happened. We just do it the old fashioned way. We perform when it’s important and deliver at every turn. We don’t brag about our adventures or our successes. We just slug away thinking that is what it is expected of us, and we never think much about the glory that success brings for us in the military ranks. But that’s not what we are about, that’s not who we are. We are quiet warriors, quiet heroes. We are brought up to do our mission and move on.  

4.2 Process of Acculturation

Assimilation cannot be a one-step, one-path, one-specific-time-set process. The reality of segmented assimilation displays the fact that immigrants and their children must first experience the process of acculturation. In this process, immigrants learn, react, maneuver, and embrace the normative ways of the culture, adapting in a different tempo, but ultimately assimilating into the new normative society via the second and third generations. There are different outcomes and manifestations of the acculturation process as described in the triad of the Dissonant, the
Consonant, and the Selective acculturation, they parallel the three states of marginality, the negative, the positive and the in-beyond.

The «Dissonant Acculturation» is considered risky for Latinos because it has the potential to break down the positive child-parents relationship, demonstrating a feature of negative marginality. This happens when the children learn, use the language, and assimilate to the social mainstream faster than, and independent of, their parents, who in turn, lose their ability to properly exercise their role of guidance. In this path, the children usually lose the opportunity to understand, appreciate, and benefit from their parents’ ethnic values and ethos of life. They tend to choose and believe, due to peer choice and pressure, that the normative way is the only right way. Logically, without the parents and ethnic community support systems, the new generations, risk confronting uncertain, complex, and often destructive environments that are infected by poverty, drugs, gangs, violence, deteriorating neighborhoods, underfunded schools, etc.  

Then, there is the «Consonant Acculturation,» when parents and children confront and acculturate in a similar pace, learning together and gradually moving into the normative culture or remaining in a chosen un-acculturated level, encompassing a character of positive marginality. In this process, the social and cultural resources of the parents’ ethnic community remain available. This type of acculturation is successful especially «when immigrant parents possess enough human capital to accompany the human evolution of their children and actually monitor it… [and] lays the basis for parental guidance and mutual intergenerational support in confronting external challenges.»

Furthermore, there is the «Selective Acculturation» which posits a process of free and gradual learning and appreciation of the normative culture and language while intentionally preserving the native culture and language, hence presenting the concept of the in-beyond state of marginality. Such a process certainly offers the opportunity for total biculturalism and fluent bilingualism. The gradual and voluntary exchange of cultural values and features allows this process to avoid intergenerational disharmony and conflicts. It also offers true co-ethnic community support and nourishment to equip the children for the daily challenges. Portes and Rumbaut believe that this type of acculturation «offers the most solid opportunity for parents, children, and the community to work together to

56 PORTES - RUMBAUT. Legacies, 54.
57 Ibid., 54.
confront external discrimination and preserve parental authority.»\(^{58}\) This is what some people called «the best of two worlds,» or, as Millard and Chapa put it, the enjoyment of «apple pie and enchiladas.»\(^{59}\)

5. Multiculturalism\(^{60}\)

It can be argued that the socio-cultural segmentation described above has in reality preserved and produced a new kaleidoscopic multicultural community. In North America, such a multicultural manifestation has also been illustrated with the metaphors of the salad bowl, cultural tapestry, and the cultural mosaic, denoting the positive integrity and flavor of each ethnic representation. But, I believe the image of the Stew-Pot better describes the American multicultural society, because it portrays the active participation of all ingredients in the pot while giving their unique contribution to the whole, yet still maintaining their distinctiveness.\(^{61}\) In such a process, one celebrates, not depreciates, maintains, and not destroys, the ethnic positive uniqueness. This multicultural theory usually promotes formational tools to enhance an understanding and appreciation of bilingualism (or multilingualism), and a multi-ethnic sharing of the arts, folklore, music, cuisine, as well as values and visions for life. It also promotes legislations such as «affirmative action» to help the marginalized minorities overcome

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\(^{58}\) Ibid., 53-54. For similar discussion see J. M. YINGER. *Ethnicity*, 69-82.

\(^{59}\) This expression «apple pie and enchiladas» is being used by Hispanic scholars to «symbolize a new combination in the dynamic contemporary encounter of peoples and cultures,» particularly between Latinos and U.S. Americans. A. V. MILLARD - J. CHAPA. *Apple Pie & Enchiladas*. Austin, 1.

\(^{60}\) «Multiculturalism is a system of beliefs and behaviors that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization or society.» C. ROSADO. «Toward a Definition of Multiculturalism,» 1. [http://rosado.net/pdf/Def_of_Multiculturalism.pdf](http://rosado.net/pdf/Def_of_Multiculturalism.pdf) (Accessed on 1/19/12)

\(^{61}\) Rosado puts it clearly: «We are a heterogeneous society, a rich cultural stew, where the various ingredients—white potatoes, brown meat, yellow squash, red tomatoes, and all the other substances—while maintaining their distinctiveness, have contributed their unique cultural juices and ethnic flavors, all richly blended by the heat of group tension. This is what makes a stew, not just the ingredients tossed in together as in a cold salad, but the application of heat to the pot. In American society «heat» has come from racial and ethnic conflict. Fire, however, is dangerous, because if one turns up the heat too high or leaves the pot on the fire too long, or simply neglects it, the stew will be burned.» Ibid., 5.
discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and level up to the other members of the social mainstream.\textsuperscript{62}

It has long been suggested that the United States has become the most powerful country in the world due to its resourceful diversity. However, this diversity naturally evokes a multiplicity of feelings and emotions that, when not properly understood, can easily obscure the positive benefits. Such is the case of the U.S. Latino community. It is the largest and the most diverse community within the nation, yet the most often misunderstood, unappreciated, and underrepresented. Carlos Fuentes presents the Hispanics as a positive asset to the United States. He asks, «Is anyone better prepared to deal with this central issue of dealing with the Other than we…the Hispanics in the United States? We are Indian, Black, European, but above all mixed, Mestizo… [Thus] when we exclude, we betray ourselves. When we include, we find ourselves.»\textsuperscript{63} In this vein, Ilan Stavans maintains that the U.S. Hispanic community is a «benign weapon» which can destroy any conflictive and destructive world community conception because it is a multi-ethnic hybrid, a «hyphenated self, neither here nor there.»\textsuperscript{64}

\textsuperscript{62} In the words of U.S. former President Bill Clinton (July 19, 1995): «The purpose of affirmative action is to give our nation a way to finally address the systemic exclusion of individuals of talent on the basis of their gender, or race from opportunities to develop, perform, achieve and contribute. Affirmative action is an effort to develop systematic approach to open the doors of education, employment, and business development opportunities to qualified individuals who happen to be members of groups that have experienced long-standing and persistent discrimination.» As found in, The American Association for Affirmative Action. http://www.affirmativeaction.org/about.html (Accessed on 1/19/12). In what pertains to U.S. Hispanics, it is currently recognized that, «though there are greater protections from obvious discriminatory behavior, de facto discrimination persists. In their daily lives, many Hispanics encounter poorly funded school systems, punitive and biased encounters with law enforcement officials, and insensitive social welfare agencies, all of which contribute to their marginalization.» P. S. J. CAFFERTY - D. W. ENGSTROM. «Introduction.» In Hispanics in the United States: An Agenda for the Twenty-First Century, xvi.

\textsuperscript{63} C. FUENTES. «The Mirror of the Other.» Nation. (March 30, 1992), 410.

\textsuperscript{64} I. STAVANS. The Hispanic Condition: The Power of a People. New York, 188-189. He goes on to say that Hispanics are «as an ethnic hybrid, part African, part Catholic, part Jewish, part Arabic, and part Native (Aztec, Quechua, Zapotec, Maya, Inca, and the like), our is a language of the colonizers, not the colonized.» This means that Hispanics have been able to maintain values, customs, and language while operating in a language that was not originally theirs. Therefore, they can and will do
However, the U.S. Hispanics need to redefine themselves. They have generally been defined by others in negative and denigrating references, such as when they are stereotyped as being only the poor «brown Indian Mexicans,» «wetbacks,» «beaners,» etc. In turn, many Latino youth are not able to freely and proudly use the wealth and strength of their cultural history due to their ambivalence about who they truly are. New U.S. Latino generations are suffering a crisis of identity because they are being fed mostly negative social perceptions and treatments that handicap the actualization of their true identity from the mainstream society. Such marginalizing perceptions have serious consequences in the youth’s human, social, religious, and academic aspirations. The youth find themselves wasting all their energies preoccupying over their ethnic identity and acceptance, rather than on developing and using their skills and efforts to become the best they can be to benefit the common good.

6. Language

The discussion on language and multilingualism in the United States is older than the country itself. Milton Yinger points out that «when persons of Spanish, Portuguese, English, French, Dutch, and German background began to settle in the “new world,” they came in contact, not only with each other, but with Native Americans who spoke some three hundred different languages.»\(^65\) Although these communities tried to keep their languages alive, most of them were not successful. Economic expense, family support and resources, legal discouragement and prohibition are some of the factors that have contributed to such failure.\(^66\) These type of

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\(^65\) J. M. YINGER. *Ethnicity*, 312.

\(^66\) Among the factors include the expense of schools to promote them, and the decrease in size of the ethnic communities in close proximity. Furthermore, without new representing ethnic first generation immigrants coming into the country, the chances for renewing and refreshing their cultural traditions and languages greatly diminished. Second and third generations slowly lose touch with their parents’ and grandparents’ cultural backgrounds. In addition, the use of other languages has been
circumstances prompted Harvard Sociologist Stanley Lieberson and associates to state that, «the United States is a cemetery of languages.»

Recently, James Crawford, a proponent of multilingualism and bilingual education, wrote,

> Despite its increasing diversity, the United States remains an underdeveloped country when it comes to language skills... Immigrants are importing other languages at record rates. Yet the vast majority of native-born Americans remain stubbornly monolingual. Our ignorance of other languages and cultures handicaps us in dealing with the rest of the world. U.S. trade, diplomacy, and national security suffer.

The suppression, exclusion, or embrace of languages deeply impacts people’s lives, and even transcends generations. Language, besides being a means of communication, «is also a marker of identity and an instrument of power,» a tool that helps you move away from the margins as it preserve your autonomous self. It touches the essence of people’s existence. Such is the linguistic situation of the U.S. Hispanic community. The traditional large numbers of this population living in the country, coupled with «geography, technology, and the Spanish media keep all segments of the Hispanic community connected to the Hispanic culture. And a constant flow of immigrants from Latino American countries renews and refreshes the Hispanic American community’s cultural traditions.»

traditionally discouraged and even legally prohibited in classrooms and other governmental services.

67 Cited in SUÁREZ-OROZCO. Children of Immigration, 136. Also in PORTES - RUMBAUT, Legacies, 114. One clear consequential example has been noted by the Census 2000 report, which shows that from an estimated 60 million U.S. citizens of German descent, the largest ethnic group of American citizens, barely one million of them reported speaking some kind of German at all. Interestingly, some third and fourth generation descendents of European immigrants are expressing disappointment for the loss of key cultural markers, particularly the language, and are now trying to resuscitate such languages for their children. For instance, «In Massachusetts, fourth-generation monolingual English-speaking parents are sending their youngsters to special after-school classes and tutors to learn such languages...» Ibid., 136-137.


69 SUÁREZ-OROZCO. Children of Immigration, 135.

70 R.t MONTEMAYOR - H. MENDOZA. Right Before Our Eyes, 81. In regard to the Spanish-Language Media, it is pointed out that there are an «estimated 550 Spanish-language publications, 600 Spanish-language radio stations, 140 Spanish-language television stations, and who knows how many Internet sites, all operating within the largest English-speaking country in the world.» Ibid., 77-78.
«the traditionally strong family patterns, [and] increased acceptance of and accommodations to use Spanish in the United States, including job opportunities that do not require English,» have helped preserve «the culture and community life on which a shared language would be the most cohesive influence.»

The Latino’s preservation of the Spanish language has provoked an intense national public debate that has proved powerful enough to divide civil and religious communities across the nation. Unfortunately, emotions run deep due to misinformation, intentional disregard, and xenophobia. It is from such public debate that the «English-Only» movement has emerged. Its advocates claim that language diversity threatens the classical notion of assimilation, the unity of the country, and it adds an economic drain to the budgets of schools and governmental social services. They argue that Latinos refuse to learn English, thus suggesting that they intentionally want to attack the prominent role of the normative language. This barrier marginalizes the Latino Spanish speaking individuals, as they

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71 J. M. YINGER. *Ethnicity*, 314.

72 The current «English-Only» Movement advocates that English is the U.S. only one official and normative language. This modern movement was founded 1983 by the Senator S.I. Hayakawa, an immigrant himself, and it has been chaired since 1993 by another immigrant from Chile, Mauro E. Mujica. They consider the monolingual skill of speaking English in the U.S., besides keeping the country unified, the «single greatest empowering tool that immigrants must have to succeed.» U.S. ENGLISH, INC. *The Official Site*. Available at www.us-english.org/inc/default.asp. The supporting and opposing positions to the movement’s proposition are expressed in the following statements. (1) «For supporters, the case is obvious: English has always been our common language, a means of resolving conflicts in a nation of diverse racial, ethnic, and religious groups. Reaffirming the preeminence of English means reaffirming a unifying force in American life. Moreover, English is an essential tool of social mobility and economic advancement.» (2) «For opponents, Official English is synonymous with English Only: a mean-spirited attempt to coerce Anglo-conformity by terminating essential services in other languages. The amendment poses a threat to civil rights, educational opportunities and free speech, even in the private sector. It is an insult to the heritage of cultural minorities, including groups whose roots in this country go deeper than English speakers – Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and American Indians. Worse of all, the English-Only movement serves to justify racist and nativist biases under the cover of American patriotism.» In J. CRAWFORD, *Language Loyalties: A Source book of the Official English Controversy*. Chicago, 1992), as cited by M.-Y. LU. «English-Only Movement: Its Consequences on the Education of Language Minority Children. » ERIC Digest. Available at www.ericdigests.org/1999-4/english.htm.
are pushed from the mainstream society. A study from the Pew Hispanic Center found that,

Although language proficiency in the first generation is overwhelmingly Spanish (62 percent) or bilingual (37 percent), the second generation is overwhelmingly proficient in English. The second generation is comprised of largely English speakers (21 percent) and English/Spanish bilingual speakers (74 percent), with only a small fraction that largely speaks Spanish (6 percent). Yet research also showed that while Hispanics may be embracing English, a large number are retaining and utilizing their Spanish … being bilingual is a matter of personal practicality – it speaks to who they are, where they live, how cohesive their family situation is, and how and where they conduct business.73

The English-Only movement judges the use and preservation of the Spanish language as a «problem,» and not as a resource or a complementary enhancer to the Latino youth’s human and social capital. In this regard, Thomas Pettigrew has concluded that in reality, «the English-Only movement is not so much pro-integration as it is anti-minority.» 74 Ultimately, the Latino youth are paying the price for the negative consequences of such political spectacle. They have been presented with an «either/or» decision when dealing with their linguistic emphasis as well as their cultural affinity. This creates for them a confusing paradox while they relate and grow up within their own family and immediate community relationships. Some of them feel rejected, unappreciated, and ambivalent due to their bicultural and bilingual identity. Others are pushed to question whether their unique ethnic identity is a positive resource for their human development and fulfillment, and ultimately the common good. In any case, as the debate continues, it does not appear that the different levels of bilingualism among Hispanics will fade away anytime soon.

Bilingualism is a cultural identifier for Hispanic American youth. For most of them, it is ingrained with their subjective ethnic identity. Depending on the different support available, these youth develop different skill levels of bilingualism. 75 Suárez-Orozco point out that,

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74 As cited in J. Milton Yinger. Ethnicity, 318.
75 MONTEMAYOR - Mendoza have noticed that many U.S. Latino youth learned «Spanish through repetition, osmosis, or not at all – depending on the vigilance of the parents. In other cases, bilingual parents insisted the children speak only English at
Most bilingual speakers are in fact dominant in one language. For other bilinguals, language use is divided according to specific domains: family and emotional matters may be most comfortably expressed in one language, while conversations about work may be most fluently discussed in another. Still other bilinguals engage in a linguistic flow characterized by strategically switching between the two languages depending upon the context and need. Bilingual skills fall along a continuum; most so-called bilinguals might be more properly called emerging bilinguals.76

Such circumstances contribute to the misguided accusations and misunderstandings by some teachers in schools and people in society who, while they themselves are not resourceful bilinguals, portray second-generation youth as «not knowing Spanish or English and of corrupting both» as they speak Spanglish.77 Ana Celia Zentella states that,

Code switchers are characterized as lazy, sloppy, and cognitively confused… Pejorative references to «Spanglish» (or to «Tex-Mex» in the Southwest) conjure up images of linguistic mish-mash, a deficient code spoken by deficient speakers and responsible for their academic failure. At the root of the problem is a view of languages merely as separate sets of rules, not as flexible symbolic systems of communication that are enmeshed with the speakers’ identities and the communicative context.78

Many U.S. schools have been adamant and non-cooperative in providing «bilingual education.» When available, these schools have designed their own local, unproven, and most frequently ineffective bilingual programs, thus producing more confusion and frustration to the communities. This

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76 SUÁREZ-OROZCO. *Children of Immigration*, 137.
77 *Spanglish* is a mix of the Spanish and the English languages. Ed Morales describes it as, «a hybrid language, and informal code…. [It] is Spanish adapting the crazy rhythms of English and English inheriting the multicultural content of Latin America.» E. MORALES. *Living in Spanglish: The Search for Latino Identity in America*. New York, 2, 6.
practice is the result of too many philosophical and political stands, approaches, and special interests across the country. It is only «natural to find that while some programs produce excellent results, others are plagued with problems…. [W]hile some…are successful, others are characterized by poor administrative support, inadequate resources, and uncertified personnel.»  

At the end of the day, the youth end up feeling that they are everybody’s problem rather than the community’s priceless assets, worthy of great investment. These circumstances clearly affect the way the youth see themselves, their world, and their aspirations. Angela Valenzuela has noted that in environments where bilingualism is not valued, the Latino «youth may fall prey to the subtle yet unrelenting message of the worthlessness of their communities. They can get socialized into the belief that leaving their communities through upward mobility is the standard against which their self-worth should be measured.»

When this process occurs, the successful youth never return to their communities to reinvest their resources, keeping them from reaching a transcendental life in service to their own ethnic people as they lack self-affirmation. It is paramount, therefore, to recognize that fluent bilingualism nourishes the future success of Latino youth because it improves self-esteem, academic skills, occupational expectations, and family and co-ethnic relationships. Bilingualism is thus associated with benign social and psychological outcomes since it helps equip the youth for future success.

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79 SUÁREZ-OROZCO. *Children of Immigration*, 140. Some of the different programs of bilingual education used in schools across the nation include the «structured immersion» (teaches in English but uses minimal Spanish words to help understand lesson), «Sheltered English» («any lesson in every subject becomes an English language lesson»), «Transitional» («the child is taught a variety of subjects in her native language until she achieves competence in English. At that time she will be moved to an English-only classroom»), and the «two-way» program («children are taught in their native language alongside English monolingual students who are motivated to learn a foreign language. In theory, all students receive the same amount of instruction in both languages in a variety of subject matters»). Ibid., 139.


7. Family

The composition and unity of the family are of great importance for Latinos. Traditionally they believe in honoring and preserving traditional values such as care, protection, education, respect, the centrality of and sacrifice for the family, as well as the mutual and collective social responsibility. Latino families are not defined only by the mother-father-children concept. It generally includes the prominent presence of grandparents, aunts, uncles, godparents, older siblings, multiple caregivers and neighbors. They all share and accept as God-given the «obligation to care and support one another.»

The role of the extended family and its surrounding community is of paramount importance for the proper functioning of the traditional family unit. Relying on my own experience as a Latino immigrant, I remember that as a boy in our community in El Salvador, we all knew that there was someone always watching us, and better yet, ready and willing to correct us when necessary. It is customary for the adults within the communities to help monitor the lives and activities of the youth. This in turn nourishes a clearer sense of respect and appreciation for themselves, the family – especially parents and elders – and the community at large. Juarez-Orozco articulates this reality well:

Family cohesion and the maintenance of the well-functioning system of supervision, authority, and mutuality are perhaps the most powerful factors in shaping the well-being and future outcomes of all children – immigrant and nonimmigrant alike. Because no family is an island, family cohesion and healthy dynamics are enhanced when the family is part of a larger community.

Nonetheless, as families migrate, they suffer a structural decomposition, which affects the natural nourishment and support of the young for generations to come. Consequently, Latino families go through very confusing and demanding challenges in their efforts to assist their children in their academic, human, and religious formation. Although the immediate families invest a great deal of effort and resources in the future of their children, the parents are usually not well equipped for these new challenges. Some parents come to understand that their priority is to work harder and longer in order to provide for the family’s basic needs. As they

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82 C. SUÁREZ-OROZCO. «Commentary,» in Latinos Remaking America, 302.
83 SUÁREZ-OROZCO. Children of Immigration, 82.
work many hours, often in several jobs, they become physically absent from the home and less available to their children. As the priorities change due to the new social circumstances, a loss of identity marginalizes the family as a whole.

Immigrant parents often tell us that working is the best way they can help their children, yet these long work hours leave many children unattended. This physical absence compounds the psychological unavailability that often accompanies parental anxiety and depression. These two forms of absence all too frequently leave immigrant children to their own devices long before they are developmentally ready. While in some cases this leads to hyper-responsible children, in other cases it leads to depressed kids who are drawn to the lure of alternative family structures such as gangs.\(^{84}\)

Moreover, many second-generation Latino youth have to experience a double-edged process of acculturation almost by themselves. They have to learn their parent’s cultural rules and interpersonal expectations as well as those of the mainstream society. Frequently, the youth are left with many unanswered questions regarding how to act, their own identity, and their future investments. Due to this marginalizing cultural uncertainty, they find themselves in need of clear direction and support. In the absence of the parents’ direction and a supportive community, the youth often turn to inexperienced friends and/or acquaintances for this important assistance. This process can deteriorate the communication and closeness between parents and children. In this regard, Cecilia Menjívar, who has done excellent research on immigrant networking, has found that the youth, …grow up distant from adults with whom they can no longer communicate well, and they increase their interactions and reinforce networks with their peers, which in a way buttresses the subculture that the parents try so hard to counteract. Finally, it decreases their chances in the wider society because it makes problematic the accumulation of cultural capital that they need to succeed.\(^{85}\)

Some Latino parents become very discouraged and ineffective. The intimacy within the family gets distorted because the youth develop self-doubts about the family that in time affect parental authority. Furthermore both fall victims to structural marginality, as the parental practices conflict with that of the social mainstream. This leads to negative reactions, such as

\(^{84}\) Ibid, 75.
\(^{85}\) C. MENJÍVAR. *Fragmented Ties.* Berkeley, CA., 217.
parents surrendering their authority or becoming stricter disciplinarians, which may in turn get them in trouble with American laws that protect children and youth. In addition, the youth themselves often misunderstand or misinterpret the parents’ discipline methods and decide to negatively confront or disregard their parents’ authority; they may even decide to leave the immediate family structure to participate in destructive affiliations. Very often, one hears these parents say, «The laws of this country deny us our disciplining styles and responsibilities. And then they don’t do anything to help our children. What can we do?» For this reason, a great number of Latino parents have experienced disillusionment and live with this constant fear of having their youth fall victim to the toxic elements of this new American culture. Esmeralda Santiago, in her book *Almost a Woman*, describes her mother’s uneasiness:

The way she pronounced *Americanized*, it sounded like a terrible thing, to be avoided at all costs, another *algo* to be added to the list of «*somethings*» outside the door…It was good to be healthy, big, and strong like Dick, Jane and Sally. It was good to learn English and to know how to act among Americans, but it was not good to behave like them.

Furthermore, Latino immigrant youth have to play different roles and respond to various obligations at home. Some youth, who see, admire, and appreciate their parents’ efforts, try to help, sometimes by assuming significant adult responsibilities prematurely. This is a double-edged practice: it can help a young person become more responsible, but it can also overwhelm that young person with adult duties that can affect his or her emotional development as well as academic formation. This new role is accompanied by many hopes, but it also creates an «imbalance that often leads to tension… when the parents’ and other adults’ authority is eroded by migration, intergenerational conflict follows.»

8. Development and (Trans) Formation of Latino Youth Identities

The complexity of multiculturalism also adds to the struggles that young people have in their efforts to incorporate their world perceptions and

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86 This is the author’s own experience as a pastor when pastorally counseling parents.
87 C. SUÁREZ-OROZCO. «Commentary.» In *Latinos Remaking America*, 302.
89 C. MENJÍVAR. *Fragmented Ties*, 214.
experiences into the formation of a clear identity.\textsuperscript{90} In this regard, sociologists conclude that, «Identities are both self-crafted and imposed. Immigrants must come to terms with those dispositions…. Based on shared cultural stereotypes, a person is told both what she “must be” and what she “cannot be”».\textsuperscript{91} Furthermore, children of immigrants have more complicated scenarios because they are literally located «within cultural worlds, they must define themselves in relation to multiple reference groups (sometimes in two countries and in two languages) and to the classification into which they are placed by their native peers, schools, the ethnic community, and the larger society.»\textsuperscript{92} Anti-Latino sentiments are continually being expressed and debated in the press, in policy debates, and in many other public forums, creating a type of anomie for the Latino youth. When such public outpourings are not exercised or put into the proper perspective, they create a powerful negative «social mirroring» of this youth. This is detrimental to the youth’s «participation in the opportunity structure,» says Celia Falicov, «but it also affects the immigrant children’s sense of self.»\textsuperscript{93} They can perceive how

\textsuperscript{90} Cultural sociologists acknowledge that «Identities can be inherited, chosen, assigned, or merely inferred from some bit of evidence…. Some ethnic identities have to be achieved; and they have to be maintained by behavior, by ethnic “signaling”. Other powerful signals of one’s ethnic identity are language and religion.» M. J. YINGER. \textit{Ethnicity}, 141-142. Ethnic Identities can also be defined as «a feeling shared by individuals in a given group and based on a sense of common origin, common beliefs and values, common goals, and shared destiny.» SUÁREZ-OROZCO. \textit{Children}, 118. For an excellent treatment of life phases and Identity development, see, G. S. KIM. «Asian North American Youth: A Ministry of Self-Identity and Pastoral Care,» in \textit{People On the Way: Asian North Americans Discovering Christ, Culture, and Community}. Ed. D. NG. Valley Forge, PA., 201-227.

\textsuperscript{91} SUÁREZ-OROZCO. \textit{Children of Immigration}, 65.

\textsuperscript{92} PORTES - RUMBAUT. \textit{Legacies}, 150.

\textsuperscript{93} C. J. FALICOV. «Ambiguous Loss: Risk and Resilience in Latino Immigrant Families.» In \textit{Latinos Remaking America}, 281. Falicov notes that the social mirroring experience by the youth challenges their «double consciousness.» By it, she means, «a perception of who one really is as a person within one’s own group and a perception of who one is in the attributions of the larger society’s story regarding the same group.» Ibid., 280. In addition, it has been noted that the negative social mirroring that Latinos must currently experience in the U.S. is the result of the historical fact that «U.S. opinion makers and leaders have been remarkably consistent in their views on Latin Americans from colonial times up to the present. In this ideological structure, Latin Americans are depicted as racially and culturally inferior, ignorant, degraded, filthy, childlike, and essentially unable to govern themselves. It is not surprising, then, that in
others see them. When they are perceived positively, they are able to feel worthwhile and thus encouraged and competent to succeed, thus given them a glimpse of positive marginality. But when the perception is negative, it is «particularly devastating for adolescents, whose main task is to develop a positive sense of who they are. The negative images of Latinos reproduced ... references to lazy, slow-witted, crime-prone parasites who are undeservingly feeding on American wealth.» This clearly represents some negative aspects of marginality that evoke uncertainty and affect self-affirmation making it more difficult for the youth to progressing to the desired state of the «in-beyond.» Philosopher Charles Taylor referring to the identity forming process says that:

Our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortions, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.95

Sadly, many Latino youth become resigned to the negative image others mirror back. Consequently, many parents helplessly see their youth daily projecting low aspirations, self-defeating behaviors, depression, passivity, self-doubt, and even shame for who they are. These tormenting factors are further nourished in many schools where the message these youth hear is, «You are no good. And some students come to believe that, and they join others hearing the same message to design an inverted culture where they are good, where they have a chance to be somebody.»96

Martin Seligman, when discussing the dynamics of optimism,97 says that some youth mobilize to resist the mirrors and injustices they encounter.

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95 As quoted in SUÁREZ-OROZCO. Children, 99.
96 YINGER. Ethnicity, 143.
97 Seligman has concluded that, «The defining characteristic of pessimists is that they tend to believe that bad events will last a long time, will undermine everything they do, and are their own fault. The optimists, who are confronted with the same hard knocks of this world, think about misfortune in the opposite way. They tend to believe defeat is
distinguishes two types of resistance: «The first is a project infused with hope, a sense of justice, and a faith in a better tomorrow. In the second case, the youth may actively resist the reflections they encounter but are unable to maintain hope for change or a better tomorrow.»

Some Latino youth are able to confront the negative mirroring they encounter and turn it into promising optimism. These youth nourish a sense of pride and a healthy self-esteem that helps them cope with the present. They persistently work for their ideal future. These youth are able to see themselves within and beyond their present circumstances. They are seen as role models and advocate working for social change. These successful examples need to be utilized to encourage and affirm those youth who are less fortunate. The challenge, in this regard, remains wide open.

As social mirroring and context clearly affect the development of Hispanic youth’s identities, their segmented assimilation process manifests three patterns of social adaptation, which project their ethnic identity. They are: the ethnic flight identity, the adversarial identity, and the transcultural identity.

8.1 Ethnic Flight Identity

In this adaptation pattern, the youth keenly identify themselves with the dominant mainstream culture. They do not feel comfortable with the youth that are less acculturated. Mastering Standard English is more than a mere communication skill for them; it becomes a symbolic cultural identification with the mainstream society. In addition, academic success is considered not just a ticket for self-improvement, but a symbolic psychological route that separates and distances them from their ethnic origins. In their journey to success, these youth become marginalized migrants again as they try to leave their families and ethnic origins behind. A great illustration is the case of the prolific writer Richard Rodriguez. A graduate of Stanford, Columbia, and Berkeley Universities, «he suffered the shame, marginality, just a temporary setback, that its causes are confined to this one case. The optimists believe defeat is not their fault; circumstances, bad lack, or other people brought it about. Such people are unfazed by defeat. Confronted by a bad situation, they perceive it as a challenge to try harder.» M. SELIGMAN. Learned Optimism. (New York: Pocket Books, 1990), 4.

Ibid, 4-5.

99 The following presentation of three adaptational identity patterns will rely heavily on the Suárez-Orozco’s work, as it is the most respected and thorough research to date.
and alienation that other immigrants and second-generation youth do.»

In his powerful writings, one finds the projection of his painful ordeal as,

He felt compelled to reject his culture, language, parents, and community in order to belong to the mainstream American society, only to discover in the end that he was never accepted as American. He confesses that he found himself angry and retaliated by intentionally hurting his parents and Mexican friends.  

The results can be extremely damaging. As people with this cultural identity acquire and enjoy important positions in the dominant culture, they still suffer a double marginalization. The ties with their communities of origin are crippled, often resulting in their suffering rejection and alienation from their own ethnic peers or from the less acculturated youth who might consider them as feeling superior. When these youth are perceived as arrogant due to their accomplishments, they can also be portrayed in participating in «ethnic betrayal.» In such a process, accusatory terms such as «acting white, or being a coconut, a banana, or an oreo (brown, yellow, or black on the outside and white on the inside)» are often used. One can conclude that though this form of adaptation can and does help youth succeed in the dominant culture, it does come with a very high, but psychologically and emotionally intriguing, cost.

8.2 Adversarial Identity

The adversarial identity is the opposite of the ethnic flight identity. It is developed based on socio-cultural perceptions of unappreciation and rejection. These youth respond against perceived psychosocial violence by rejecting «the institutions of a society that rejects them and creat[ing] “countercultural” identities. This may take the form of identifying with gangs and developing ambivalent attitudes toward institutions of the

100 SUÁREZ-OROZCO. Trans-Formations, 72.
dominant culture, including schools and authorities.» Accordingly, some of these youth frequently have problems in, and drop-out of, schools, thus positioning themselves for possible joblessness and deprived social conditions. Clearly these youth, without significant people who can provide solid positive support and guidance, turn for emotional support to those who share similar fates. In this regard, urban anthropologist Diego Vigil has concluded that, «urban poverty and limited economic opportunity, ethnic minority status and discrimination, lack of training and education, and a breakdown in the social institutions of schools and family» are prominent factors that nourish the development of gangs. The story is the same across the country. Gangs offer the youth a sense of belonging, importance, solidarity, protection, support, discipline, power, and what many of them call unconditional love.

103 SUÁREZ-OROZCO. Trans-Formations, 201.
104 A recent Report on «Hispanic Youth Dropping Out of U.S. Schools» reveals that, «Latinos who dropped out after engaging the American education system yields a rate of about 15 percent among 16- to 19-year-olds… The bad news is that this dropout rate is twice as high as the dropout rate for comparable non-Hispanic whites.» In a similar report, the Pew notes that, «Only 8 percent of the nation’s teens are foreign born, but nearly 25 percent [are] school dropouts….» A dropped out youth is characterized «if he or she is not currently enrolled in school and has not completed a high school education. This includes those who have never enrolled in school in the United States.» Pew Hispanic Center. «Hispanic Youth Dropping Out of U.S. Schools,» and «The Higher Drop-Out Rate of Foreign-Born Teens.» Available from http://pewhispanic.org/reports. (Accessed ob 4/13/2006).
106 M. SÁNCHEZ-JANKOWSKI accomplished a thorough research project after studying, and living among 37 different gangs, 13 in Los Angeles, 20 in New York, and 4 in Boston over a period of ten years and five months. What follows are some of his findings, which this author finds helpful for understanding the role of gangs in society. Sociological theories on gangs usually emphasize their delinquency and crime aspects. They generally share the assumption that «gangs emerge from poverty and persist… because socially disorganized poor communities have developed a culture that has spawned these deviant behavior patterns and made it difficult for formal social institutions to institute control.» There is another social theory that suggests that gangs do not emerge from social disorganization. They form within low-income neighborhoods which are, «in fact, organized, but they are organized around an intense competition for, and conflict over, the scarce resources that exist in these areas… the gang emerges as one organizational response – but not the only one – seeking to improve the competitive advantage of its members in obtaining an increase in material resources.» Furthermore, the gang members develop a most important psychological
It is of great importance to note that these youth are often considered as having given up their own ethnic identity. They suffer a sort of double disappreciation and exclusion, namely, from their parents’ ethnic community and from the mainstream community of their country of birth. In other words, they have unclear, undefined, unanchored identities. José Villarreal, in his novel *Pocho*, illustrates this difficult manifestation well.

They had a burning contempt for people of different ancestry, whom they called Americans, and a marked hauteur towards Mexico and towards their parents for their old-country ways. The former feeling came from a sense of inferiority that is a prominent characteristic in any Mexican reared in southern California; and the latter was an inexplicable compensation for that feeling. They needed to feel superior to something, which is a natural thing. The result was that they attempted to segregate themselves from both their cultures, and became truly a lost race. . . . In spite of their behavior, which was sensational at times and violent at others, they were simply a portion of a confused humanity, employing their self-segregation as a means of expression.

These youth, who perceived rejection from both of their core cultures, develop a confused identity tainted with a persecution complex, which further marginalizes them into a continuous state of disregard. Frequently, it is the wrong people and affiliations that provide these youth with short-term fulfillment, which causes them long-lasting negative repercussions. In their vulnerability and confusion, they «come to feel powerless and hopeless…. [G]angs furnish the illusion of emotional, financial, and physical protection, … provide an initially exhilarating lifestyle – one that lies in sharp contrast to that provided by schools» and/or their immediate


families and communities. When that happens, the destruction of their lives is just a matter of time.

8.3 Transcultural Identity.

This type of identity is located in between the two extremes already presented above. It is the most desirable one, because the youth are able to form their bicultural identities by integrating the best aspects of both cultures. It can be paralleled to the in-beyond state of marginality as it is the most desirable. In this process of transculturation, the youth’s identity is developed and nourished by their bicultural and bilingual positive competences. Ed Morales, who refers to U.S. Latino true identity as «Spanglish,» describes it as,

… belonging to at least two identities at the same time, and not being confused or hurt by it . . . It is a displacement from one place, home, to another place, home, in which one feels at home in both places, yet at home in neither place.\(^{110}\)

As a result, these youth develop healthy transcultural identities, an «and / both» state of being, endowing them with the potential to bridge the gap between a diverse-cultural society. These youth can certainly assist in mediating the challenging conflict of race and cultures, while positively building the communities in which they live. They mature and fulfill themselves while being creative agents of their own future. In this regard, it has been pointed out that,

Many who successfully «make it» clearly perceive and appreciate the sacrifices that loved ones have made to enable them to thrive in a new country. Rather than wishing to distance themselves from parents, these youth come to experience success as a way to «pay back» their parents for their sacrifices. At times, they experience a form of «survival guilt» as a result of the deprivation that their parents and other family members have suffered in order to move to the new land. Among many such adolescents, success in school means not only self-advancement and independence, but also, and perhaps even more importantly, making the parental sacrifices worthwhile by «becoming a somebody.» For such youth, «making it» may involve «giving back» to parents, siblings, peers, and other less fortunate members of the community.\(^{111}\)


\(^{111}\) SUÁREZ-OROZCO, *Children,* 113.
In our present time, the youth with transcultural identities have the most advantages in a world of globalism and multiculturalism. The challenge remains, therefore, in how society can better assist the immigrant youth in developing a clear understanding of themselves. This process of forging bicultural identities must emphasize the inclusive recognition of a «both/and» state of being, wherein the Latino youth can be their most proficient selves in more than one cultural context. In this way, the youth may experience what Falicov describes as «a third space – a “culture of biculturality” that they share with others (from a variety of backgrounds).»

When such clarity of identity is reached, the youth not only develop a sense of tolerance, but are also able to embrace the «Other,» while appreciating the differentness and uniqueness of both the «Other» and themselves. When such a condition is realized, the youth truly become a new creation of the best of two worlds. As Claudine Chiawei O’Hearn has uniquely articulated it, their reality embodies the equation that, «one and one don’t necessarily add up to two. Cultural and racial amalgams create a third, wholly indistinguishable category where origin and home are indeterminate.»

This chapter has presented some essential aspects of the socio-cultural condition of Hispanics that directly affect the formational process of the identity and attitudinal patterns of the youth. It began by showing the current demographics, growth, cultural composition, and impact on the social structures, as well as some of the negative reactions in the reception of the Latino youth by the mainstream society. Issues such as social assimilation, integration, multiculturalism, language as a cultural identifier and as an instrument of power, the role of the family, and the influence of social mirroring were considered. The presentation’s aim was to show the different sources of marginalization as a gauntlet of challenges the youth have to endure. The discussion situated important socio-cultural aspects that ultimately affect the religious and spiritual life of the youth. In this regard, it offers essential data for understanding and formulating future effective pastoral strategies and approaches in the service of the Latino youth.

Additionally, the chapter demonstrated that the youth’s lack of political representation and cultural depreciation have negatively affected their

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integration into society, further confusing their cultural identity. Therefore, it demonstrates the urgent need for positive affirmation of self and of group identity. As a response, the next chapter will include the role of the Latino theology and the Church to the frustrated positive recognition and appreciation of the youth’s cultural identity and dignity as a people.
CHAPTER V

Latino Youth in the United States: A Pastoral Response

The total U.S. Catholic population in the year 2011 is 68,293,369, or 22% of the country’s general population. Considering that the total of Latinos in the U.S. is 50.5 million and about 71% of them are Catholics, there are approximately 35.5 million Latino Catholics in the country. It is estimated that presently there are about 23 million Latinos under the age of 24, thus offering a base target group for youth ministry of about 45.5% of the entire Hispanic population. Although this young Latino population will continue to grow in numbers and influence in all aspects of the American Church and society, their active Catholic affiliation is suffering a considerable decrease across the generations. The breakdown of Catholic affiliation by generations since the time of immigration indicates that «74% of foreign-born Hispanics are Catholic, while 66% of second generation and 59% of third or later generation Hispanics consider themselves Catholic.»

2 Under the age of 5 = 5,105,856; from age 5 to 9 = 4,842,139; from age 10 to 14 = 4,661,220; from age 15 to 17 = 2,688,444; from age 18 to 19 = 1,857,671; from age 20 to 24 = 4,367,460; and from age 24 to 29 = 2,274,801. U.S Census Bureau, American Fact Finder from 2010. As found in http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml? (accessed on 2/3/12).
3 This calculation is based on three research studies: the Glenmary Research Center’s Religious Congregations Membership Study 2000, the American Religious Identification Survey 2001, and the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute. However, these percentages are just calculations, and therefore, the actual conclusion might be a couple percentages higher or lower. K. JOHNSON-MONDRAGÓN, ed. The Status of
Following the chapter on the socio-cultural condition of Hispanics, and having considered some of the most pertinent aspects of marginalization that affect and influence the development of the youth’s identity or lack of, and their behaviors, this chapter considers the Latino youth from a pastoral perspective. To situate the pastoral challenge they represent, the chapter begins by presenting a general development of U.S. Hispanic ministry with particular focus on how youth ministry has been considered and attended throughout the process, denoting their marginalization within the church. The Latino Encuentros (national gatherings), Hispanic theology as culturally contextualized, the cultural-religious understanding of Mestizaje (cultural, racial, and religious hybridization), popular religiosity, and the barrios (marginalized Latino neighborhoods as theological locations) are considered. They offer a profile of Hispanic ministry and youth ministry that is characterized by an experience of historical attacks and threats to the Latino’s cultural identity, as well as a lack of convincing religious structural support. Consequently, this ministry not only includes a sense of continuous efforts for survival, but also a needed affirmation, «remembrance, defense, and celebration of Latino/a cultural identity and difference.»

The main section identifies some target subgroups for youth ministry, three broad categories of youth ministry currently being used in the country, and the role of Catholic schools. The aim of the chapter is to present the pastoral challenge of Latino youth ministry as an urgent need for a more articulated, creative, and structurally supported effort. Moreover, the fact that numerous Latino youth are not effectively being reached out to by the current Church poses a significant risk of further alienating them from their inherited Catholic faith. From a missionary point of view, since half or more of all Catholic youth in the country are now of Hispanic heritage, if they are not properly evangelized with seriousness and diligence, the American Catholic Church will deny them the sharing of their God’s unique blessings within the Catholic communion.

Hispanic ministry in the United States began long before the country was formed. The first Spanish Mass was celebrated in the year 1565, in the

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Hispanic Youth and Young Adult Ministry in the United States: A Preliminary Study. Stockton, CA., 73.

town of St. Agustín, Florida. In addition, Spaniard missionaries established missions and cities in what would become the states of Texas and California, and in many other locations from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean during the early 1600s. Only the Native Americans have been in the U.S. longer than the Hispanics. On the East coast, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia established its first office for the care of Hispanics in 1912.

Latino Catholics gained little national recognition in the American Church until the mid-1960s. Historically, the structure of the Eurocentric American Catholic Church did not generously open up spaces nor offer resources for worship and formation, thus marginalizing them. Hispanics have been viewed with suspicion, and as a threat to the religious status quo. Some of their religious popular practices have not been considered refined and/or purified enough, thus suggesting that Latinos are too informal and superstitious. In addition, the perception of their unwillingness to totally assimilate into the mainline American culture has also touched sensitive feelings within the Church. Latinos have been treated as second-class Catholics. They, in turn, began to organize and challenge mother Church to recognize and accept them as an integral part of the U.S. Catholic family. They have sought to have the Church’s Episcopal leadership make a public commitment to them as equal partners in the building of the Kingdom of God. In view of that, they began to develop and to bring their national

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5 The Spaniards Ponce de León and companions arrived at the coast of «Florida in 1513... In 1539, De Soto began a three-year journey that would take him through the future states of Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma... in 1565, founded the town of St. Augustine.... To this little Spanish town went the distinction of being the site of the oldest Christian community of the United States.» J. P. DOLAN. The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present. New York, 20-21.


7 Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in North America, was founded on May 14, 1607. In addition, Plymouth was founded on December 21, 1620. Academic American Encyclopedia. «Jamestown, Plymouth.» Danbury, Connecticut, 1983.


missionary dreams and challenges to the attention of the whole Church. Those efforts led to the so-called *Encuentro*\(^\text{10}\) processes.

1. **The Four Latino Encuentros**

There have been four national *Encuentros*. The first one took place in June 1972 in Washington D.C., and was attended by 250 delegates and nine bishops. The main focus was to reaffirm the Hispanic Catholic identity and to establish Hispanic Apostolates in strategic places throughout the country. Two important points were promoted, namely, (1) the respect and understanding of the Hispanic culture and language, and (2) the clarification that Hispanics do not desire separatism, but a genuine integration into the American Church and society.\(^\text{11}\) At this time, Youth ministry was not formally discussed. However, by contrast, in 1976, the Department of Education of the United States Catholic Conference (USCC) published its First Pastoral Letter on Youth Ministry for English-speaking youth, entitled «*A Vision of Youth Ministry.*»\(^\text{12}\)

The Second *Encuentro* was also held in Washington D.C., in August 1977. This historic event included the consultation of 100,000 people

\(^\text{10}\) *Encuentro*, literally means gathering. It is a process that provided opportunities for Hispanics to analyze their conditions and to organize future plans of action for their common good. These *Encuentros* were also used as confrontational tools. They followed the style used by civil rights movements in their quest for social and policy change. In the beginning, the leaders were Mexican-American Catholics who took part in the civil movements of the 1960s organizing in politics, the economy and society. M. SANDOVAL, «The Organization of a Hispanic Church» in *Hispanic Catholic Culture in the U.S.: Issues and Concerns*, 41. The U.S. bishops said that «The Encuentros have been powerful moments that have unleashed a series of questions, attitudes, and actions, contributing in a definitive way to the journeying of the people in their following of Jesus.» These *Encuentros* have used the methodology known as SEE-JUDGE-ACT-CELEBRATE-EVALUATE, which generates a very critical thinking and a strong missionary commitment. NCCB, «*Encuentro and Mission: A Renewed Pastoral Framework for Hispanic Ministry.*» Washington D.C., 5.


\(^\text{12}\) This pastoral letter, *A Vision of Youth Ministry*, sought to reaffirm the Church’s commitment to American Catholic youth and to focus the work of youth ministry through the Church’s «three-fold mission of Word, Community, and Service.» This was a rather broad document, avoiding concrete and rigid delineations to provide open and free space for future developmental growth. UNITED STATES CATHOLIC CONFERENCE. *A Vision of Youth Ministry*. Washington, DC.,1-4.
from across the country, and 34 bishops, 500 delegates, and 700 observers. The main purpose was the development of national socio-ecclesial infrastructures. Among the predominant issues discussed were human rights, integral education, political responsibility, unity, and pluralism. This gathering challenged the bishops to make a pastoral statement to all U.S. Catholics regarding the Hispanic presence. They responded in 1983 with their First Pastoral Letter on Hispanic ministry, entitled «The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment.» This Letter proved to be a very prophetic statement, as they recognized and challenged the entire Church to reflect, tolerate, appreciate and commit to the pastoral and natural needs of Latino immigrants, who desired to be a part of the ecclesial mainstream. The bishops stated:

We recognize the Hispanic community among us as a blessing from God… This Hispanic presence challenges us all to be more catholic, more open to the diversity of religious expression… We are all called to appreciate our own histories, and to reflect upon the ethnic, racial, and cultural origins, which make us a nation of immigrants.… [T]he history, culture, and spirituality animating the faith [of Hispanics] deserve to be known, shared, and reinforced by us all… Catholic tradition, religion, and culture, faith and life are inseparable for Hispanics… Respect for culture is rooted in the dignity of people made in God’s image. The Church shows its esteem for this dignity by working to ensure that pluralism, not assimilation and uniformity, is the guiding principle in the life of communities in both the ecclesial and secular societies. All of us in the Church should broaden the embrace with which we greet our Hispanic brothers and sisters and deepen our commitment to them.14

The third Encuentro took place in August of 1985. The preparation process included massive grassroots work at all levels of the Church, which culminated a year later with the publication of a document entitled «Prophetic Voices.»15 This document collected the results, concerns, and pastoral priorities of all participating diocesan delegates. They targeted five broad pastoral challenges and commitments, namely, evangelization,

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13 M. Sandoval, «The Organization of a Hispanic Church» in Hispanic Catholic Culture in the U.S.: Issues and Concerns, 144.
14 NCCB. «The Hispanic Presence» in Hispanic Ministry: Three Major Documents, 5-6. [bold is mine for emphasis]
integral education, social justice, youth, and leadership. For the purpose of this dissertation, two points must be emphasized: (1) in the section on youth, the delegates acknowledged and lamented that Latino youth were marginalized from the Catholic Church, and (2) the document concluded with a demand for and a commitment to the creation of a National Office for Hispanic Youth Pastoral Ministry. This data became the groundwork that led to the creation and approval of the bishops’ first National Plan for Hispanic Ministry in November of 1987.

In the National Plan, the bishops described the Church as missionary, communitarian, and participatory to manifest her structural openness and embrace to all Catholics. Latino youth ministry was for the first time seriously discussed and recognized by the bishops as an urgent missionary priority. They expressed their commitment as a «preferential missionary option for the youth.» This National Plan further encouraged the formation of national, regional, and diocesan structures to provide an opportunity for all Hispanics, particularly the youth, to discern God’s plan for them in the U.S. It included their vocational discernment, with special emphasis on religious and priestly vocations. It is relevant to note the bishops’ emphasis on the social, cultural, and religious integration, not assimilation, of Hispanics into the life of the American mainstream. The Bishops stated,

Integration is not to be confused with assimilation. Through the policy of assimilation, new immigrants are forced to give up their language, culture, values and traditions and adopt a form of life and worship foreign to them in order to be accepted as parish members. This attitude alienates new Catholic immigrants from the Church and makes them vulnerable to sects and other denominations. … By integration we mean that our Hispanic people are to be welcomed to our church institutions at all levels. They are to be served in their language when possible, and their cultural values and religious traditions

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16 Ibid., 7-14 [Bold is mine for emphasis]
18 Ibid., 2-3. It is argued that Hispanic youth ministry was not prioritized before because the population as a whole was considered as too young. Therefore, it was presumed that all of Latino ministry was a Youth ministry. In this regard, Figueroa Deck says that because of its youthfulness, «Hispanic ministry is therefore ministry with youth to a degree and extent beyond other Catholic groups.» A. FIGUEROA DECK, S.J. The Second Wave. New York, 144.
are to be respected. Beyond that, we must work toward mutual enrichment through interaction among all our cultures.\footnote{19}{NCCB. «National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry,» in \textit{Hispanic Ministry: Three Major Documents}, 66.}

Ironically, the bishops were not effective in executing their own plan due to their insufficient investing of resources. To save money and other resources, in 1988 they eliminated the original Hispanic National Committee that was responsible for the execution of the plan. Consequently, the missionary and creative goals and challenges that were originally articulated were never recapitulated.\footnote{20}{K. JOHNSON-MONDÁRAGON. «Renewing the Vision: An Hispanic Critique of the USCCB Framework for Youth Ministry in the United States.» An unpublished paper presented at the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas (February 2005) 17.} Moreover, in 1997, the bishops developed another document entitled, \textit{Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry}. This document was a follow-up to their earlier youth pastoral letter (\textit{A Vision of Youth Ministry}, 1976). In that pastoral document, the bishops included the ministry to Latino youth in their section on multicultural ministry.\footnote{21}{The bishops refer only to adolescent youngsters as youth, thus showing a cultural misunderstanding and embrace of Latino youth concept (not just adolescents but unmarried people 30 or less years of age). The bishops offer two important considerations. (1) «Ministry with adolescents recognizes, values, and responds to the diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds and experiences that exist among adolescents and develops culturally responsive and inclusive programming to address those needs. …It helps youth identify and explore their own and other’s ethnic practices…. In stressing with our young Catholics the importance of multicultural awareness, an awareness of difference and diversity, we should take to balance this awareness with the concept of their belonging to a universal Church, that is, with the concept of \textit{unity in diversity} that characterizes the universal Church.» (2) «all ministry with adolescents needs to incorporate ethnic traditions, values, and rituals into ministerial programming; teach about the variety of ethnic cultures in the Catholic Church; provide opportunities for crosscultural experiences; and foster acceptance and respect for cultural diversity. This approach helps young people learn about, understand, and appreciate people with backgrounds different from their own.» USCCB. «Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry.» (Washington, D.C., 22-23.)}

Furthermore, in the same year of 1997, as a preparation for the Jubilee Year, the bishops convoked \textit{Encuentro 2000}, under the theme \textit{Many Faces in God’s House}, which took place in Los Angeles, California. The scope of this gathering was to embrace, project, and celebrate the different
ethnicities and races represented in the Church. The Hispanic leadership for this Encuentro stated,

It was an opportunity for the Church … to gather, to engage in profound conversations about life and faith, to worship together, to learn from each other, to forgive one another and be reconciled, to acknowledge our unique histories, and to discover ways in which we, as Catholic communities, can be one Church.²²

This historic convocation was projected as the culmination of the three former Encuentros, thus portraying the capacity of Hispanic ministries to inclusively lead the way to an open celebration of «unity in diversity» within the One Catholic Church.²³

Subsequently, the U.S. bishops presented a Pastoral Statement, issued in November of 2002, entitled «Encuentro and Mission: A Renewed Pastoral Framework for Hispanic Ministry.» They outlined three important areas for future consideration: (1) Ministerial structures and network, (2) relationship building and collaboration between groups and organizations, and (3) the active participation in all ecclesial ministries.²⁴ This was one of the ways the bishops responded to John Paul II’s call for a New Evangelization. They emphasized their support to missionary communion and solidarity, and encouraged the promotion of Small Ecclesial Communities to counteract the fragmented ethnic Catholic communities. In addition, they emphasized the need for ongoing formation of Hispanic Youth and Young Adult ministry and not just an informal emphasis under the umbrella of Hispanic Ministry.²⁵ Again, as the bishops refer to Latino youth ministry only broadly, the interventions of the national delegates challenged the institutional Church to create new ministerial models for Latino youth ministry with a special emphasis on how to best respond to

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²³ Encuentro 2000 marked the first time that the Church in the United States gathered to recognize, affirm, and celebrate the cultural and racial diversity of its members. With the participation of more than five thousand leaders representing the many faces of the Church – from 150 dioceses and 157 different ethnic groups and nationalities – Catholics were inspired and challenged to embrace a Catholic vision for the third millennium in which all are welcomed to the Father’s table. NCCB. Encuentro and Mission, 2.
²⁴ Ibid., 2.
²⁵ Ibid., 8-14.
the particular needs of second and third generations as well as the newly arrived.²⁶

2. U.S. Latino Mestizo Theology

The U.S. Latino theology is characterized as *mestizo*²⁷ because its locus encompasses the various socio-cultural and religious histories and current marginal circumstances of Latinos in the United States. Their diverse backgrounds offer a matrix for rich theological reflection that is typified by a strong sense of “mixture and otherness.” This theology seeks to celebrate God’s presence in the biological and cultural mixture of U.S. Latinos while rejoicing in God’s unique gifts and blessings in the midst of diversity. Latino theologians have tried to develop a theology that is “imbued with deep sense of respect for the “other,” moving beyond paralyzing stereotypes to understand other theological voices in their own terms and visions … [and to] avoid provincialism and engage in global dialogue.”²⁸

As Latino theologians work within and out of social and religious marginal contexts, they have been highly influenced by Latin American Liberation theology, particularly by “its praxis-oriented methodology.”²⁹

This Latino theology is uniquely rooted in the need, suffering, and neglect

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²⁷ The concept of *mestizaje* has its beginning “in the early sixteenth century with the Spanish conquest and the religious and cultural confluence of the Spaniards, Amerindians, and Africans in the Americas.” This process of mixing “cultures, bloods and religious traditions” projected God’s presence in a new creation. This divine manifestation, characterized by people’s struggles for survival, is understood as the beginning of *mestizo* Christianity in the New World. As U.S. Hispanics live in a multicultural “mixture and interrelatedness,” their unique socio-cultural and religious circumstances become the locus for U.S. Latino theology. It seeks to discern how God is present and creating new life from within the tensive and ambiguous U.S. *mestizo* Hispanic condition. A. J. BAÑUELAS. «Introduction,» in *Mestizo Christianity*. Eugene, OR., 1.
²⁸ F. F. SEGOVIA. «Two Places and No Place on Which to Stand,» in *Mestizo Christianity*, 36-37. He suggests that this way U.S. Latino theology would “not eschew otherness and alienation, but rather use it as a source of identity and affirmation, comfort and understanding, autonomy and criticism.” Ibid, 37.
experienced in the richest country of the world. Fernando Segovia believes that considering,

… the overwhelming cultural barriers faced by all members of the group (the dominant perception of an inferior, uncivilized, and uneducated people), and an enormous social barriers faced by the vast majority of the group (e.g., political, socioeconomic, and educational), such theology inevitably involves a path of struggle, liberation, and self-determination.

Latino theology is, therefore, the result of courageous efforts of theologians in the trenches. In the midst of so many adversities and discouraging challenges, this theology has articulated God’s blessings and aspirations for the Latino community while challenging the institutional Church to walk with and assist her Latino children. In this regard, Virgil Elizondo wrote that:

The accomplishments of the last twenty-five years have been miraculous, the problems facing us today are scary, and the challenges and opportunities are the greatest ever! … There is no doubt that the more we recall our history in this country, the more we discover the oppression and the suffering that our people have endured. The Church was not always present when we needed it the most, and often we felt like abandoned and orphaned children, like unwelcome stepchildren in a family that not only did not care for us but was even ashamed of us for being who we were… It has been a painful past, but

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30 A. M. ISASI-DÍAZ explains that, «The need is that of our communities, which as marginalized and oppressed people … struggle daily to survive at the material and cultural levels. The commitment is … to [that] struggle… all around the United States. The conviction is … that religion … is at the heart of our culture, at the heart of our daily lives.» A. M. ISASI-DÍAZ. «Strangers No Longer» in Hispanic/Latino Theology: Challenge and Promise. A. M. ISASI-DÍAZ - F. F. SEGOVIA, eds. Minneapolis., 367-370. V. Elizondo illustrates some of the consequential conditions of Hispanics well: «Abandoned, undernourished, and homeless children are found everywhere around the country. Teenage drugs, violence, sex, and early pregnancies are extremely high among our people. Our Hispanic school dropout rate is at an all-time high at all levels at the educational spectrum. So few of our people reach college level, much less the Ph.D. Jails, prisons, detention centers, and the cells along death row are packed with our people…. What has been most sacred for us in the past is quickly disappearing with the breakdown of family. There are multiple «couples» wherein each child has a different last name, no extended family, and the worst: no grandparents present around the family. V. ELIZONDO. «Foreword» in El Cuerpo de Cristo, 12.

31 F. F. SEGOVIA. «Two Places and No Place on Which to Stand,» in Mestizo Christianity, 35.
not a sad one, for our faith enabled us to contend with the harsh realities of
daily life, rise above them and celebrate life as it is a gift of God.\textsuperscript{32}

Moreover, Latino theology has taken the task of stressing the importance
of the survival of the Latino people in the U.S. as dignified by God. To do
so, Latino theologians have embraced the challenge of affirming Latinos'
«self-identity, cultural identity, and difference recognition.»\textsuperscript{33} They share
the conviction that Latinos must understand and appreciate their unique
racial and ethnic hybridization, with all the ramifications of its
marginalized condition, in order to take ownership of their positive cultural
and religious identity. Latino theologians recognize the prominent role of
culture as a vehicle for regaining, renewing, and affirming a «denied
positive identity» in the United States.\textsuperscript{34}

It is well to note that this U.S. Latino theology has, from the very
beginning, emphasized the centrality of personal conversion to Christ as the
first step toward empowerment for collective social and ecclesiological
change. This traditional Christological expectation leads to an
anthropological process of liberation in which the people, particularly the
youth, would recognize their self-worth and dignity. The message seeks to
recognize and appreciate the presence of God in the past, and to celebrate
God’s constancy in a new embracing manner. Elizondo further states,
«Our historical journey … was as necessary as the way of the cross for the
emergence of a truly new humanity. We want to forgive the abuses of the
past but never forget the wounds as we rejoice in what has come, through
what is just the beginning of a new future.»\textsuperscript{35} U.S. Latino theologians, by
and large, believe that in the building of God’s kingdom, their unique
theological approach to liberation and affirmation must include a realistic
criticism of past and present injustices within and outside the Church.\textsuperscript{36}

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\textsuperscript{32} V. ELIZONDO. «Foreword» in \textit{El Cuerpo de Cristo: The Hispanic presence in
the U.S. Catholic Church}. P. CASARELLA - R. GOMEZ, eds. New York, 9. [Italic
mine for emphasis]\textsuperscript{33} B. VALENTIN. \textit{Mapping Public Theology: Beyond Culture, Identity, and
Difference}, xiii.\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 45.\textsuperscript{35} V. ELIZONDO. «Foreword» in \textit{El Cuerpo de Cristo}, 20.\textsuperscript{36} Stevens-Arroyo says that, «those who would deny … this possibility do not
properly understand that theology seeks to define the Kingdom of God even if that
implies criticism...» A. M. STEVENS-ARROYO. \textit{Prophets Denied Honor: An
Anthology on the Hispanic Church in the United States}. New York, 3.
\end{flushright}
Accordingly, Latino theology, as cultural contextualized, prominently uses the concepts of "mestizaje" and "popular religiosity" to highlight God-given identity and symbolic cultural difference in the United States. Their hope is to acknowledge «fertile space for new formations and celebrations of cultural identity to take hold» in the American Church and society.\(^{37}\)

### 2.1 Mestizaje

Virgilio Elizondo first pioneered the use of the concept of *mestizaje* as a locus of theological reflection to discern the historical Christian experience of Latinos in the United States. Theologically, the concept has been understood as a divine manifestation of a new creation out of and through the suffering experience of resistance, the search for identity, and evangelical missionary purpose. In this light, *mestizaje* leads to the understanding of a *mestizo* Christianity that is a dynamic reality «rooted in resistance against assimilationist tendencies by any oppressive, dominant culture. For this reason, Latino theology affirms *mestizaje* in the Latino’s struggles for self-identity and self-determination and links it with God’s plan for a new world order.»\(^{38}\) Elizondo points out that since the condition of Latinos is one of «unfinished» and/or «undefined» identity, their potential for newness will be actualized only when they «choose to live out the radical meaning of their new being,» and not a mere copy of either their parent groups, or the normative way of life in which they live.\(^{39}\) He supports his reasoning by considering Jesus’ cultural identity and mission as a Galilean Jew.

Jerusalem, Greece, and Rome were all important with or without Jesus, but not Galilee… It was a region of mixed peoples and languages… Because of their mixture with others, they were marginated by their own people. There were no doubts about the cultural *mestizaje* that was taking place and, knowing the ordinary situation of human beings, a certain amount of biological *mestizaje* was equally taking place. Culturally and linguistically speaking, Jesus was certainly a *mestizo* between Judaism and the other cultures that flourished in Galilee… Because the world expected nothing good to come out of Galilee, God chose it to be the starting point of God’s human presence among us. The

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\(^{37}\) B. VALENTIN. *Mapping Public Theology*, 41.


\(^{39}\) V. ELIZONDO. «Mestizaje as a Locus of Theological Reflection,» in *Mestizo Christianity*, 17.
principle behind the cultural image of the Galilean identity is that God chooses what the world rejects. What is marginal to the world is central to God. According to this perspective, the experience of mestizaje in the life of Jesus provides a new paradigm of the kingdom of God that continues to bring new life, meaning, and clarity to the current Latino cultural identity and mission as God’s chosen agents. Elizondo concludes:

Because we are inside-outsiders, we appreciate more clearly the best of the traditions of both groups, while equally appreciating the worst of the situation of both. It is precisely in this double identity that we in effect have something of unique value to offer both. The very reasons for the margination are the bases of our liberating and salvific potential not only for ourselves but for the others as well. In a privileged way, God is present in the marginated, for distance from the powers of the world is closeness to God. It is consistently in the frontier regions of human belonging that God begins the new creation. The established centers seek stability, but the frontier regions can risk to be pioneers. It is the frontier people who will be the trailblazers of the new societies… This is our «divine must»!

As Latino theology situates U.S. Hispanics as being part of and shaped by both cultures, yet not really possessing either one in its entirety, it defines their unique identity as being «a new mestizaje.» In this sense, it situates this mestizo condition as becoming «the basis for realizing an inclusive, albeit at times agonal, pursuit of multicultural relations… an experimental basis for pursuing a substantive unity-in-diversity between the growing, not diminishing, cornucopia of cultural groups that make up the United States in the twenty-first-century.»

3. Popular Religiosity

Popular Religiosity is often described as «a form of popular devotion among Hispanics, based more on indigenous cultural elements than on official Roman worship patterns.» In reality, the practice of this religiosity contains inculturated expressions of gospel teachings that project the peoples’ mestizo religious identity (a Hispanic Christian self-

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40 Ibid., 18-19.
41 Ibid., 24, 25.
42 J. F. BURKE. Mestizo Democracy. College Station: TX., 10.
disclosure). Roberto Goizueta says that popular religiosity is «by definition a theopoetic mediation of the historical praxis of the oppressed, marginalized community,» which, in turn, demonstrates «the basis of the community’s identity and, thus, of its ability to withstand and resist the imposition of identity from without.»  

Orlando Espín, in his investigation on the subject, writes that this religiosity «allows its practitioners to discover power there where hegemonic ideology had veiled the possibilities for self-determination. Instead of utter powerlessness, through popular religion’s symbols, the people can define themselves as empowered.»

Much has been written about popular religiosity and the different symbolic variations that exist due to the Hispanic diverse backgrounds. There are two images, relevant for the purpose of this dissertation, which are constant and most prominent symbols across the U.S. Latin communities. They are the suffering Jesus, Mary, the mestiza mother, and, by extension, the native Juan Diego in the context of the Guadalupe encounter. Espín has argued that these two images can theologically help understand Latino religiosity «as a cultural expression of the sensus fidelium.»

The drama of the suffering of Jesus is always presented as bloody—showing the desperation of the agony in the most graphic manner—to the point that it scares and causes nightmares to some children. It does not leave any doubts about the message that it conveys. Latinos identify with all elements of the redeeming and nourishing drama of the generous kenotic service: the incarnation, the accusation and verdict of death, the passion and crucifixion, and the actual death of Jesus on the cross. The appreciation and devotions derived from this fundamental image characterize the Catholic religious identity of U.S. Hispanics in a thorough

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44 R. S. GOIZUETA. «U.S. Hispanic Popular Catholicism as Theopoetics» in Hispanic/Latino Theology: Challenge and Promise, 268, 272.
46 O. ESPÍN. «Tradition and Popular Religion,» in Mestizo Christianity, 149. He considers the use of the two most popular devotions, the Suffering Christ and Mary (particularly of Guadalupe), as bearers of the sensus fidelium. He develops this thought thoroughly in his book, The Faith of the People: Theological Reflections on Popular Catholicism. New York, 64.
manner. By identifying with the marginalized Jesus, they find within him a mirror of their own marginality.\(^{47}\)

These sacramental elements are kept in *memoria* as Latinos celebrate the Via Crucis at home and on the streets throughout the year. Sixto Garcia states, «The broken humanity of Jesus stands as a sacrament of the brokenness of the body of the Hispanic communities. Jesus the Christ is our brother in sorrow and oppression, and we can touch him, mourn with him, die with him, and yes, also hope with him.»\(^{48}\) This actualized commemoration is not just a personal, but also a collective identification that helps the people «appreciate better Jesus’ active march toward the cross, and not just the passive aspect of suffering on the cross.»\(^{49}\) Goizueta says that taking under consideration Christ’s post-resurrection appearance to the disciples, «to erase [the wounds] is to erase those memories and, with them, our very identity as persons, without which there can be no liberation that arises out of our own history as subjects.»\(^{50}\) Johann Baptist Metz refers to this reality when he says, «The Christian *memoria* insists that the history of human suffering is not merely part of the pre-history of freedom but remains an inner aspect of the history of freedom.»\(^{51}\)

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\(^{47}\) ELIZONDO describes such devotions as lived and celebrated by the Mexican-Americans: «…devotion to the crucified Lord—scourged, bleeding, agonizing—is one of the deepest traits of Mexican-American faith… El Viernes Santo (Good Friday) is the … celebration par excellence. The commemoration of the Lord’s crucifixion is the celebration of their life—a life of suffering. Their daily life is assumed in his death and therein defies the anomalies of life…. The drama of the Good Friday is not just celebrated ritually in the churches but lived out by Mexican-American people. Beginning on Holy Thursday with the agony in the garden, on Good Friday the way of the cross is reenacted by the people, then the crucifixion, and the seven last words of Jesus from the cross. Finally, in the evening, there is the pésame a la Virgen (a visit [with condolences] to the Virgin). The final… reenactment is the burial service…. It is not an «other-worldly» make believe; it is a celebration of nuestra vida.» \(^{52}\)

\(^{48}\) Cited in R. S. GOIZUETA. «U.S. Hispanic Popular Catholicism as Theopoetics,» in *Hispanic/Latino Theology: Challenge and Promise*, 273.


\(^{50}\) Ibid., 275.
Furthermore, there is the *mestiza* Mary of Guadalupe\(^52\) with her determining role and celebrating presence in the very midst of people’s suffering. The relationship of the Mother to her suffering Son is seen by Hispanics as the same as the mother to the suffering Latino children.\(^53\) Moreover, in the Guadalupe event, they see in Mary’s identification of sending a marginalized *Juan Diego* on the difficult and seemingly impossible mission to confirm her affirming and empowering presence.

The apparitions of the Virgin of Guadalupe are seen more like an encounter that resembles the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus to the Apostles. After being sent by the virgin of Guadalupe, «Juan Diego and the community he represents are no longer the passive objects of someone else’s history but are now human subjects themselves, with all the rights and dignity such an assertion entails… [W]hat appears is not simply the Virgin but Juan Diego himself—as a dignified human person.»\(^54\) Juan Diego is transformed from thinking and seeing himself through the oppressors’ lenses, to appreciating and believing in himself and in his God-given potential to serve the common good. In this way, Mary of Guadalupe presents herself «not as a pacifier but an energizer which gives meaning, dignity and hope to the marginalized and suffering of today’s society.»\(^55\)

\(^{52}\) The *Nican Mopohua* is the first description of Guadalupe’s appearances, written in their language for *Nahuatl* people. See C. L. SILLER ACUÑA. *Para Comprender el mensaje de María de Guadalupe*. Buenos Aires, 11-16. Also R. NEBEL. *Santa María Tonantzín: Virgin of Guadalupe*. Mexico City, 167-264.

\(^{53}\) Espín states that, «First of all, Mary of Guadalupe has always been perceived by the people as a tender mother, always compassionate, accepting, supporting and forgiving. And secondly, she is seen as protector, identified with her people but most especially with the weakest and neediest. She procures justice for the oppressed and takes up their cause.» In regard to her *mestizo* identity, Mary’s entire appearance manifested a projection and representation of the people she was evangelizing. But she has been associated with the Aztec deities *Tonantzín* (literally «our mother»), who «was frequently said to be pregnant, or to be carrying a small child on her back or arms. When depicted as pregnant, the religious symbol representing the fundamental reconciliation of opposites was placed over her womb. Her sacred place had been precisely on the *Tepeyac*… The woman who spoke to Juan Diego (in his native *Nahuatl*) did so in the hill of *Tepeyac*, wore a type of dress with mantle, and appeared to be pregnant, and had the symbol of the reconciliation of opposites over her womb.» O. ESPÍN. «Tradition and Popular Religiosity,» in *Mestizo Christianity*, 161.

\(^{54}\) R. S GOIZUETA. «U.S. Hispanic Popular Catholicism as Theopoetics,» 284.

\(^{55}\) V. ELIZONDO. *La Morenita: Evangelizer of the Americas*. San Antonio, TX., 120. The reflection on Our Lady of Guadalupe’s dual greeting to Juan Diego: «Listen, my most abandoned son, dignified Juan: Where are you going?» is extremely significant
These Latino theologians conclude that the Guadalupe event was the beginning of a new, empowered sense of identity and mission for the mestizo Church. Moreover, Elizondo has found a clear theological progression of Mary’s transforming impact on the culture, mission, and religious identity, of all mestizos and Latinos in the United States. It was «the mestizo image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, who provided the beginning of the new socio-cultural...birth of a new people. In and through her, new meanings, myths and symbols,» 

56 a manifestation began to transcend their futures. Therefore, the significance of Mary’s encounter with the natives of Mexico has had an unimaginable relevance to the universal Church, and particularly to the U.S. Latino Catholic Church. This conviction prompted Elizondo radically to declare,

The more I try to comprehend the intrinsic force and energy of the apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe to Juan Diego in Tepeyac in 1531, at the very beginning of the Americas, the more I dare to say that I do not know of any other event since Pentecost that has had such revolutionary, profound, lasting, far-reaching, healing, and liberating impact on Christianity... In time, I started to recognize her as the foundation of Mexican identity and Mexican Catholicism. Growing up in the southwestern United States, I realized that it

for this presentation. Elizondo states that Juan Diego was «abandoned to abusive labor and nothingness by the authorities of the new society but recognized as dignified by La Virgen. Juan Diego stands for every person whose self-identity has been crushed, whose credibility has been destroyed, whose sense of worth has been trampled. As he will tell us himself, he is nothing; he is a bunch of dry leaves. He has been made to think of himself as excrement (v.40). He no longer knows himself as he truly is, seeing himself only through others’ eyes as totally worthless and useless (vv. 35-41). This is the most destructive element of oppression: the oppressed cease believing in themselves and become convinced that only the oppressors can know and do things correctly. . . . But La Virgen knows who he truly is and will reveal his true self to him: a self that is dignified, honored, and trustworthy. Here begins the gospel through Our Lady of Guadalupe. . . . What La Virgen recognizes and says is ultimate truth. It is the truth of Juan Diego himself. Ibid., 52-53. For an excellent presentation on the role of Guadalupe see J. RODRIGUEZ. Our Lady of Guadalupe: Faith and Empowerment among Mexican-American Women. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994).

56 V. ELIZONDO. «Mestizaje as a Locus of Theological Reflection,» in Mestizo Christianity, 12. He goes on to say that, «As the physical birth of Mexicans had come through the conquest, the cultural birth came through the apparition. It is only after the apparition that those who had wanted to die now wanted to live and celebrate life.» Ibid., 12.
was her devotees, the Guadalupana societies, that had kept our people Catholic even when we had not had the service of priests and religious.  

Latino Catholic families manifest their religious affinity to Mary by many devotions in the form of the Rosary, Novenas, Las Posadas, special «promises,» and «pilgrimages,» etc. Her significant presence has remained central in the religious convictions and practices of Latino people throughout the centuries. Orlando Espín believes that Mary Guadalupe has belonged to the majority of people because from the beginning «she was judged to belong to the poor, since the educated and the wealthy had their Virgin of the Remedies.» As her influence continues to maintain prominent relevance in Latino homes, it is paramount for U.S. Latino youth to now understand and appreciate Mary’s message for them. The more they know about her history and continuous presence, the more they can identify with her message and that of the testimony of Juan Diego.

The transcendence of the wholeness of the human person through an identity and life in Jesus Christ is indeed at the heart of Guadalupe’s message. Providentially, with his intense devotion to Mary, Pope John Paul II also embraced her message and prominently featured it in his own anthropology of the human person. In his opening address at the Puebla Conference, January 28, 1979, he said, «the truth we owe to human beings is, first and foremost, a truth about themselves . . . [for] one of the most glaring weaknesses of present-day civilization lies in an inadequate view of the human being.» This is the case of many Latino youth.

57 V. ELIZONDO. Guadalupe: Mother of the New Creation. New York, xi. (Italic mine for emphasis). He continues saying that, «Today, I see her as the beginning of a new creation, the mother of a new humanity, and the manifestation of the femininity of God, a figure offering unlimited possibilities for creative and liberating reflection. Juan Diego is a prototype of the new human being of the Americas.» Ibid., xi.

58 Las Posadas are a devotional celebration of the pregnancy of Mary with a particular re-enactment of Mary and Joseph searching for shelter to give birth to Jesus.

59 O. O. ESPÍN. «Tradition and Popular Religiosity,» in Mestizo Christianity, 159.

60 The Puebla Conference gathered all Latin American bishops and took place in the city of Puebla, Mexico, in January 1979. This was John Paul II’s first pastoral trip of his Pontificate.

61 JOHN PAUL II. «Opening Address at Puebla Conference, I,9,» in Puebla and Beyond: Documentation and Commentary. New York: Orbis Books, 1979. Also see Centesimus Annus, 11.3. He deepened this understanding throughout his papal teachings and encyclicals. The unity of the person of Jesus reveals both who God is as well as man’s true identity. The Holy Father emphasizes that, «In Christ and through Christ man has acquired full awareness of his dignity, of the heights to which he is
4. The *Barrios* as Theological Locations

The majority of Latinos are concentrated in urban centers, living in areas known as «*barrios*». These are dangerous and tough living places because of the misery, neglect, violence, drugs, and death found there. Latinos in these environments and circumstances find solace in a Jesus that suffers with them, but who also «criticizes any society that fosters death by creating human wretchedness» and who works towards a true fulfillment «in the existential setting of marginality.» These people are reaffirmed by the biblical examples of how God chose the poor and the insignificant places for the realization of an alternative just society—God’s kingdom.

However, the Church’s ministry has frequently been criticized for offering only a passive understanding and compassion, as supposed to a participating, active solidarity for creating a new tangible just world. It is frequently believed that the Church is purposely protecting the unjust *status quo*. Jesus’ suffering is not always presented as a source of empowerment for a new life, thus leading people to become paralyzed conformists. Consequently, people understand life only in the «context of ultimate salvation beyond history,» and therefore, they will find «personal salvation apart from social, economic, political, and institutional renewal.» The message should be, says Recinos, that, «Jesus calls Latinos to accept their place in salvific history that refuses to accept that a new way of life will not come to the barrio.»

5. U.S. Latino Youth Ministry and its Target Groups

Although Hispanic ministry has a long history, youth ministry has not fully developed into an integrated missionary system. Its development continues to seek a more articulated vision and mission that can be representative of and responsive to the changing circumstances of the

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footnotes:

62 *Barrios*, Spanish word for neighborhoods. As affluent mainstream families have moved out to new, better, and/or suburban neighborhoods, they have left these *barrios*, due to their decaying structures, thus making them available to poor families. In some cities, «Most barrios, however, remain a place apart, where Latinos live separated from others by custom, language, and preference. They are surrounded by a city but are not part of it.» R. SURO. *Stranger Among Us*, 6.

63 H. J. RECINOS. «The Barrio as the Locus of a New Church» in *Hispanic/Latino Theology*, 183.

64 Ibid., 184-185
Latino youth. While there have been many successful efforts, the situation is in urgent need of committed and creative pastoral attention. It is somewhat ironic that after five centuries of Hispanic presence in the country, the First Encuentro for Latino Youth and Young Adults Ministry finally took place the 8-11 of June in 2006 at Notre Dame University, in Indiana. The preface to the preparation and consultation Manual for this Youth Encounter states:

Unfortunately, Hispanic children and young people have only benefited marginally from the impressive growth of Hispanic ministry and youth ministry the past thirty years. The unspoken assumption that Hispanic children and young people knew English, or were in the process of learning it, made the development of catechetical programs in Spanish quite difficult, even for First Communion and Confirmation. In the area of youth ministry, this assumption was even more prevalent as Hispanic youth were simply expected to assimilate into the existing parish youth groups and activities. The assumption has proved to be incorrect, as a large segment of the young Catholic population has gone without appropriate pastoral attention.

There are unmistakably serious challenges creating a need for creative pastoral responses. However, without deeply understanding the conditions and circumstances posed by the Latino youth ministry, past mistakes may be repeated. To prevent this occurrence, it is paramount for those seeking to minister the Hispanic youth to enter not just as observers, but as active participants in the life conditions of these youth.

The socio-cultural consideration of Latinos in the U.S., as presented earlier, shows their segmented marginalized condition; for some this condition is generally caused by their diverse history of immigration, for others, by the recognition and acceptance, or lack of it, by the mainstream society. That data offers insight into the pastoral opportunity to attend to the different needs of various groups within the category of «Hispanic youth.» With that in mind, this section will consider some target groups for ministry and then evaluate different programs and models of existing Latino youth ministries that have been executed in different parts of the country.

The National Catholic Network de Pastoral Juvenil Hispana (La Red). «Manual: First National Encounter for Hispanic Youth and Young Adult Ministry.» (Co-sponsored by the USCCB and the University of Notre Dame, 2006), citation from the Preface.
There are four broad categories of Hispanic youth in the United States, as categorized by the study, «The Status of Hispanic Youth and Young Adult Ministry in the United States (SHYYAM).» Understanding these categories can clarify the future ministerial objective and facilitate more success. They are: (1) the Immigrant Workers, (2) the Identity-Seekers, (3) the Mainstream Movers, and (4) the Youth at Risk and Gang members.

5.1 The Immigrant Workers

These youth, ages 16 to 30 years old, are first-generation immigrants, who generally come into the country lacking legal documentation. They join the labor force in back-breaking, low-paying jobs because they do not have a formal education and/or technical skills. The prospect for completing their education is slight, due to their lack of time, support, and financial resources. Although these youth have a very strong ethnic identity, they are adrift within the new cultural circumstances. They can, therefore, suffer the imposition of the dominant cultural determinants without understanding the ramifications such impositions entail. These youth have learned survival English to do their shopping and operate in the workplace. Most of them are religious and bring with them the deeply ingrained worship practices and devotions that characterize Latin American popular Catholicism. Naturally, when they come to the U.S. they expect the Church to offer them pastoral assistance. When that is lacking, they become vulnerable to the many Pentecostal and Evangelical congregations that are eager to embrace them, and who in fact, offer very personalized pastoral assistance.

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67 George BORAN. «Hispanic Catholic Youth in the United States,» in Chicago Studies, Vol. 36, No. 3. (December 1997), 246.
68 Azevedo, in his presentation of four types of U.S. Hispanics, based on the typology developed by Juan Lorenzo Hinojosa, describes these immigrants as pioneers who «Decided to leave their homeland, and were prepared to pay a very high price to make a new life. They have taken the basic elements of their culture along with them: family values, work and professional skills, and distinctive religious convictions and expressions. They maintain their customs and language. They do so by multiplying contacts with other immigrants like themselves. They live in barrios in great urban centers and they try to support one another. They endure the heavy weight of cultural uprooting and the onslaught of the dominant culture.» M. AZEVEDO. «Hispanic Leaders: Faith and Culture in the New Millennium,» in Chicago Studies, Vol. 36, No. 3. (December 1997), 229.
69 K. JOHNSON-MONDAGÓN. The Status of Hispanic Youth, 6-7.
5.2 The Identity-Seekers

These youth are generally U.S. born citizens, bilingual yet ambivalent about their biculturalism. The negative social mirroring, discrimination, poor education and patronizing governmental public policies affect them. Although the majority of them are enrolled in public schools, many do not graduate from high school, and only a small number of them pursue a university degree due to a lack of support and/or financial resources. The SHYYAM study differentiates this category into four particular groups, namely the «searching,» the «stalled,» the «defeated,» and the «rebellious.»

5.2.1 The «Searching» youth recognize and appreciate the sacrifices their parents are making for them. However, when they compare themselves to the mainstream youth, they see themselves as disadvantaged. Many of them are embarrassed of their parents and their decaying poor neighborhoods. While in school, their mainstream peers reject them; in turn, these Latino youth reject their peers as a defensive mechanism. Frequently, they find refuge for themselves in a job considered respectable or in community relationships.

5.2.2 There are the «Stalled» youth. They have experienced minimum encouragement from significant people during their developmental process in childhood and adolescence. They are not able to visualize beyond their immediate limited reality and, therefore, may spend their lives looking for instant gratification and stimulation. These youth are often influenced to participate in illegal activities. In addition, because their self-esteem is low, they have difficulties in recognizing and nourishing their strengths. When and if they start a family, their children are at risk to become part of a vicious cycle of «abuse, neglect, and a life of gang activity and crime.»

5.2.3 Furthermore, there are the «Defeated» youth, who compare themselves with other, more affluent youth, conclude that their parents are a failure in the U.S. and that they are destined to follow a similar course. They have no high aspirations for accomplishing a formal education, thus ends up dropping out of school. These youth blame society as a whole for their lack of social support and opportunities, and harbor feelings of resentment and anger, which, «turned inward … takes the form of self-doubt or even self-hatred. To relieve the suffering from their low self-esteem, they begin to engage in self-destructive behaviors such as binge

\[\text{70 Ibid., 8-10.}\]
drinking, drugs, promiscuous sexual activity, and in extreme cases suicide.»\textsuperscript{71} These youth become the perfect targets for gang membership.

5.2.4 Additionally, there are the «Rebellious» youth. They blame mainstream society, and not necessarily their parents, for their fate. They are different than the «defeated» youth in that they turn their resentment outwardly against society at large. Interestingly, the SHYYAM study found that, when given the proper encouragement and training in anger control, these youth could nourish positive perspectives and become «social activists.» The right timing for intervention is the key to success. However, when they are not attended, these youth may end up participating in destructive and criminal activities.\textsuperscript{72}

It is calculated that «Identity-Seekers» make up 25 to 45 percent of the overall youth Hispanic population in the country. As such, they are a very significant target group for ministry in the Catholic Church. They are in need of an integral formation program with more emphasis on psycho-cultural and spiritual elements.\textsuperscript{73}

5.3 The Mainstream Movers

These youth are generally second and third generation Americans with traditional Latino families. They take education very seriously; they consider it an asset for their personal and family advancement in the socio-economic ladder. Many of their parents have good professional jobs and live in affluent neighborhoods. A great number of these youth are graduates from private Catholic schools. Some of them may not speak Spanish well, though many see the value of a second language and might make a great effort to learn it. In the case of new arrivals that fall into this category, they come legally and their parents already have considerable formal education and financial resources. This group develops a great sense of conformity with the dominant society and may manifest indifference toward their Hispanic culture to better adapt to the mainstream culture. They often show a condescending attitude toward the less educated or poorer Latino youth.\textsuperscript{74}

Consequently, the SHYYAM study subdivides the «Mainstream Movers» into three segments: (a) those from rich and educated Latin
American families who come from and to comfortable, and secure environments, and thus with a privileged place in society; (b) those using education and whatever venues possible to get out of their «barrios.» These youth consider the other youth that have failed in their neighborhood as examples of what not to do, as a challenge to overcome.\(^75\) (c) The third segment is youth who work as hard as humanly possible, but in an objective and sensitive manner.\(^76\) This subgroup is conscious that, through challenges and sacrifices, it can be possible for them to overcome their deficient situation. They acknowledge and are inspired by the example of other successful Latinos, and they commit to becoming examples for others to follow their path as well.\(^77\)

5.4 Gang Members and Youth at Risk

These youth are divided into three subgroups: (a) the gangs members: youth who join gangs for a variety of reasons, as stated earlier\(^78\); (b) the

\(^75\) Azevedo’s second and third types of Hispanics can be placed in these two subsegments of mainstream movers as presented above. He describes them as «immigrants who confront directly the issue of adaptation to Euro-American culture . . . [and those] characterized by a certain autonomy and a critical attitude toward both the culture of origin and the dominant culture.» M. AZEVEDO. Hispanic Leaders: Faith and Culture, 229.

\(^76\) This subgroup decides, “to belong to both cultures while adjusting to each one in a differentiated manner. They have opted for bilinguality and biculturalism and they live them with freedom and autonomy. As bicultural persons they strive to identify what is worth saving, what is of value, in each culture. They do not allow themselves to be instrumentalized or alienated. They do not think of this option as a static one. Rather, they understand that culture is a dynamic reality. . . . Well-informed about both universes, this group pursues channels for cultural integration. It sees formal education and professional development as indispensable means for earning recognition and acceptance in the dominant culture.» M. AZEVEDO. Hispanic Leaders: Faith and Culture, 229-230.

\(^77\) JOHNSON-MONDAGÓN. The Status of Hispanic Youth, 13-14.

\(^78\) Earlier in this chapter, a detailed description of gang life was included. However, the underlying element is the despair, disregard, and threat they experience in society. They come to feel they must run and protect themselves, thus finding refuge in gang life. Generally, these youth are second and third generation Americans, but there is a considerable number of first generation as well. The educational system has not worked for them. They live in urban environments infested with poverty, violence and drugs, thus putting them in high risks of losing their lives at a young age. They could end up killed or in prisons. For further information, visit Gang Research Online at http://www.uic.edu/orgs/kbc/stereotypes/BrokFam.html. See also the National Criminal Justice Reference Service at http://www.ncjrs.org/txtfiles/fs000190.txt.
youth at risk: those living in neighborhood with gang’s subculture: and (c) the gang associates: the youth «who have adopted gang attire and are attracted to the gang lifestyle but have not formally been accepted into the gang.» 79 Generally, many gang members show glimpse of religious influences and practices in their lives. Many of their gang symbols have Catholic associations, such as Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Rosary, the face of a crying Jesus, etc. They attend Church services on occasion, mostly when a peer or family member has been murdered, a baptism of a child, a Quinciañera, 80 a wedding, etc. They also pray for protection when they are in trouble or in a dangerous mission that involves an attack on a rival gang or in a drug deal. 81 Ministry among them is one of the most serious and difficult challenges for the Church. Their needs are complex and require a specialized pastoral response.

6. U.S. Current Youth Programs

Presently, U.S. Catholic youth ministry operates three general pastoral programs in the parish level: the Mainstream Youth Ministry programs, the Confirmation Programs, and the Pastoral Juvenil Hispana.

6.1 Mainstream Youth Ministry

The «Mainstream Youth Ministry» programs seek to offer pastoral assistance to high school students within the parish group structure. This ministry has a good record of considerable growth and success in its

79 JOHNSON-MONDRAGÓN, The Status of Hispanic Youth, 15. Gang membership is quite large in the United States. The 1999 National Youth Gang Survey (NYGS) «reports that of 840,500 active gang members in the U.S. in 1999, about 47% were Hispanic… Active gang members in 2000 decreased to 772,500… [with] 360,000 active Hispanic… about 1% of the overall Hispanic population in the U.S.» Ibid., 62-63.

80 A Quinciañera is a fifteenth birthday celebration for Latino girls. These celebrations have a social and a religious component. There is an approved liturgical text that can be used within the context of Mass and/or outside. Generally, this ceremony celebrates the passage from adolescence to adulthood in the social and religious contexts. For some of these youth, such celebrations are the only or the few times they attend Church. They are excellent teachable opportunities to celebrate faith, life and to evangelize the Latino youth.

81 A parish where I was pastor has «perpetual adoration,» and gang members would come at different hours of the day and night to pray and reflect. When I asked them about their praying, they would remind me of the necessity to ask for God’s and the Virgin’s blessings and protection.
outreach to English-speaking mainstream youth. Presently, a majority of dioceses have established their own independent office for this ministry, with most of them having paid professional ministers. These dioceses are offering ongoing training for their leaders to facilitate a more effective and articulated ministry in parishes. This Mainstream Ministry, however, has not been as successful in their outreach to Hispanic youth.

There are around 4.22 million Catholics of high school age in the United States. Mainstream high school ministry does not appear to serve many, if any, high school dropouts; since roughly 740 thousand (about two-thirds of whom are Hispanic) of these students will not complete high school, there is a base population of around 3.5 million Catholic high school students that need to be served by mainstream parish youth ministry. About 1.1 million of them (32%) are Hispanic. The National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), suggests that this ministry has been most effective at reaching teens in the middle to upper end of the socioeconomic spectrum who come from stable families.82

6.2 Confirmation Programs

The «Confirmation Programs» for the most part aim at preparing seniors and juniors in high school for the celebration of this sacrament of initiation. This ministry serves U.S. born youth in English, including some Hispanics who are second and third generation. First generation Latinos by and large have already been confirmed at a much earlier age, since that is the practice in the majority of Latin American countries. Those American-born Hispanics preparing for Confirmation are «significantly more educated and more assimilated into the mainstream lifestyle of the U.S.»83 However, as cited above, the issue at hand is how to deal with the great numbers of U.S. born Hispanic youth that are not being reached out to or confirmed.

6.3 Pastoral Juvenil Hispana

The «Pastoral Juvenil Hispana» serves unmarried youth between the ages of 16 and 30. An important socio-cultural characteristic of this group is the understanding of «Latino youth and young adults» as opposed to the mainstream programs, which focus solely on «youth.» In the Latino community, «youth is the time from puberty to marriage. Therefore, it is defined more in terms of being married or not, rather than in terms of

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82 JOHNSON-MONDRAGÓN, The Status of Hispanic Youth, 34.
83 Ibid., 27.
This understanding has many difficult implications for U.S. Latino youth ministry. In many parishes, it is not surprising to find unmarried twenty-five-year-olds with teenagers together in the same youth group. This reality raises many questions of cultural practices that might have legal complication in the U.S., such as when teen girls are dating older young adults. Young adult immigrants, in turn, need to be well informed about the laws of the country so they do not get in trouble. Most frequently, lack of resources handicaps the formation of these differentiated age groups.

This pastoral Juvenil does not directly deal with sacramental preparation and/or memorization of formulas of faith. Its curriculum primarily centers on the challenges of living the baptismal responsibilities. These groups are organized by the youth themselves, with limited supervision due to the lack of trained and/or paid leaders. This ministry borrows directives from the Pastoral Juvenil in Latin America. The Pastoral Juvenil Hispana has a base population of about 1.8 million potential participants. In fact, only a small fraction of this population is actually participating... at the present time because the ministry is not available in every part of the country and the structural support ... at the national, diocesan, and parish levels continues to be weak.”

7. Catholic Schools and Latinos

Catholic schools have traditionally worked in the United States as an extended ministry to the parishes, who would assist them with the necessary financial resources for their maintenance. The decreased numbers of religious vocations, especially for the sisters, and low enrollments, have created a heavy burden to the future of these schools. Human and material resources have become scarce and expensive. As a

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84 FIGUEROA DECK. *The Second Wave*, 144.
85 JOHNSON-MONDRAGÓN, *The Status of Hispanic Youth*, 34.
86 In addition, it is noted that, «many Catholics have questioned the traditional role of Catholic schools in the education of Catholic children. As state-sponsored public schools have become more secular, and consequently less anti-Catholic, and as the descendants of immigrant Catholics from various parts of Europe have broadly assimilated American culture, the need for parish schools to protect and form the faith and culture of the Catholic children has become less urgent for the parents. That combined with the decreasing numbers of religious teachers in parochial schools and their replacement with (more expensive) lay teachers has increased he cost of private
result, the fewer the students that attend these schools, the higher the tuition they must pay; the higher the tuition, the fewer the students that attend. Consequently, U.S. Catholic education has been and is a privilege for those who can afford the high tuitions or those who have been recognized with scholarships. The recipients of such education have become elite of a blessed few. Without entering into all the complexities of the Catholic school system, it may be noted that the majority of Latino families cannot afford high tuitions for their many children to benefit from such extraordinary and effective schooling.

However, there are some small exceptions. Through combined community efforts and sacrifices, some parochial Catholic schools serve young Hispanics and other poor minorities well. In turn, these poor families generously offer a great deal of time and resources in order to give their children the benefit of such education and Christian formation in a secure learning environment. In the high school level, there is an impressive record of academic success for Latinos who attend these schools. A recent research has shown that, while the dropout rate for Hispanics across the country is about 25%, rising as high as 40% to 50% in some public high schools, in Catholic high schools the graduation rate for Latinos is over 90%, and 95% of those … will obtain a university degree. [However,] only 10% of Hispanics in the U.S. attend religious schools.”

7.1 Cristo Rey High School

There is a very innovative educational model being led by the Jesuits of Chicago that is already producing unprecedented success for Latino youth across the country. The effort is called «Cristo Rey.» The image of Christ the King is very popular for Hispanics; it helps them imagine an alternative kingdom to their present way of life. The first Cristo Rey High School was opened in 1996 in Chicago to provide college preparation and Christian formation to «undereducated and economically challenged» youth, most of them Latinos. The geographical target area manifests dense poverty and a high dropout rate in the public schools. This Cristo Rey approach offers a

\[\text{education, leading to far fewer Catholic children receiving a Catholic education.} \]

\[\text{JOHNSON-MONDRA\~G\~ON, «Renewing the Vision: An Hispanic Critique,» 5.} \]

\[\text{87 JOHNSON-MONDRA\~G\~ON, The Status of Hispanic Youth..., 59.} \]

\[\text{88 All the information used about Cristo Rey is found in the article by M. J. DANGEL, «Cristo Rey: High Schools That Work for Disadvantaged Students.» St. Anthony Messenger. Available at: www.cristorey.net Also from www.americancatholic.org/Messenger/May2004/feature2.asp.} \]
holistic curriculum for an integral education. It begins by helping the youth develop a sense of responsible accountability for sacrifices and investments in their education. In this process, the students must work; their earnings pay about 65 percent of their tuition. The school finds them jobs in businesses, such as law offices, banks, marketing firms, and hospitals, accommodating their academic schedules so they don’t miss class. In addition, the school requires four years of Spanish (so that when they graduate they are fluent bilinguals), and four years of religion classes, which includes Masses, retreats, and community service projects.

These extraordinary efforts by the school seek to allow the students to develop responsible discipline and a work ethic while they build up an impressive résumé and gain professional working skills. Most of the school’s faculty and staff are bicultural and bilingual in order to inspire and demonstrate the importance of languages and the richness of cultural diversity. In addition, the school offers parenting classes for parents (most of them immigrants) to learn of and respond to the complex challenges their children experience as they integrate into the normative American culture and society. The Chicago school has grown from 80 students when first opened to nearly 525 students now, and it has a long waiting list. Every graduating student for the past four years has been accepted to at least one college.

The success in Chicago has led to the founding of the Cristo Rey Network National Association to offer the same opportunities in other urban centers in the country. With the support of philanthropists, there are 12 open Cristo Rey Schools with six on the way, and a student body of 91 students of color, from homes that fall below the national poverty line. When asked to comment about the success of the school and the students, Father John Foley, S.J., president of the Chicago school, said:

89 The vision of this Cristo Rey school is advertised as follows: «The reason for the school’s existence is to advance the human and intellectual capacities, as well as the religious and cultural heritage, of all those it serves. The goal is to maximize the students’ potential to prepare them to assume leadership roles in the civic, religious, business and cultural life of our city and nation. The hope is that the graduates reflect these characteristics: open to growth, religious, intellectually competent, loving, committed to justice and work experience.» Chicago Cristo Rey Jesuit High School. Presentation Letter. Available from www.cristorey.net

90 This information about the «Network» is found in their presentation letter. Cristo Rey Network: Transforming Urban America One Student at a Time. Available at www.cristoreynetwork.org.
These young people have discovered that there is a future and the beautiful talents, both personally and culturally, that God has given them are their most valuable assets for a brighter tomorrow...[T]hey are excited by what our friends and supporters have provided for them and proud that they themselves are essentially making their own dreams come true.  

This is clear evidence that the Church, through education, can creatively help these youth forge a hopeful future. Such an effort corresponds with what a new University of Notre Dame study has found that because of the lack of a solid education, «segments of the Latino population in the United States are in danger of becoming a permanent underclass...[S]uccessive generations of Latinos are likely to remain trapped in a cycle of academic underachievement.» 

Within the framework purpose of this dissertation, it must be reiterated that since the majority of these youth do not attend Catholic schools, parishes must provide catechetical and formational programs to evangelize them. However, some parishes with schools are spending from 30 to over 50 percent of their budgets in supporting their schools with low enrollments. From an ecclesiological and missiological point of view, the challenge still remains when only a disproportionate 10 or so percent of parish budgets are being invested on their catechetical programs, which serves the 85 to 90 percent of children that do not attend Catholic schools.

This chapter has presented the pastoral condition and some essential challenges of Hispanic ministry with particular focus upon the Latino youth ministry. The increasing numbers of this population, their traditional

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91 Cited by M. J. DANGEL, «Cristo Rey: High Schools That Work for Disadvantaged Students.»  

93 It is the experience of this author, as a parish priest, that in many parishes in my diocese, one of the most Hispanic populated in the country, many volunteers have to provide their own teaching material. This trend is reflected in other dioceses as well, because of financial restraints, or lack of planning and creativity. Though this is not the case in every parish, the point I am making is that there are substantial needs when it comes to formation of Hispanic children and youth. This is a serious problem because not only the youth suffer but the ministers as well. They often times get very discouraged in their ministry and many of them choose not to return for a second or third year of service.
Catholic faith, and the decrease of Church affiliation among the American-born generations are issues of great importance to the future missionary life of the Church. The chapter considered past and present pastoral efforts, struggles, and missed opportunities to acknowledge an urgent need for a better-integrated youth ministry. Clearly, Latino youth need to move from the state of mere survival to a proactive and affirmative position whereby their «cultural identity and difference» are used as positive assets for their Christian development, maturation and fulfillment. It is the contention of this author that any articulation for a successful targeted Latino youth ministry must include the preservation, affirmation, and promotion of the unique mestizo identity of these youth. An intention was made to present their unique multicultural and bilingual identity as being, in the words of Benjamin Valentin, with «much more than pain and dislocation; it is also a liminal space filled with potentiality, and is a prospective site of grace.»

The chapter began with a presentation of the general development of Hispanic ministry, principally including the national Encuentros, the role and focus of U.S. Latino theology, the subtle projection and affirmation of popular religiosity, and the understanding of cultural, racial, and religious Mestizaje. These events, conceptual beliefs, and religious practices have provided a profile of Hispanic and youth ministry, highlighting its most essential aspects and characteristics. The prominent role of culture as a vehicle of evangelization as well as preservation and affirmation of identity was emphasized throughout the chapter.

Furthermore, the principal section of the chapter offered a differentiation of these youth into subgroups, and highlighted three broad categories of ministry, as well as the role and successes of Catholic schools with Latino youth. The aim of this presentation was to offer a broad contextual understanding of the circumstances of the youth and the Church’s journey to acknowledge and attempt to respond to their pastoral needs. The evidence illustrates that the institutional Church has not yet intentionally created a concrete integrated ministry that encompasses the socio-cultural and religious marginalizing circumstances of the second and third generation Latinos as formulated throughout the chapters.

94 B. VALENTIN. Mapping Public Theology, 53.
CHAPTER VI

Following Jesus to the Margins: Evangelizing Second Generation Latino Youth in the U.S.A

This chapter proposes a new pastoral response which integrates official Church documents and more recent theological projects, namely the «New Evangelization» and «Authentic Liberation,» labeled in this dissertation as «Integral Liberating Evangelization.» This pastoral proposition addresses the contextual socio-cultural and biblical-pastoral understanding of the second-generation Latino youth living in the United States, who are struggling with the reality of marginality and experiencing a crisis of identity and purpose. This dissertation demonstrates how the concept of Integral Evangelization can help the second-generation Latino youth confront and digest all of the ramifications marginality imposes, meanwhile providing them with a transforming discernment process for a fulfilling Christian life.

In the spirit of the New Evangelization called by Pope John Paul II, the Church is obliged to respond to the pastoral needs of all cultures. Hence, each parish must answer to this call by fostering specialized programs that address the unique needs of the second-generation Latino youth, thus allowing them to recognize and experience the redeeming and transforming power of Christ within their contextual realities. On the other hand, given the reality that marginality robs individuals of their freedom and identity, an integrated teaching of liberation is also necessary, as it emphasizes an anthropological pastoral response to the enslavements of this particular population. Through this process, the teaching of an authentic human liberation, as articulated by Pope John Paul II and then Cardinal Ratzinger,
is actualized through the order of personal conversion leading to social transformation. This presupposes the development of a personal relationship with Christ, which manifests healthy values and behavioral patterns that provide direction and definition for a true fulfilling Christian life. In contrast, Latin American Liberation Theology emphasizes a model for a true human liberation that confronts social sin with an organized effort, due to dehumanizing effects on the marginalized people. It then provides a communal understanding that God’s active power abides within their marginalizing experiences pushing them to participate in personal and collective efforts for transformation. The chapter proposes the importance of an integrated proposition of both authentic liberation teachings, labeled «Integral Liberating Evangelization,» and is seen as a transformative and empowering instrument for the second-generation Latino youth to transcend. By experiencing God on a personal level, the youth can discover the potential of forming an organized effort to tackle the marginalizing structures in their societies. Hence, the «Integral Liberating Evangelization» approach offers a process in which the youth can analyze personal and collective marginalizing structures of society and find resources to turn negative aspects of marginality into positive tools to get to the in-beyond state.

Nevertheless, the U.S. Church has «attempted» to respond to her mission of serving the youth mainly through three general approaches. The first noted is that of the traditional approach which primarily focuses on preparing for the reception and celebration of the sacraments. The second is the reformist approach where awareness of God’s presence in the youth’s life is the central focus in hope of compelling the youth to actively participate in the life of the community. The final approach is the transformative, which emphasizes the need for a pragmatic and tangible change in the person within the religious and social structures. Although each is beneficial within its realm, given that they individually relate to either «authentic integral liberation» or to the call to «the new evangelization», an integrated specialized approach better suits the needs of the second-generation Latino youth as they require a more holistic response. Thus, in combining these three pastoral approaches it demonstrates the enhancing force of an «Integral Liberating Evangelization.»

The chapter implies this concept to be true as it analyzes two models of youth groups that use components of each pastoral approach with an emphasis on the order of personal conversion or social transformation. The first model, Equipos Unidos, primarily worked toward a social sense of
mission within their cultural origin. Although the cognitive features, aspirations, and importance of leaving the margins was vividly exercised, they seemed to neglect a prioritized emphasis on personal conversion before social change. Many participating members did succeed as they furthered their education and social status; however the in-beyond state requires that people of faith acknowledge the margins along with an experience of personal relationship with Christ that is shared within the Church community. On the other hand, the youth group La Jornada focused on the emotional manifestation of a personal conversion to Christ meanwhile deemphasizing the need of engagement on social, cultural, and political issues. Group members initiated a personal relationship with Jesus, allowing them to understand the need for redemption, yet the state of transcendence also heeds the involvement of changing your social environment. Though both youth groups were well intentioned and successful for a period of time, they were not efficient as they provided an either/or of the characteristics the Latino youth in this country truly need to reach the transcendental «in-beyond» state.

Furthermore, in looking at the sources of the issues the Latino youth are facing, the chapter denotes a contrast between youth ministries in the U.S. and Latin America. Differences appear to exist between their focus and character. The U.S. uses a psychological approach when working with its youth, primarily emphasizing the building of relationships. Within this approach the gospel message is used to deal with the psychological difficulties the youth encounter in their daily lives. In contrast, the Latin American youth ministry mostly follows a sociological approach emphasizing social analysis to understand the environment they live in. In this approach the biblical message is used in assisting the youth to understand the root causes of their social circumstances and structural change. Their true identity nourishes the personal mission. Hence, it is necessary to acknowledge that the U.S second-generation Latino youth need a mestizo understanding of themselves as they are composed of two cultural world views.

Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ, can help bring about marginal change for the youth and assist them in reaching a transcendental state given that she serves as the ultimate example of what it means to be marginal, yet plays a significant role in the new life of Jesus and the Church. This could be seen throughout her life, seeing as she has been a chosen woman from the margins to respond and serve God’s liberating message. In her position of linking the Old and the New Testament she demonstrates the ramifications of the «in-between,» «in-both,» and in-beyond state of
marginality, affirming, empowering, and enabling the mestizo youth to benefit from both current cultural worlds. The Guadalupe apparitions clearly denote this phenomenon as she consistently brings her transcendental message on behalf and to the marginal people of this world. Consequently, the youth can embrace her as a necessary tool to initiate personal and social change.

The chapter concludes by presenting a format where a liminal process could be experienced by the youth. It provides a specialized group proposal that delineates some general guidelines and directives that incorporate the concepts found in «Integral Liberating Evangelization» which can serve as initial markers for potential youth groups. It consists of: Purpose and Goals, Eligibility Criteria, Length, Frequency, and Duration of Group Sessions, Appropriate Group Norms, Process, and Procedures, Appropriate Leadership Styles and Roles, Ethical and Legal Concerns, and Evaluation Criteria. In addition, the chapter concludes by offering a curriculum of themes that have been highlighted in previous chapters and are crucial when working with the specific needs of this targeted group, which can be found in the Group Session Outline section following the chapter. On a more global scale, when analyzing the situation faced by the second-generation Latino youth, it brings the realization that their conditions and pastoral needs are also manifested in other countries where a mobility of migration has been experienced, thus highlighting the dire need to address the phenomenon.

1. Church’s Call to a New Evangelization

Pope Paul VI concretely declared to the world that the missionary vocation of the Church is to evangelize, and that «There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, are not proclaimed.»¹ This declaration recognizes that the biblical essence of evangelization is the entire redemptive life of Jesus as its subject,² and the

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¹ Evangelii Nuntiandi #14, 22.
² In this regard, Fr. Jacques Dupuis noted that, «The horizontal and vertical dimensions of his person and activity cannot be separated or disconnected. What begins in him is both divine and human, transcendent but also social and political. Human beings are in need of an integral liberation, both from sin and from unjust structures to which sin leads. The social gospel is part of the reign of God.» J. DUPUIS.
intended human response in faith as its object. In this manner, it points a holistic process of liberation from everything that enslaves the human being, which «begun during the life of Christ and definitely accomplished by his Death and Resurrection. But it must be patiently carried on during the course of history, in order to be realized fully on the day of the final coming of Christ.» This evangelizing liberation, therefore, is to be exercised through the transformation and conversion of «both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and the concrete milieux which are theirs.» In this sense, although the finality of evangelization is of religious character, there are direct links to human advancement, to the shared relationship of development and liberation. Paul VI saw these links as:

…an anthropological order, because the man who is to be evangelized is not an abstract being but is subject to social and economic questions. They also include links in the theological order, since one cannot dissociate the plan of creation from the plan of Redemption…they include links of the eminently evangelical order, which is that of charity: how in fact can one proclaim the...


3 «In fact, the proclamation only reaches full development when it is listened to, accepted and assimilated, and when it arouses a genuine adherence in the one who has thus received it… adherence to the kingdom, that is to say the “new world,” to the new state of things, to the new manner of being…» (EN 23). The synoptic gospels present Jesus as defining his identity and purpose through the proclamation of a holistic reign of God that is dynamically «affective (experiential), intellectual (understanding), a moral (judging) and religious (ecclesial, action).» His preaching was intended to raise the current human being into a new creation and a new way of valuing their self worth and future. It was about a realization and fulfillment in the present tense (his messianic signs): glad tidings to the poor, liberty proclaimed to captives, sight given to the blind and freedom offer to prisoners (Lk 4:18). As he preached he was fulfilling his purpose: «This is the time of fulfillment. The reign of God is at hand. Reform your lives and believe in the Gospel,» (Mark 1:15; Mt. 4:17). L. McNeil. «Evangelization,» in Dictionary of Theology. Collegeville, 358.

4 Regarding this holistic approach of evangelization, the Pope cautioned that, «Any partial and fragmentary definition that attempts to render the reality of evangelization in all its richness, complexity and dynamism does so only at the risk of impoverishing it and even of distorting it,» (EN 17).

5 Evangelii Nuntiandi # 9.

6 Ibid., # 18.
new commandment without promoting in justice and in peace the true authentic advancement of man?\textsuperscript{7}

Subsequently, Pope John Paul II, in view of the coming of the Third Millennium, promoted the need of a New Evangelization for the Church. For instance, in his Opening Address to the Santo Domingo Conference (Oct. 12, 1992), the Holy Father pinpointed the major challenges of the Church stating the need for «New Evangelization, Human Development, and Christian Culture.» Since these three pastoral challenges share an interrelated and interdependent relationship, a new evangelization would illumine their relationship, as it is based and directed by the «responsibility for the gift that God has made to us in Christ, in which we accede to the truth about God and about the human being, and to the possibility of true life.»\textsuperscript{8} In this process, the gospel, though it remains the same, is to be proclaimed and lived in new ways, methods, expressions and stronger commitments. In other words, it must creatively be adapted in response to the current socio-cultural reality. It is in this light that John Paul II stated, «the moment has come to commit all of the Church’s energies to a new evangelization and to the mission \textit{ad gentes}. No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church, can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples.»\textsuperscript{9}

Although John Paul II only stimulated the local churches with general propositions, Avery Dulles aptly articulated four characteristics of this new evangelization from the Pope’s teachings that can serve as a framework of how to exercise evangelization.\textsuperscript{10} (1) The task is a common responsibility that requires the participation of all Christians. (2) This new evangelization is different than the traditional foreign missions in that it is aimed at the Church herself, because many of the current baptized Christians have not been effectively evangelized. This follows an integration of Paul VI’s notation, «The Church is an evangelizer, but she begins by being evangelized herself. She … needs to listen unceasingly to what she must believe, to her reason for hoping, to the new commandments of love.»\textsuperscript{11} (3)

\textsuperscript{7} \textit{Ibid.}, # 31.
\textsuperscript{8} JOHNSON PAUL II, «Opening Address at Santo Domingo Conference,» #1, 6. In \textit{Santo Domingo and Beyond}, 45.
\textsuperscript{9} \textit{Redemptoris Missio} #86, (1990).
\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Evangelii Nuntiandi}, EN #14, 15.
Furthermore, it must be directed to all cultures. The Holy Father noted that evangelization «plays a role in the culture of various nations, sustaining culture in its progress toward truth and assisting in the work of its purification and enrichment.»\textsuperscript{12} This statement denotes the specific call for the Church to provide pastoral resources and assistance to those living in the margins, hence giving them the opportunity to be active members of the Mystical Body of Christ. (4) The new evangelization must also envision an integral Christian formation that includes «catechetical instruction, moral doctrine, and the social teaching of the Church.» In using this formation triad, John Paul II believed that it, «will penetrate deeply into the social and cultural reality, including the economic and political order,» which «will naturally have its highest point in an intense liturgical life that will make parishes living ecclesial communities.»\textsuperscript{13}

From the beginning, the purpose of this new evangelization was to respond to people in cultures and societies that had been traditionally evangelized but «are now living in a secularized world that denies religion any value and simply tolerates a private religion or sometimes directly attacks even this or hinders it indirectly by policies and practices that marginalize believers and their communities.»\textsuperscript{14} Consequently, the transforming power of the gospel and its identity in people’s lives is not palpably made evident. The secular culture nourishes a religious superficiality and indifference in society where people are not able to see and testify the Good News Jesus has to offer – a new redemptive direction in their current lives. These cultural experiences cause a religious and faith crisis that clearly marginalize people from their liberating and transcending values in Jesus. To this regard, it has been noted, «The young are the witnesses and victims of the religious crisis, but they are also and above all the revealers of contemporary aspirations. It is with their collaboration that we shall be able truly to create a new culture of hope.»\textsuperscript{15}

An essential focus of the new evangelization is the recognition that all cultures need to be fully evangelized in order to assist and facilitate a true

\textsuperscript{12}Centesimus Annus #50.
\textsuperscript{13}Ad Limina visit of Puerto Rican Bishops, October 27, 1988; L’Osservatore Romano (English Ed.), December 5, 1988, 7, 14.
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., 290.
conversion for the people. This requires a Christian anthropological method for understanding, not only the human person and his spiritual longings and anxieties, but also the culture itself, in order to bring to light the redeeming message of Jesus in their contextual realities. This is an essential process because only by understanding the culture is it possible to effectively differentiate and identify the cultural aspects that need to be nourished and affirmed, and the ones that need purification and transformation. In this vein, it is imperative to address the mestizo culture of the second-generation Latino youth living in the United States in order to work within their unfamiliar circumstances. It requires a collective effort and a specialized pastoral expertise, because cultural ethos is made up of complex systems of behaviors and attitudes in how people think, judge and feel. When such a process is successful, a true liberation and empowerment can be facilitated for the culturally marginalized people.

2. Theological Guiding Principles for Overcoming Marginality

2.1 The Church’s Authentic Liberation Illumining the State of Marginality

Pope John Paul II in his Encyclical Letter Centesimus Annus (1991) states that for, «those who are searching today for a new and authentic theory and praxis of liberation, the Church offers not only her social doctrine and, in general, her teaching about the human person redeemed in Christ, but also her concrete commitment and material assistance in the struggle against marginalization and suffering.» If developed and practiced from a second-generation cultural contextual reality, this doctrine

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16 «The split between the Gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time, just as it was of other times. Therefore every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly of cultures.» (EN #20).


18 CA., 26.4. He continues to say that, «present circumstances are leading to a reaffirmation of the positive value of an authentic theology of integral human liberation, (CA, 26.5). Furthermore, in his Opening Address at the Puebla Conference in 1979, the Holy Father had clearly specified that the evangelization of the Church is based on “the truth that comes from God,” which «includes the principle of authentic human liberation» as, declared by John 8:32, «You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.» JOHN PAUL II. «Opening Address at the Puebla Conference,» #I. In Puebla and Beyond, 58.
can assist with the current issues created by their marginal states. The Church presents this evangelical truth within a hierarchical triad, namely, the truth about Jesus Christ, the truth about the Church’s mission, and the truth about the human being. This hierarchical triad is essential because it shows the right order in the process that leads to the primordial point of departure and ultimate liberation – the redemption of human beings. Accordingly, John Paul II developed a clear anthropological and pastoral posture to counteract the «many other forms of humanism, which frequently are locked into a strictly economic, biological, or psychological view of the human being.» 19

It is crucial to recognize John Paul II’s reference to the necessity of encompassing a holistic sense of the self. In the case of second-generation Latino youth a clear misconception exists given that they have been nourished to believe a false reality regarding their potential and purpose for a fulfilling life. The Pope further enlightens the issue by stating,

The truth we owe to human beings is, first and foremost, a truth about themselves… [For] one of the most glaring weakness of present-day civilization lies in an inadequate view of the human being… The primordial assertion of this anthropology is that the human being is the image of God and cannot be reduced to a mere fragment of nature or to an anonymous element in the human city.20

Joseph Ratzinger, as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, reiterated John Paul II’s teaching. He emphasized the Christian fact that since Jesus, through his Cross and Resurrection, won «our Redemption, which is liberation in the strongest sense of the word,» any missionary efforts must begin with the truth about that ultimate redemption, as «the root and the rule of freedom, the foundation and the measure of all liberating action.» 21 It is evident that the reemphasis on personal conversion by then Cardinal Ratzinger demonstrates the Church’s priority of the individual as a major source for change. Hence, the youth must learn to address self marginal matters as part of personal conversion before they can initiate their transcendental journey in social change. In the same light, he earlier stated in the «Instruction on Certain Aspects of the Theology of

19 Ibid., #I, 9, 63.
20 Ibid., #I, 9, 63.
Liberation,» that a true liberation first redeems the person from being bounded to sin, because the gift of grace offers freedom to God’s children. This grace then, «As a logical consequence, it calls for freedom from many different kinds of slavery in the cultural, economic, social, and political spheres, all of which derive ultimately from sin, and so often prevent people from living in a manner befitting their dignity.»

Therefore, the Church’s true and authentic vocation, as a sacrament of Christ is to proclaim Jesus in his fullness, which essentially includes the teaching and promises of the kingdom within the mystery of his identity and mission. It is from the truth of such a mystery that there «will flow options, values, attitudes, and behavior patterns that can give direction and definition to our Christian living that can create new human beings and then a new humanity through the conversion of the individual and social conscience.» In practicing the Church’s teachings, through its mission, the Latino youth will embrace the reality Christianity has to offer, meanwhile eliciting a transformed self into a new way of life. Only within this path the Church can faithfully and successfully offer what she has received in Jesus, and thus truly help human beings realize and appreciate «the truth of themselves.»

The Church evangelizes through loving efforts in the proclamation and sharing of Jesus’ message. This reality in turn demonstrates that the only choice is to enter in true solidarity with those suffering in the margins of society. In this vein, the disciples of Jesus are called to share God’s love in the margins that are professed in the spirit of the Beatitudes, which makes God’s presence manifest «the foundations of justice in the temporal order.»

Cardinal Ratzinger clarifies this thought when he said:

The Church’s essential mission… is a mission of evangelization and salvation… But the love which impels the Church to communicate to all

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23 EN: 22; 18. The Holy Father had a profound preoccupation with the depiction of Jesus as primarily a «prophet,» as a «political activist,» without purporting his redemptive mission as the Son of God, which makes possible «a complete and integral salvation through a love that brings transformation, peace, pardon, and reconciliation.»

John Paul II. «Opening Address at the Puebla Conference,» #1,4. Puebla and Beyond, 59-60.

people a sharing in the grace of divine life also causes her... to pursue people’s true temporal good, help them in their needs, provide for education and promote an integral liberation from everything that hinders the development of individuals. The Church desires the good of man in all his dimensions, first of all as a member of the city of God, and then as a member of the earthly city... She takes great care to maintain clearly and firmly both the unity and the distinction between evangelization and human promotion: unity, because she seeks the good of the whole person; distinction, because these two tasks enter, in different ways, into her mission.25

According to the Church’s teachings, any efforts for an authentic human liberation must begin with a clear understanding that for people to be liberated from all worldly enslavements, they must first be liberated from personal sin. An ongoing emphasis for personal conversion of heart must be maintained, because it allows possible participation in the ultimate redemption in Christ. Naturally, this approach relies on the confidence, trust, and hope that insofar as the right order of beliefs and deliverances for human liberation are maintained, the denigrating calamities caused by sinful structures will be transformed. In this regard, John Paul II reiterated, «the reality of personal sin is at the root of all such situations, mechanisms, or collective behavior of social groups. These webs of complicity are always linked to the concrete acts of individuals who introduce these structures, consolidate them and make them difficult to remove.»26 The intent of this approach could also ensure the dignity of the totality of the marginal human being with its individual spiritual reality as the most essential aspect for their transforming and transcending identity and mission. It also assures and re-energizes all the other important struggles in defense of their human dignity, and the development of the human person while trusting in «the mutual interaction that takes hold in the course of time between the Gospel and the concrete personal and social life of the human being.»27 Therefore, the embracing of the wisdom and mercy of God are required to establish a clear identity as a child of God allowing the second-generation youth to understand their pilgrimage of transcending transformation.

25 Ibid., 63, 64. [Italic mine for emphasis].
26 Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 36.2.
27 EN, 29.
2.2 Liberation through the State of Marginality

Latin American Liberation theology\(^{28}\) is important for the purpose of this dissertation because, as noted earlier, it has influenced the life, ministry, and theology of Latinos in the United States. Its own missionary approach to the human integral liberation shed light and direction on any future evangelizing approach and anthropological response to the needs of second-generation Latino youth. This approach emphasizes that a true Christian life requires an active practice of the faith (a following of Jesus), which must denote an ongoing conversion and reconciliation, as well as the active participation in the transformation of the secular reality. This Christian dynamic is thus rooted and nourished in a spiritual liberation that manifest its itself in the concrete encounter with Jesus the Redeemer.\(^{29}\) In this regard, Henri Nouwen states that this spiritual liberation is found in:

…the Christian-encounter as experienced by the poor of Latin America in their struggle to affirm their human dignity and claim their true identity as sons and daughters of God. As all true spiritualities, this spirituality of liberation is deeply rooted in the lived experience of God’s presence in history, an experience that is not unique and new for the poor of Latin America as it was for St. Benedict, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Ignatius Loyola, and their followers. This has nothing to do with abstract opinions, convictions, or ideas, but it

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\(^{28}\) O’Collins and Farrugia define Liberation theology as «A largely Latin American movement that (a) is inspired by the Exodus, prophetic call for justice, and Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom, (b) reads the Bible in the key of integral liberation, and (c) has struck deep roots where structures of injustice and economic dependence oppress great masses of poor people… Deeply concerned with the public function of theology in encouraging social change, the leaders of this movement have always been developing a spirituality of liberation.» G. O’COLLINS - E. G. FARRUGIA. *A Concise Dictionary of Theology.* New York, 139-140.

\(^{29}\) J. SOBRINO. *Spirituality of Liberation.* New York, x, 2. In addition, he points out that, «The intuition of the Old Testament that “to know God is to practice justice,” the intuition of the Gospels that the ultimate scope of Jesus self-understanding and practice was the reign of God as inchoate in history and not merely eschatological and transcendent, together with the power of chapter 25 of Matthew bequeathed to us a reminder of the ultimate criterion of Christian faith… Spirituality of liberation speaks of an encounter with God, and agents of liberation assert that they experience this encounter… Spirituality is a journey…toward the promotion of life» in God’s presence. Ibid., 4, 42, 90.
has everything to do with the tangible, audible, and visible experience of God, an experience so real that it can become the foundation of a life project.  

Relevant to the understanding of an authentic human liberation is the actual consideration and definition of the victims of marginality. They are considered as victims whose humanity has been denigrated and handicapped, and, therefore, their sense of personhood is greatly impaired. In this sense, Liberation theology seeks to offer a realistic and transforming response to the question, «How do you tell a nonperson that they are loved by God, and that this love makes us all brothers and sisters?» This is an important observation, not only because it is the point of departure for this theology, but also because it helps avoid over-spiritualizing the biblical message which often paralyzes its force for its personal and social transformation. This theology uses four determining biblical paradigms:

30 H. J. M. NOUWEN. «Foreword,» in We Drink From Our Own Well. G. GUTIÉRREZ. New York, xiii, xiv. Nouwen further notes three essential aspects of this spirituality of liberation. (1) «It is a truly biblical spirituality that allows God’s saving act in history to penetrate all levels of the human existence. God is seen here as the God of the living who enters into humanity’s history to dispel the forces of death, wherever they are at work, and to call forth the healing and reconciling forces.» (2) It is a Christ-centered spirituality. It is illumined and directed by «the centrality of Jesus in the struggle for full human freedom,» as it emphasizes «the intimate encounters with Jesus that are recorded in the New Testament,» p. xvii. It is, «the initiative for the encounter with Christ comes from the Lord himself. To those who ask, “Where do you live?” Jesus answers, “Come and see,” and later he directly invites them to become his followers. Discipleship is first and foremost the response to an invitation. This insight is essential for an understanding of the spirituality of liberation... It is precisely the gratuitous quality of God’s love, revealed in Jesus, that sets us free to work in the service of God’s kingdom.». (3) «This spirituality is drawn from the concrete daily experiences of the Christian communities in Latin America. “The fact is that daily contact with the experiences of some, a reading of the writings of many, and the testimony of still others have convinced me of the profound spiritual experiences that persons among us are living today.”» Ibid., xv, xiii, ix.


32 GUTIÉRREZ points out that «The principal partner in the dialogue of modern Western theology has been unbelievers or else believers affected by unbelief and the criticisms of the enlightenment.» By this he notes the different points of departure of both theologies – the Western and Latin American theology of liberation – and implies that Western theology has over-spiritualized the biblical message thus paralyzing its personal and social transforming force. G. GUTIÉRREZ. The Truth Shall Make You Free: Confrontations. New York, 23.
the exodus, poverty as presented in the Bible, the Cross, and the ultimate victory of Jesus’ Paschal Mystery.

The «exodus» experience provides a paradigm of how the Jewish people, in the midst of marginalization and poverty, consciously find themselves unified by suffering and denigration, and are delivered and established by God as a chosen people to live a covenantal life of freedom in the Promised Land. This experience provided them with a realization of the dignity of a people capable of becoming agents of their own human history in communion with, and dependence from God’s assistance and protection. In turn, they were to acknowledge God’s ongoing presence among them in worship and in service to their common good. The biblical experience of «poverty and marginalization» is considered here not only as a social and economic reality, but of religious character, due to its destructive power of death. While the negative consequences of marginality are repudiated, it is also seen as an opportunity for a deeper encounter with God through a shared solidarity. In addition, the symbol and reality of the Cross is prominent, because God, in Jesus, experienced and testified to the greatest love as marginalized and crucified outside the city’s center of power. Marginalized people are thus affirmed as a locus of God’s transformation and as future projections of God’s victory over personal and social sin.33

In the context of poverty and marginality in Latin America, an authentic liberation needs to confront «the social dimension of sin,» because of its inhuman impact in the personal life of the marginalized people. However, there is a theological criticism which deems such social emphasis to neglect the fundamental role of personal sin, and subsequently, to the priority of personal conversion. In this respect, «We must avoid falling victim to facile generalizations … it is no more “mechanistic” to think that a structure change automatically makes for a new humanity, than to think that a “personal” change guarantees social transformation.»34

This understanding embraces the fact that only in God’s grace human beings can be liberated from sin and thus be empowered to share their lives

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33 Ibid., 20-30. I heavily rely on this book because it is an articulated integral presentation of the earlier and most fundamental works by Gutiérrez, as presented in his doctorate «dissertation» at the theological faculty of the Catholic Institute of Lyons in 1985. The works included, A Theology of Liberation (English Edition, 1973); Liberation and Change (1977); The Power of the Poor in History (English Edition, 1983); El Dios de la Vida (1982); We Drink from Our Own Well, (1984); and many articles.

34 G. GUTIÉRREZ. The Truth Shall Make You Free, 133.
in communion with him and one another. In this light, Gutiérrez points out that, «liberation from sin is one side of the coin; the other is communion with God and others. According to a classic distinction, freedom from is directed toward freedom for. It is to this freedom for that Christ’s saving work is also directed. By nailing sin to the cross, Jesus opened the way for us to full communion with the Father.»

Integral liberation of people is based on the truth of the person of Jesus Christ. In this light, the truth of the Church as a «sacrament of Christ» is understood as manifested through the encounter with the truth of Jesus, as portrayed in the biblical dynamic between promise and fulfillment.

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35 Ibid., 138. This theology of liberation, to promote the total liberation of people, and the unity that comes from communion with God and his people, developed a triad of levels of liberation in Christ, which links liberation, freedom and communion. They are: social liberation, the freedom of the human person (to assume conscious responsibility and reconciliation), and the personal liberation of sin as a precondition for full communion in love. In reality, this triad portrays a complete process with interrelated and distinguishable dimensions, but still one liberation in substance and goal. Here, Gutiérrez cautions that social change can lead to personal conversion but not automatically, just as personal transformation may not always lead to social change. They are both needed to be together. Therefore, he goes on saying that this «second level of liberation, which postulates the necessity of constructing.»

Ibid., 133. In addition, he notes that, “this is not a matter of three parallel or chronologically successive processes. These are three levels of meaning of a single, complex process, which finds its deepest sense and its full realization in the saving work of Christ. These levels of meaning, therefore, are interdependent. G. GUTIÉRREZ. The Power of the Poor in History. New York, 144-145. [Bold is mine for emphasis]

36 To illustrate this dynamic process, Gutiérrez contrasts the traditional Greek philosophical concept of truth, which has influenced the history of Western philosophy, and the Semitic concept of truth found in the Bible. According to the traditional philosophy of Greek origin, «truth resides in the essence of things, and we reach it via the connection that exists between any given thing and the idea we reconstruct of it; if there is conformity between reality and idea, we possess the truth about the thing. … The Semitic mentality, which is that of the Bible, has a very different conception of truth. The Hebrew word translated as "truth" (namely, ‘met and related words…) implies solidity, fidelity, reliability, trustworthiness. The perspective here is concrete and historical; it reflects the world of the interpersonal, where what happens is as important as, or even more important than, what is. More specifically: truth in the scriptures is a relation not between things and concepts but between promise and fulfillment.» G. GUTIÉRREZ. The Truth Shall Make You Free, 94.
2.3 Integral Liberating Evangelization: A Transcending Tool

The theological principles and positions presented under the headings, «The Church’s Authentic Liberation Illumining the State of Marginality» and «Liberation through the State of Marginality» enlighten and complement future pastoral efforts for evangelizing the U.S. second-generation marginalized Latino youth. Similarities exist within both theological perspectives as they are based on the truth and purpose of Jesus Christ, and seek the same ultimate ending – the purification, freedom, reconciliation and redemption of the marginalized human being. Although the approaches seek a holistic view and realization of the human person, recognition of the need for an anthropological liberation, which includes liberation from sin and of all its interconnecting cultural, economic, social, etc., ramifications and consequences, yet each is done from a different set of strategies and focuses. These theological teachings also emphasize the holistic and intrinsic unity of the message of the «Incarnation—Redemption, » and the «dignity—vocation of the human person.» This understanding presupposes that the Christian life and actions of people must be consciously acknowledged, supported, and projected as emerging from an ongoing transformative personal relationship with Jesus’ identity and mission.

What differentiates the two theological perspectives are the socio-cultural and religious contextual realities from which they have emerged, but most importantly their stance on addressing personal and social transformation. The first principle relating to Authentic Human Liberation, provided by the Vatican, focuses on the evangelization of the Church primordially as an apologetic and spiritual personal conversion from sin.™ Hence, the promotion and liberation from all that hinders the development of the person in society, though still important, in practice appears to have less value and attention. In this perspective, the institutionalized social sin would be destroyed and society will ultimately be transformed primarily through the conversion from personal sin. If applied to the marginalizing situations bestowed upon the Latino youth, by experiencing a personal conversion they will have the strength to begin the process of liberation as they initiate internal healthy confrontation of their surroundings.

—-37 In this sense, the Vatican’s position is one that concentrates and responds to the crisis of belief, because it was greatly influenced by the experience of incredulity and secularization of Europe.
Nevertheless, one apparent shortcoming found in this perspective relies on the hope and trust that sinful powerful people will allow God to transform their lives, and in turn, on their own initiative, transform the unjust structures they have inherited, created, and/or currently sustain. This hopeful expectation anticipates that in the most unexpected times, the perpetrators of institutionalized social marginalization will recognize God’s voice and direction, and will be led to generously embrace and assist the marginalized powerless victims with equal significance and dignity. In the meantime, the marginalized people need to trust and have confidence that the day will certainly come for their re-vindication and fulfillment. Within this scope of practice, as the marginalized are not directly participating in social change, their primary focus lies only in personal conversion, since it will lead to experience inner peace, communion, and reliance on their personal God. This in turn highlights the earlier stated risk, that by concentrating and hoping solely on personal conversion it may overly spiritualize the person’s life, thus paralyzing their active participation in social change. Hence, this understanding urges the marginalized to live in the reality of a better life only through ultimate redemption.

In contrast, since the effects of social sin are deeply ingrained and dehumanizing in long lasting well-established structures in society, Latin American Liberation theology considers that a concrete significant change will occur, surely when addressed, confronted, and transformed through a collective effort. It strongly promotes that the kingdom of God must begin in the here and now, so that the marginalized victims may experience glimpses of God’s redeeming love for them and look forward to a fulfilling future life. Since this theology considers that the personal conversion of the perpetrators of social sin is not always in sight, it emphasizes that a direct response to the denigrating effects of social sin is an urgent biblical imperative, which must currently be confronted through shared concrete efforts and not left to chance. In this approach, individual liberation and conversion is essential, but intrinsically connected to the bigger liberating effort of assisting those who are consumed by social sin and no longer able to regain their true sense of God’s given identity and purpose in life. Hence, it is imperative for the second-generation Latino youth to acknowledge their present marginalizing circumstances as to aid them in imagining and acting toward a more promising future in the here and now. Through the glimpse of transcendence the youth can become agents of their own destiny as they take responsibility of improving their current life circumstances and acknowledge the reward of inner change.
Furthermore, within this Liberation theology exists an essential historical fact regarding persistent socio-structural neglect and human depreciation which have forced the marginalized to see themselves as insignificant and abandoned by the very institutions that are supposed to assist them. Hence, this institutionalized detrimental force creates a negative social mirroring that contributes to the existing crisis of identity among the Latino youth as they appear to believe unfounded definitions of themselves. In this sense, this theology seeks to regain and nourish a clarified and affirmed sense of purpose and mission in life. The focus would be to consciously create environments that allow the marginalized youth to personally and collectively experience being loved, respected, and appreciated with equal dignity. They, in turn, would experience a true empowerment to overcome and break the sinful paralyzing enslavements, as they enter the active process toward experiencing the in-beyond state of marginality in building in the kingdom of God. It is in this context that Liberation theology recognizes and promotes an anthropological integral liberation.

A weakness embedded in Liberation theology resides in its inability to emphasize the sole power of personal conversion for social change to occur. It seems to have less faith in the positive outcomes of internal transformation that can create outward social change from individuals who have been perpetrators of the institutionalized sin and marginalization. Another issue lies within the fact that Liberation theology is not primarily concerned with the disbelief in God, as it claims that the marginalized people in the midst of their circumstances generally continue to believe in God’s existence, transformative power, freedom, and ultimate redemption. Nevertheless, it cannot be generalized that all marginalized individuals believe and rely on God. For in the midst of uncertainties, pain, sorrows, and disappointments, etc., people easily enter a sense of disbelief on a higher power, thus making it important to evangelize through apologetics.

The presented guiding theological principles and approaches are helpful when responding to the particular pastoral needs of the second-generation Latino youth. However, an integrative approach of both liberation perspectives, which I have labeled «Integral Liberating Evangelization», is necessary to target the symptoms and consequences of marginality. This integrative theological perspective will provide venues for understanding, developing, and functioning of personal conversion and social structures, as it refers to the individual conditions of the youth. Given that, it is also essential for the youth to understand how and why social sin is manifested in their midst, an «Integral Liberating Evangelization» process can assist the youth to embrace God’s directives and overcome its negative
impositions. By first improving how they see and appreciate themselves, the youth can nourish their positive unique identity and role in Church and society. Thus then the youth would not only affirm who they are, but also unify themselves in an effort to engage in missionary ventures for spiritual and social improvement. This evangelizing process will in turn offer a sense of personal and communal purpose capable of overcoming their shortsighted and paralyzing experiences. Therefore, they may benefit from the integration of the guiding theological principals regarding liberation in hope of reaching the in-beyond state of marginality.

Furthermore, in concentrating on the youth’s participation within the institutional Church, a general belief in God and the role of Mary exists, yet they are not actively partaking within the life of the Church. Their understanding of the true message of Jesus, his mother and the benefits of being members of the Church are often limited, due to personal and religious negative disregard, rejection, exclusion, and neglect, which do not correspond to their current lived experiences. Hence, for numerous individuals, the perception of the Church derives from historical presentations provided by family members causing the Latino youth to feel displaced within the present realism of the current Church. In addition, the Church contributes to the dilemma as she neglects to provide the adequate responses to their unique pastoral needs enduring marginality. This understanding often times creates a paralysis exploiting their God-given talents as they choose to either consciously or unconsciously ignore the qualities they possess and can celebrate within their faith communities. Needless to say, it is essential to confront the marginal issues all within the self, Church, and society in order to reach a healthier state of marginality, given that the in-beyond state is attained through awareness.

In this sense, the second-generation Latino youth can benefit from having an «Integral Liberating Evangelization,» which includes a personal religious experience in conjunction with an apologetical evangelization, that will seek to clarify their understanding of Jesus’ and the Church’s truth, identity, mission and relevance for a promising future that will fulfill their present needs. Thus, allowing them to contribute to the Church to discern and develop a more effective strategic response to their needs and in turn both can grow and be nourished together. This would also deepen their personal relationship with God, and the Church, seeing their future within the process of ultimate redemption, meanwhile reaching the in-beyond state. However, as noted earlier, since the current evangelizing ministries of the Church have not successfully connected with the majority of second-generation Latino youth, the challenge remains in the Church’s
ability to equally integrate and empower the principles and emphasis of personal conversion and social engagement, as encompassed in «Integral Liberating Evangelization». This integral process can be used as a tool for attracting the interest, commitment, and participation for spiritual growth and formation of the youth toward a transcendental life.

3. Three Parish Pastoral Approaches

There are three ministerial approaches generally exercised in U.S. parishes, which have had a great impact on Latino youth ministry.\(^{38}\)

3.1 Traditionalist Approach

The first is the **traditionalist approach**, described as a sacramental dispensation, because its main objective is to prepare the youth for the celebration of the sacraments. This approach is not seen as creative since it normally emphasizes the memorization of prayers and formulas of faith rather than encouraging an interactive theological discussion relating to daily struggles. It is frequently criticized for nourishing a strong sense of paternalism where the priests are supposed to provide the appropriate responses to any anticipated challenges without much external assistance.\(^{39}\) As the youth are told how to act and what to believe without room for personal critical discernment, it leads to a non-participative and passive kind of Catholicism, creating a militaristic style of learning.

3.2 Reformist Approach

The second ministerial approach is the **reformist approach**, influenced by the Second Vatican Council. It aims at raising awareness and commitment to actively and consciously participate in the celebration of God’s presence in the youth’s life. There is a shared vision of a Church that goes beyond the mere dispensing of the sacraments, as it also encompasses an ongoing internal discernment for human growth and social participation. An example is visible in the decision making processes of the community, as when difficulties occur and change is necessary, the members are encouraged to engage in the needed resolution. The directives of the Small Faith Communities are frequently used to help the youth

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\(^{38}\) A. FIGUEROA DECK. «Models» in *Perspectivas: Hispanic Ministry*. Kansas City, 2-5

\(^{39}\) Ibid, 2.
develop an appreciation for their cultural heritage, while being critical of the un-evangelized aspects of the life of the Church and society.  

3.3 Transformation Approach

The final is the **transformative approach**. It is highly influenced by Latin American Liberation Theology, and aims at a radical personal and communal change in religious and social structures within people’s lives. The leaders believe that the gospel cannot be preached with credibility unless it delivers a clear commitment to the fundamental liberation from any personal or structural enslavement. The curriculum includes themes of immigration, social justice, human rights, affirmative action, equal opportunity, multiculturalism, etc. A great emphasis focuses on recognizing that the Kingdom of God begins here and now, and that the active participation of the youth must produce tangible and practical results. Change must take place in both Church and society.\(^{41}\) However, a common dilemma arises when a needed change is not evident; the leaders tend to lose interest in working within the given structures. This discouragement is caused by an understanding of how to empower the laity to lead. These leaders «view the Church as an instrument in that process, not as an end in itself.»\(^ {42}\)

Although each ministerial approach is well intentioned, however, in terms of pastoral strategies, they on an individual basis do not address the particular needs of the second-generation Latino youth. In working with this group, it is necessary to have an integrative approach combining the effective discussed elements for each approach. In doing so, the combination includes aspects of Authentic Human Liberation and Liberation Theology which make-up «Integral Liberating Evangelization.» Thus then, the three pastoral approaches are better able to address the youth’s needs. However, when focusing on the Latino youth, additional beneficial characteristics can be considered and adapted from other existing models of youth ministries to further improve its effectiveness.

4. Two Latino Pastoral Models of Youth Ministry

Two pastoral models of Latino Youth Ministry with considerable success in the New York area were: *Equipos Unidos* and *La Jornada*.

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\(^{40}\) Ibid., 3-4.  
\(^{41}\) Ibid., 3.  
\(^{42}\) Ibid., 3-4, 5.
4.1 Equipos Unidos

The first ministerial model, Equipos Unidos, was developed in the 1970s in the Archdiocese of New York. It followed a similar format found in the Small Base Communities of the Latin American Church. The aim was to develop a conscientious evangelical and social sense of mission in the youth’s lives. This evangelizing dynamic focused on the role the gospel message played in their cultural identity, thus helping the youth discover the intertwined reality of their Catholic faith and cultural identity. Through a process of self-assessment, the youth were to realize that the more they would learn and understand their cultural origins, the more they would find the transforming role of the Catholic faith in their personal and collective lives. Conversely, the more they would know and experience the Catholic faith, the more they would know and appreciate their ethnic backgrounds. This process used the role of cultural identity «as a window to both Church loyalty and social commitment … [T]heir time and energy was devoted to empower youth with a better understanding of … the structures of society in which they lived, [and] their role in that society.»

This ministry was led by visionary priests and university students, and developed an evangelizing network to offer a common formational training among the different neighboring parishes. In hope of transforming the youth’s world, the ministry aimed at emphasizing the appreciation of the Christian faith and their promising cultural inheritance. In this context, the youth were affirmed of their God-given potential to perform the best to their ability valuing the paramount importance for success through education. It is evident that within this ministry one can argue that shared traits from Latin American Liberation Theology are visible through the primordial focus on social change.

However, as this ministry became effective and attractive to many youth, it also became a threat to some clerical Church leaders who considered some of its activities suspicious, too political and socially oriented. In turn, the youth, occasionally expressed «their dissatisfaction with the leadership of some members of the clergy and adult lay leaders who rather than empowering the young people to think and act for themselves offered bingo and basketball games as apostolic work.»

The pastoral model of Equipos Unidos successfully combined cultural and religious awareness in the

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43 A. M. DÍAZ-STEVENS. «Latino Youth and the Church» in Hispanic Catholic Culture in the U.S., 292-93.
44 Ibid., 294.
development and affirmation of the youth’s identity to activate their resolution for dynamic Christian commitment. Unfortunately, the institutional Church was not able to find ways to nourish and keep this ministry from deteriorating, causing the ministry to cease its mission in 1978.

4.2 La Jornada

In Brooklyn there was another youth movement called La Jornada. This ministry was based on the Cursillo movement and to some degree was also influenced by the Charismatic movement. It focused on the emotional manifestation of a personal conversion to Christ, using «a once-in-a-lifetime emotional experience as the basis for the organization.»\(^\text{45}\) To initiate the youth into the program, La Jornada conducted yearly retreats with the intention of helping the youth recognize themselves as sinners, yet loved by a compassionate God. There was no emphasis on social issues, and/or self-assessment for developing leadership abilities and cultural identity awareness, following the order of Authentic Human Liberation yet de-prioritizing the need for an organized structure change. The participating youth would use traditional prayers, socialize, and work together in activities such as car washes, clothing drives, dances, etc.

This ministry initially attracted great numbers of youth, but it also struggled in keeping the same youth together for long periods of time. They became bored, uninspired, and uncommitted. In addition, these youth developed individualistic\(^\text{46}\) attitudes that prevented them from nourishing a committed common understanding and appreciation for their need to remain active in the group.\(^\text{47}\) It is argued, however, that the youth in this pastoral model, when properly accompanied, could build on their initial spiritual and emotional experience of God, and value participating and celebrating in the community’s liturgical and social activities.

In analyzing different strategies that could possibly enhance already effective youth ministries, Marcello Azevedo points out the risk of manipulation and misuse of the privilege of service in leadership as a power that leads to abuse, which can be observed in the presented pastoral

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\(^\text{45}\) Ibid., 293.

\(^\text{46}\) Figueroa Deck makes the observation, based on Michael Warren’s book Youth, Gospel, Liberation, that «the evolution of youth ministry in the United States… comes out of the protestant experience …» A. FIGUEROA DECK. The Second Wave., 145.

\(^\text{47}\) A. M. DÍAZ-STEvens. «Latino Youth and the Church» in Hispanic Catholic Culture in the U.S., 291.
formats. He refers to the authoritarianism often present in ministry, concentrating on the ministers rather than on the beneficiaries of the service shown by Jesus in the washing of the feet. In this vein, effective leadership creates for the youth opportunities of identity and mission discernment while instilling active participation in the building of Jesus’ kingdom. In this regard, effective leadership must be relational and participatory to help the youth see themselves as rooted in their heritage and blessed by shared communal Christian experiences and hope.  

Azevedo goes on to say:

Today’s youth will be the artisans of a new ecclesial reality. They ought not to view the past in a static or nostalgic way… This participatory leadership includes an understanding that youth are «in the process of change and have a capacity to be more … [and] encourages the progressive humanization of interpersonal relations, of the family and work. It seeks to permeate the workings of the civil society with the values of justice, solidarity, cooperation and subsidiarity».

Both Equipos Unidos and La Jornada, with their particular strengths and weaknesses, offer a helpful precedence and vision for the planning of an effective and inviting youth ministry. It seems that one appreciates social and cultural interaction meanwhile the other concentrates on personal conversion. Nevertheless, it is vital when working with the second-generation Latino youth to establish a ministry with an understanding of the need of maintaining an intrinsic unity of both their cultural origins and an emphasis of liberation through marginality. Thus, «Integral Liberating Evangelization» seeks to address this issue, as it highlights through Authentic Human Liberation the importance of personal conversion as a primary requirement for true discipleship – that is an ongoing process in need of serious spiritual nourishment. Moreover, its cooperation with Liberation Theology also proposes active engagement as an essential and effective medium for deepening and maturing any initial transformation. Together they provide encouragement and conviction to enter into an ongoing and renewing missionary pilgrimage. The challenge lies in the individual’s capacity to grow within a reciprocal process of a passionate personal conversion and an active social engagement.

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49 Ibid., 231-233.
5. Two Contrasting and Complementing Approaches of Youth Ministry

It is suggested that Latino youth ministry in the U.S. should reflect and project its unique *mestizo* cultural character, and not identify solely with one cultural source for its directives. In this regard, George Boran, while comparing U.S. and Latin American youth ministry found complementing differences in both character and focus.

5.1 U.S. Youth Ministry

The U.S. Youth Ministry uses a psychological approach with a special emphasis on relationships. The gospel message responds to the psychological difficulties the youth encounter in their daily lives. It does not, however, aim at understanding the root causes of all social ills that ultimately affect the lives of the youth, and directly affects the development of their identity and spiritual life. When dealing with social issues such as discrimination, racism, education, poverty, etc., this approach only follows «a line of alleviating symptoms rather than the causes.»\(^{50}\) The youth do not develop a sense of urgency and relevance for their active and conscious participation in social, institutional, and religious transformation.

5.2 Latin American Youth Ministry

In contrast, the Latin American Youth Ministry uses a sociological approach, placing a strong emphasis on social analysis. The aim is to assist the youth in developing critical perspectives about their religious and social lives. The gospel message assists the youth in understanding the root causes of their social conditions and in responding to them with transforming gospel deliberations. In this ministerial approach, «personal conversion is also fundamental, but it cannot be divorced from structural change.»\(^{51}\) Boran notes, however, that this sociological approach is hard and challenging on the youth, because unjust structures are complicated in themselves; this approach consequently adds more complexities to the ministry. Nevertheless, he realizes that, given the extreme social inequities these youth experience, it would be irresponsible and sinful to be indifferent and/or to ignore their unjust reality. This ministry supposes that the youth must consciously embrace a personal conviction and commitment.

\(^{50}\) G. BORAN. *Youth Ministry That Works*, 248.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., 248.
to become active agents of their common future by sharing the Christian mission of evangelization and social transformation.

Boran believes that this approach of raising social consciousness and engagement is also necessary, legitimate and beneficial for Youth ministry in the United States. He points out, however, that both of these approaches are already present in some form, but not in an integrated ministry. To actualize such a pastoral integration, Boran considers the process should be done in the right order of stages.

In practice, youth leaders must start with the psychological model to be effective in motivating and involving young people. But young people should also be challenged to move beyond a therapeutic pattern in pastoral ministry, with its emphasis on building self-esteem and solving individual problems, to an awareness of responsibility for the wider human family, especially disadvantaged groups. An effective ministry to Hispanic youth should prepare them for involvement in public life as a consequence of their faith and duty as citizens.

Additional differences can be found within the presented pastoral frameworks of the compared youth ministry. As earlier noted, the first difference is found within the term «youth». In the U.S., Youth Ministry is generally comprised of adolescents. In Latin America, however, the youth are a broader category that includes adolescents and young unmarried adults, fostering a more serious pastoral environment. This dynamic could translate into successful pastoral results. The second difference notes that the Youth Ministry model in the U.S. is usually broadly articulated and presented by Church officials, allowing local leaders to adapt the concepts and principles they deem necessary and appropriate to their circumstances. In Latin America, however, no pastoral proposition is ever presented «without contextualizing it in the pastoral reality and the theology of this ministry.» Pastoral plans are articulated simply enough for the youth to understand their reality, leading them to take ownership of the whole process of deliberation and commitment. This approach has proven to be

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52 Boran supports this assertion by quoting Tom Zanzig who brings to the attention of youth ministers the need «to actively engage young people in action on behalf of social justice, awakening within them a consciousness of how they are manipulated by the media and other dimensions of our culture and then providing the guidance they need to combat these negative influences in their lives.» (Ibid, 248-9).
53 Ibid., 251.
successful, as the youth are able to engage in evangelization efforts both among themselves and outward with passionate conviction. In principle, the goal is to help these youth come to see themselves as active agents in the building of God’s kingdom for the common good.

5.3 Integrative Approach of Youth Ministry

An Integrative Approach of Youth Ministry, embracing both the American and Latin American models, without neglecting or imposing one over the other, can be very effective for U.S. Hispanic youth ministry, with an additional empowering message of Mary of Nazareth and her Apparition in Mexico. In this manner, the true spirit of a mestizo evangelization will manifest and result in a true representation and projection of the positive values of the second-generation hybrid identity. Such a process would help Latino youth better understand the importance of their socio-cultural and religious integration of their God-given place and role in the American Church and society, rather than perceiving it as an accidental occurrence. Furthermore, their marginalized condition can become an effective instrument for God’s revelation to manifest its transcendental and transforming power in their lives through Mary.

6. An Empowering Message of Mary for the Marginalized Mestizo Latino Youth

All throughout her life Mary has been and continues to be a symbol, an example, and a process for new beginnings. She is in solidarity with the individuals living outside of the normative centers as they share similar experiences of poverty and marginalization. In choosing Mary, a faithful woman living outside of the mainstream, to deliver a new life and mission in Jesus, God reaffirms the worth and potential the marginalized possess. Needless to say, if God chose the marginalized to carry out His promise of fulfillment and transcendence, it reaffirms the Church’s vocation to continue imitating her Master of evangelizing to this population. Hence, the second-generation Latino youth can profit from Mary’s presence and

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55 For instance, Figueroa Deck, when reflecting on the mestizo spirituality of U.S. Latinos noted that, «one cannot impose the Latino American frame of reference on the United States experience without doing violence to the actual situation. There has been in my judgment an unhealthy, unconscious dependence on Latin American theologians impeding the original reflections of the United States Hispanics.» A. FIGUEROA DECK. «The Spirituality of United States Hispanics,» in Mestizo Christianity, 228.
message as they can relate with her identity and mission receiving strength in seeing her as an inspiration. She in turn is a tool and medium for helping them find their marginal truth and potential for a new life in the promise of her Son.

Furthermore, Mary is a link between the old and the new given that she was a woman of the Old Testament and brought the new life in the New Testament through her Son. As she demonstrated what it meant to be a faithful disciple, Mary became an example and an inspiration for the people of the old life and for all new generations as she endured joy, suffering, distress, and trust in the midst of uncertainties, etc. Since then she has become a sign of new hope. In addition, Mary epitomizes the greatest example of an all faithful, loving Mother, to Jesus, the early Church, and to the universal Church throughout the centuries. In this role, she accompanied Jesus’ disciples through their tribulations and continues accompanying today’s marginal youth as they experience numerous challenges of identity and belongingness, aiding them to embrace Jesus’ new life. Moreover, she continues reaffirming this loving and transforming presence through her apparitions that manifest a continuity of God’s promises and assistance to the marginal people.

In appreciating and embracing Mary’s encounters, there is a consistency within her apparitions given that she continually delivers her message from within the individual’s culture, thus creating a bonding experience and an ease of identification. In the Guadalupe apparitions Mary’s commissioning of a marginalized Juan Diego enabled him to carry out a seemingly impossible mission, creating an affirming and empowering presence for every marginalized person who listens and heeds to her message. Therefore, as she provided the birth of a new beginning for the people in Mexico, she can also provide the birth of a new beginning for the second-generation Latino youth in the U.S. Within this notion, the youth can relate to her as they take on the message of the mestizo Guadalupe, a Mary who came to bring them meaning as she herself comprises the root of what it means to be in the in-beyond state of marginality. Moreover, by Juan Diego responding to Guadalupe’s divine mandate, he became a marginal symbol of transformation, a representation for the new marginalized generations. Hence, by imitating his example, the marginalized will no longer be seen as passive objects of someone else’s history, but as human subjects empowered to create a new future. It is through this process that the Guadalupe message aids the marginalized youth in seeing and believing in their identity and in God’s given potential to improve themselves and
their communities. In this sense she gives meaning, dignity, hope, and affirmed potential to the marginalized of today’s society.

It is important to note that for the youth to understand, appreciate and be helped by Mary’s message, and the holistic teachings offered by the Catholic Church, they need to enter into a liminal process through which they share their personal experiences and are illumined through such teachings as they learn to apply them to their daily lives.

7. Proposal for an «Integral Liberating Evangelization»

Youth ministry, guided by «Integral Liberating Evangelization» can provide a support group to minister personal and social change, where marginality can be evaluated through a clear understanding of how it affects the self as well as how it is perceived. Furthermore, in order to create change and work towards experiencing the in-beyond it is necessary to first realize the reality of its existence and effects in the personal life. Hence, the marginal Latino youth can come to understand the truth of their double cultural bounded situation meanwhile clarifying their identity with the aid of group processing. It is important for the youth to comprehend that the journey of experiencing the in-beyond state of marginality is not linear, but instead one that the person will bounce in and out of, as marginality will arise in unfamiliar forms and always cease to exist. The three stages of marginality integrated within the youth group are ways of acquiring coping skills that one can apply when sudden marginal situations arise. The youth will practice what they have learned within the youth group and apply it to current marginal situations as a way of reaching the in-beyond state, meanwhile striving to maintain this type of mentality.

7.1 Purpose and Goals

In living out the Church’s vocation to evangelize, it is necessary to adequately address the need for the actualization of a New Evangelization, Human Development, and Christian Culture. Hence, for this purposes an «Integral Liberating Evangelization» youth group format with a holistic formational liminal process has been developed in response to the current second-generation contextual reality. It looks to help these youth transcend and acknowledge the need for an anthropological understanding and appreciation of their culturally compound identity, in hope of making them active participants of the Body of Christ in their society. The dynamic of the group is set up to provide the members with the opportunity to learn and convert their negative experiences of marginality into positive
encounters of growth, assisting them to experience the in-beyond state of marginality. In this manner the youth will be able to attain true liberation and empowerment. The goal of this process is for the youth to receive a holistic perspective of the primary need for personal conversion through the understanding of the truth about Jesus Christ, the truth about their Church’s mission, and the truth about themselves. All of which are necessary prerequisites in contributing to an intentional social change that seeks their ultimate purification, freedom, reconciliation, and redemption. Furthermore, the marginalized Latino will be required to learn how to embrace their lives with the understanding of marginality and its encompassing effects, as to help them visualize and work toward a more fulfilling future beginning in the present moment. This understanding will allow them to contrast their cosmovision and pathos of life, since daily encountered relationships «produce and/or reduce stress, feelings of loneliness, low self esteem, a sense of failure or a desire to improve one’s own life.»

With the proper guidance, social conscience can foster positive values, attitudes, and behavioral patterns towards a more Christian living, thus creating renewed individuals. The marginalized Latino youth are experiencing a heightened state of unnecessary symptoms, given that they must not only deal with the «typical» life stressors, but are also obliged to encounter additional marginal states that society has bestowed upon them. Hence, a youth group can foster an atmosphere where skills can be learned and practiced, assisting in the identity formation of the veracity of the role the Latino youth hold in the United States. In this vein, the objective would be to reaffirm a dignified identity and role in society that will empower them to actively participate in the building of the kingdom of God meanwhile working toward the in-beyond state of marginality.

In being active participants of the youth group, members can take advantage of the opportunity of learning how to confront the effects of negative social mirroring as they acquire various techniques to overcome such experiences. An integrative pastoral approach will surely offer the means for recognition, manifestation, and purpose of personal conversion and social structures, given that it will refer to the unique circumstances the youth possess. Group process enables individuals to become «aware of similarities between personal problems and the problems of other group

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members, which lead to decreased feelings of isolation, peculiarity, and a sense of commonality with others.»\(^\text{57}\) This is a crucial concept when working with this population as the environment creates a «safe haven» with equal dignity, appreciation, and respect, where marginality is viewed not only as a topic to be discussed, but also as a creative locus of divine intervention where God’s love is shared. Hence, within the group, the comprised members will become comfortable in viewing themselves as marginal, supplying the opportunity for change, growth, fulfillment, and comfort of the present realism through active participation.

The existence of this specialized youth group process will also offer a type of check and balance support system where the youth can renew their perspectives and commitments in their journey towards knowing and reaching a spiritual in-beyond. Since the use of group relations nurtures self-understanding as well as personal behavioral change, it can ultimately help each individual develop a clear understanding of themselves as they learn to evaluate marginal issues and transform their meanings by making use of what both worlds has to offer. In doing so, as they decide to either knowingly or instinctively convey their God given aptitudes and values, they will be able to appreciate and celebrate them within their faith communities. Furthermore, positive peer support will encourage the youth towards action and growth, thus aiding all of the individuals to benefit from the youth group sessions, given that all «members are urged toward involving, facing, and acting on the real present concerns in their lives.»\(^\text{58}\) In this manner, as they discern God’s purpose and guidance through their present circumstances and learn how to embrace a promising future, it will also allow them the opportunity to share a common religious experience.

This active involvement will provide additional effective ways for behavioral change within the state of marginality as members will discern and develop a more effective strategic response to their needs by observing each other’s behaviors. In the process they will be introduced to different ways of reaching the same desired goal as they individually grow and are communally nourished. These learned skills do not belong solely to the group, as group process provides a model of a greater reality portraying the similarities between the struggles and conflicts people undergo within the group from those they experience outside of it.\(^\text{59}\) Consequently, the group

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\(^\text{57}\) Ibid., 6  
\(^\text{58}\) Ibid., 6  
\(^\text{59}\) Ibid., 5
members will have the opportunity to explore their relational styles toward negative marginality and learn more effective behaviors that will lead them to live in a transcendental state. The established responses involving self perceptions and negative marginality can aid the group members in acknowledging similar experiences as they relate and recognize their common concerns, meanwhile assisting each other to shift from the current state of marginality to a healthier one. Despite the similarity of experiences, all participating members have the potential to personally grow through the youth group process as they learn to initiate healthy risks towards developing new attitudes and behaviors by trusting, caring, and the helping of themselves through one another.\(^{60}\)

In working toward enhancing the cognitive approach of dealing with marginality, the second-generation Latino youth must acquire certain techniques that will aid them in continuing to overcome any marginal situations outside of the group. Some essential practices pertain to their ability to maintain the unity of both their cultural origins and the emphasis of liberation through marginality. Thus, making it important for the youth to learn how to execute what they have gained from the group, in the hope of improving their capacity to apply these skills to problems presented outside of the group, as they work with others toward embracing a shared objective. This can then serve as a «protective» mechanism supplying encouragement and confidence to enter into a continual and renewing missionary journey, as each member presses the other from becoming stuck in the negative or positive state meanwhile sharing the new acquired coping methods for future encountered marginal situations. There are five step patterns for constructive thinking that can be instrumental for the Latino youth as they work towards the in-beyond state and ultimate redemption.\(^{61}\)

1. Identify the goal (e.g. the in-beyond state).
2. Analyze the problem (e.g. the relationship between the common goal and the barriers, along with the loss of identity and how to reach that state of in-beyond by getting through the marginal states).
3. Suggest all possible solutions to the difficulty (e.g. discussion of different experiences will give birth to these).

\(^{60}\) Ibid., 6

\(^{61}\) R. C. DIEDRICH - H. A. DYE. Eds. *Group Procedures: Purposes, Processes, and Outcomes; Selected Readings for the Counselor*. Boston, 30. The five steps presented by Diedrich have been used and modified to support the purpose of this proposal.
4. Select the most satisfactory solution or solutions (e.g. understanding the media's reasoning behind one's culture, or acknowledging how the normative society defines and projects its treatment toward the marginalized and how a personal change of reaction can take place).

5. Consider ways to implement the solution (e.g. could analyze the personal reactions by writing down what could be done differently to move from the simple negative marginal state to the positive).

The sharing process within this youth group dynamic will provide the opportunity «to achieve an agreement by members through solution finding, meanwhile providing participants with a deeper insight into the problem under consideration.» Since the purpose of this youth group is to seek the route to experience the in-beyond state of marginality, along with the potential to enhance a sharing process of intimate personal conversion and social participation, it can then help transform them into a transcending self. Nonetheless, the process of dialogue will give relevance to all group members as their contributions are valued. Furthermore, discussion will provide a give and take process that will eventually lead to the embracement of personal efforts, teaching them to become active instruments of social transformation toward a common Christian destination. When focusing on the marginalized Latino youth, all members need to express what they deem the problem to be, in addition to offering feedback on the existing issue. This in turn will provide a deeper understanding of the variety of forms marginality can present itself, giving the youth an opportunity to focus on their contextual social cultural realities. In this vein, an inculturated mestizo evangelization will produce and present itself in positive values supporting the formation of the second-generation new amalgamated identity. Thus, in the midst of support they will be encouraged to become productive participants in the lives of their communities as they better understand the need to be actively integrated in God’s given Church and society.

Another aspect of this youth group process looks to provide participants with the ability to discuss and experience a real sense of integration, acceptance of their reality, and thus set realistic goals with a responsible adaptability in their social and religious environments in the midst of the Virgin Mary’s assistance. When Mary is seen as a symbol and process for

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62 Ibid., 30
new beginnings, she enables the powerless and vulnerable to execute unimaginable tasks as seen in the Guadalupe encounters with Juan Diego. In other words, she gives affirmation and significance to every marginalized person who receives and responds to her message. Hence, the youth must learn to live out her message as she serves as a beneficial tool for understanding their reality of marginality in society, as an aid in setting realistic in-beyond goals, an assistor in adapting to change through personal cognitive, emotional, and spiritual awareness, and helpful to them when learning to take the best from both worlds. In imitating Juan Diego’s example, group members will be able to take advantage of each other’s participation while they serve as representations of new marginalized generations and support «one another in the expression of emotions, interpret meanings, clarify feelings, give support, and exert some influence on behaviors.»

Furthermore, through the integrative approach of Mary’s message and group discussion, problems are examined and solutions reached, teaching the youth how to work with others as empowered human subjects. As similar problems are being examined within the group, group interaction gives each individual the liberty of finding an appropriate solution for his and her own marginal state. In the end, it is through this process that the Guadalupe mestizo message brings hope to the marginalized youth as they see and believe their God-given identity, capacity and fulfillment in themselves and within their communities.

Turning now the attention to the specific goals pertaining to the comprised youth group, they primarily consist of an effort to aid each other reach the in-beyond state of marginality through personal examination and social interaction. The members will learn how to live in the midst of the negative marginalizing characteristics and influences that have been distorting their ability to acknowledge and live out who God has called them to be. An overview of the goals will be presented to the group, as the fundamental concepts of their attendance will be reassured through them. The objectives could be essential in times of despair and struggles towards growth, as individuals may perhaps feel a lack of hope. The members will have the opportunity to discern personal goals they deem essential for their growth and transcendence, giving them a sense of investment and

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63 Ibid., 34
ownership in the dynamic of the process toward the in-beyond. The following are overall normative goals for the group process.\footnote{Corey proposed some basic goals that groups generally comply with. As cited by R. L. George - D. Dustin. \textit{Group Counseling: Theory and Practice}, 7. These goals were adapted to aid the purpose of this youth group process.}

1. Appreciate how to trust one-self and others.
3. Identify the commonality of their emotional state of being.
4. Augment self acceptance, self confidence, and self respect to attain a new understanding of one-self.
5. Encountering new attitudes when dealing with «normal» cultural problems and seeing them in a different light.
6. Learn how to freely live within a racially diverse environment.
7. Make specific plans for changing certain behaviors and committing oneself to follow through with these plans.
8. Learn more effective social skills.
9. Become more sensitive to the reality of marginality.
10. Learn how to confront one's marginal state with honesty, understanding, and directness.
11. Clarify one’s cultural values and decide whether and how to modify them.
12. Recognize the state of marginality as the creative and transforming locus of God in our human lives in order to reach the in-beyond state.

\textbf{7.2 Eligibility Criteria}

The individuals eligible to partake in this group are second-generation Latino youth living in the United States. It is important to keep in mind, as earlier noted, Latino youth ages range in terms of marital status; subsequently we can have a group consisting of individuals as young as 15 and up to 35, or as long as the person is not married. Therefore, the youth will be divided into two groups consisting of ages 15-20 and 21-35. Though there are many issues and reasons regarding the formation of two groups, two principal concerns should be considered: (1) the legal ramification in the U.S. pertaining to relationships with adolescents, and (2) the intellectual development of the youth as they possess different levels of maturity due to their age. In this regard it is most beneficial for the
comprising members to partake in a youth group that respects and responds to their current state. In turn, this will allow them to actively participate within the group and reach their goal towards transcendence, as they are able to relate and engage in issues particular to their present life circumstances.

7.3 Length of Group Sessions, Frequency and Duration of Meetings

In terms of attendance, members will be allowed to join the group at any phase of its progression. Since youth groups in the U.S. typically follow an academic calendar, a commitment of nine months will be asked of each member, excluding civil and religious holidays. In looking at the best date for youth members to gather, each Parish will determine the suitable date and time. Group sessions will run for 90 minutes every week and will include a time frame for communal interaction with the sharing of food and beverages to help with relationship building. The group’s basic format will consist of:

- **Initial Prayer**  
  (Traditional prayers will be offered.)

- **Check-in**  
  (Check-in is a process in which each member will be asked to share a brief overview of the positive and negative highlights in his or her week. This process will allow the members to understand each other’s current state of mind, along with establishing a sign of welcome for new members.)

- **Icebreakers or Activities**  
  (Within the icebreakers/activities lies the theme as they facilitate group interaction and foster group processing which then leads to personal and group transformation.)

- **Group Processing**  
  (Group Processing will be triggered through the icebreakers/activities and the answering of the key questions to consider, hence allowing the individuals to meet the group objectives for the particular session.)

- **Wrap-up**  
  (During wrap-up, the facilitator will ask members to voice any final questions or concerns regarding the given topic along with clearly articulating the dynamic of the present session before it is concluded.)

- **Community Life**  
  (Community life will have members discuss and plan current or future events they wish to participate and contribute to in the parish
community. This is an important component of the session as it will help keep the youth active in the Church while fulfilling the major goals of this program.)

- **Concluding Prayer**
  (Members will have the opportunity to compose «a working prayer in progress» throughout the sessions.)

- **Group Social**
  (Snacks and beverages will be shared giving the youth the opportunity to establish relationships.)

Although a general format has been provided to structure the layout of the sessions, in terms of themes, there are specific topics that require attention and are therefore necessary for the journey toward a holistic sense of the self and transcendence. Through this manner the youth will become active participants of their faith community and society. For example, the three states of marginality must be clearly elicited as they are the bearers of a life toward transcendence, given that marginality cannot be discussed if the individual is unaware of its existence and consequences. Hence, if marginality is ignored it cannot be converted to positive marginality, keeping the person from reaching an in-beyond state. Numerous facets are critical for formation and transformation to occur, therefore a more precise outline governing necessary topics and its general format can be found in the *Group Session Outline* section following this chapter.

### 7.4 Appropriate Group Norms, Process, and Procedures

Members will be expected to respect the thoughts and opinions of other group members, although they will be encouraged to discuss what they are feeling as others share their thoughts on the given topic. This process must persuade openness and honesty as the psycho-educational and transcendental process take place within the reality the members are facing. However, self disclosure does not mean everything must be said but only that which will benefit the group along with the self.\(^{65}\) If at any given point a member feels discouraged or the object of ridicule the issue will be addressed as disrespect will not be tolerated.

Respect will not apply only toward the individual, but will also play a role in the group’s existence as a whole. Members will be asked to attend regularly, and arrive on time. The most important concept regarding the group’s norms, process, or procedure lies in the individual’s ability to

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participate. In order for the group to move toward the in-beyond state, it will be absolutely necessary for each member to seriously invest in the program-process. Nonetheless, every member will be in a different marginal state and facing different marginal aspects in their lives due to the diverse categories of the holistic sense of self. Thus, the importance of partaking does not lie in the quantity one shares but in the quality of one’s participation which will establish individual growth.

7.5 Appropriate Leadership Styles and Roles

The person facilitating this youth group needs to have the adequate training and qualifications for working within this dynamic. Some notions to consider are that of qualified natural life experience, academic training, supervision within the field of group counseling, and actual personal group therapy. The person must have the capacity to accept and adapt to changes in leading the group sessions, given that unannounced issues may arise along with a necessary extension of a theme. An emphasis lies within the understanding of the involved cultures given that individual experiences are different regarding the level of acculturation and assimilation. Furthermore, as this is a specialized ministry, the potential facilitator must have a thorough understanding of the reality and dynamics of marginality and how it manifests itself in people’s lives. Since these youth group meetings are the extension of a Catholic parish, they will maintain a religious identity in nature and therefore the mysterious movements of the Spirit must be respected, in addition to encompassing a strong psychosocial emphasis. The facilitator therefore has to be an objective person, who does not impose any detrimental preconceived ideas on the youth regarding their cultural and spiritual beliefs.

7.6 Ethical/Legal Concerns

It is important for the «group leader to be a relatively congruent and stable individual... with a developed insight into their own unique characteristics and needs.» Hence, the facilitator will need to take full responsibility for trying to establish and maintain a professional relationship with each participating youth, as they avoid any behavior that may have a negative impact on the group. If applicable, «The group leader must be familiar with the standards and codes of ethical behavior of their

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67 Ibid., 125
professional organization and apply them where appropriate, to group practice. This is particularly necessary in the Catholic Church due to the recent circumstances arisen from the sexual abuse scandals. Accordingly, the facilitator should avoid dual relationships and not become overly involved in the personal lives of the members. In this light, objectivity (on part of the facilitator) should always take place during the progression of the program to avoid projecting a personal stance which can hinder the dynamic of the sessions.

Since vulnerability will present itself through group discussion, the issue of confidentiality must not be taken lightly and ought to be addressed clearly early within the group setting. The inability to control what other group members say is also a confidential issue that needs to be given much attention as it may freeze the sharing process that is necessary for growth. However, group members should be educated where confidentiality must be breached if the person is a danger to self or others.

### 7.7 Evaluation Criteria

The individuals, through an oral survey, will evaluate personal growth and the benefits or hindrances received from the group. A verbal method will be used to allow the participants to reply in a detailed manner. Hence, the group leader will minister a discussion asking members for feedback regarding what best helped them foster cognitive, emotional, and spiritual change, changes they perceive beneficial for future groups, and how this group has impacted the way they view their current state of marginality. These verbal evaluations will take place during the beginning and the end of the program. The leader should make an effort to answer any questions the group members may have and take note of what could be improved for future support groups, along with what brought the most benefits to the members.

When dealing with the conditions and circumstances of the second-generation Latino youth, their reality is begging for a specialized and integrated response that addresses their pastoral and human concerns. Thus, this chapter began by considering the Church’s universal call for a New Evangelization, as delineated by John Paul II, which seeks a true personal and social conversion while producing human development, and a

68 M. S. Corey - G. Corey. *Groups: Process and Practice*, 125
more Christian culture. The youth are living in an enslaving environment that is robbing them of their God’s given identity and mission in life. As the Church exists to evangelize, she must reach out and assist the youth, purifying them from within their cultural circumstantial environment with a more integrative approach. This chapter has demonstrated that the Church has all the necessary resources to respond to the special needs of the youth, but have not been utilized in a unified manner. It is essential to provide a Christian anthropological understanding of the self in order to facilitate an experience of true personal and social conversion through an intimate relationship with Jesus and his transforming mission. Within this evangelizing response, a combination of the personal as well as the social transformation embedded within Authentic Human Liberation and Liberation Theology’s teachings is required for the youth to initiate a fulfilling and transcending life. The merging of these two theological approaches has been labeled, «Integral Liberating Evangelization.»

Authentic Human Liberation, articulated by John Paul II and then Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, which projects its actualization through the order of personal conversion through Jesus Christ, causing social transformation. The second teaching comes from the Latin American Theology, emphasizing a social approach that confronts structural sin through a personal and collective participation. The chapter continued by stating the need for an integrated teaching of both liberating approaches to assist the youth in experiencing a personal conversion meanwhile understanding the origins and nature of their structural marginalization. This in turn will accompany the youth through the marginal stages in hope of reaching the in-beyond state, as they move toward a fulfilling life of transcendence. Also introduced were three pastoral approaches used in the U.S. namely, the traditionalist, reformist, and transformative. However, once again in responding to the group’s needs, these approaches are not independently beneficial, but if integrated can offer a more effective and holistic response to the particular Latino youth’s pastoral needs. Furthermore, the chapter demonstrates two models of youth groups, Equipos Unidos and La Jornada, both presented short term successes, as they lacked in providing a holistic liberating and empowering teaching that would move the youth toward a sustainable personal and social conversion.

A contrast between youth ministries in the U.S. and Latin America was also highlighted to lead a possible integrated ministry for the second-generation Latino youth. One noted difference belongs to the psychological approach seen in U.S. ministries that deals with the issues of interrelationships among the youth. On the other hand, the Latin American
youth ministry focuses on the sociological approach meanwhile emphasizing the social analysis to understand the root causes of cultural, social, and religious environments. In this venue, given the reality that U.S. Latino youth are a new hybrid group living within two or more cultures, the *mestizo* Mary who links the Old and New Testament, serves as a disciple, companion, friend, enabler and as a mother…etc. The role of Mary and her message also serve as a symbol and process that can be helpful to the youth, as they identify with her marginal and multicultural experiences, thus affirming and empowering the understanding of their personal identity and mission.

The presented pastoral approaches joined to form «Integral Liberating Evangelization,» models of youth ministry, along with the empowering message of Mary can come together in an integrated holistic way, which can be adopted and implemented by the Church for parochial youth support groups. Through this process the youth can not only understand the reality of marginality in their lives, but can also find hope and reaffirmation in the Church’s teachings, which can help them go through the negativities of marginality and find a way to bring about positive aspects to reach the in-beyond state. With this in mind, the chapter concludes by proposing a format for a liminal process, delineating some guidelines for the implementation of future youth groups considering the concepts embedded within «Integral Liberating Evangelization». In addition, an introductory and pertinent curriculum of some crucial themes pertaining to the special needs of the marginalized youth is provided in the *Group Session Outline* section of the dissertation.

The situation of second-generation Latino youth is a symptom of a greater reality given that this last century has seen the greatest migration movement in the history of humankind. Consequently, the encounter of different cultures gave birth to a great number of second-generation *mestizos* all over the world, but especially in the U.S. and European countries. These new generations certainly need assistance to clarify their holistic sense of self, purpose, and special role in their given societies. It is the hope that this general format and the knowledge that has been provided through this proposal will assist not only our current situation here in the U.S. but can also be transported and executed abroad as it can also benefit their second-generation youth.
In the last two decades the Latino population in the United States has experienced unprecedented growth, creating a large number of second and third-generation youth. Although a great percentage of the general Latino population identifies themselves as Catholic, many are non-practicing or have decided to leave the Church. Thus then, it was within the relationship between the issues of the process of assimilation of faith and culture that inspired the research for this dissertation. One of the principal concerns looked into pertains to the common use of what is traditionally considered to be the right process of assimilation in the United States, as it makes the second-generation Latino youth prone to experiencing a crisis of identity. Therefore, often times they are misunderstood, neglected, confused, pushed to the margins, etc., which causes them to feel displaced. For the Church, this crisis calls for a specialized pastoral response because they are a new hybrid people and require new evangelization efforts that also integrate cross-cultural ministerial concerns. Hence, this dissertation provided informative guidance and an enlightened new approach to deal with the challenges this population encounters, meanwhile offering a potential pastoral resolution, with the hope of assisting with the Church’s efforts of a new evangelization when addressing their current missiological needs as opportunity for growth. Consequently, with the hope of helping recognize and appreciate the marginalized state of second-generation Latino youth in the United States as a divine locus for God’s intervention and as a process for transcendence, six chapters presented essential information addressing the essential issues.

This dissertation proposes a new pastoral response, labeled «Integral Liberating Evangelization,» which responds to the call of a «New Evangelization» as promoted by the late Pope John Paul II and Pope
Benedict XVI, and the «Integral Liberation» as promoted by Latino Theology in the United States. This missionary proposition addresses the contextual socio-cultural and spiritual reality of U.S. second-generation Latino youth, who are being challenged with living the reality of marginality and experiencing a crisis of identity and purpose. The proposition is enlightened through a Christian anthropological liminal process towards a redemptive and transcending liberation and reconciliation. This dissertation demonstrates how the concept of an «Integral Liberating Evangelization» can help the second-generation Latino youth to experience all of the ramifications their marginality imposes, meanwhile providing them with a transforming discernment process for a true fulfilling Christian life

1. Structural Development of Chapters

The first chapter offered an anthropological development of marginality from a secular point of view. It highlighted the cultural distinctiveness of the human person as a sociopolitical being, meanwhile exploring the concepts of anomie and liminality. The chapter then looked into the contextual reality of Latino immigrants as to emphasize the distress and uncertainties marginality perpetrates, along with its impact on the development of the identities of the second-generation Latino youth in the U.S.

This information provided foundational reference to serve as a guide for recognizing and understanding the state and consequences of how marginal socio-cultural manifestations, namely, the negative, positive, and in-beyond play out in people’s lives. Hence, the veracity of marginality and its expressions, structurally and voluntarily, would become more evident in the life and encompassing world of second-generation youth.

Most importantly, the material points out the notion that this population faces several unique complexities, making it difficult for them to cultivate and nurture personal and social abilities in the form of behavioral patterns, thoughts, incentives, awareness, etc. It also demonstrates the many symptoms and forms of marginality and how they influence the cognitive, emotional, sociopolitical, biological, cultural and religious experiences of an individual’s life. Thus both facets highlight the importance of making this population a pastoral missionary priority for the U.S. Church in view of the call for a new evangelization.

Chapter II focused on a religious consideration of marginality as it presented its perception, progression and advancement within the ecclesial
institution. It reflected on marginality within a religious milieu and acknowledged its challenges and opportunities for inspiration, conversion, reconciliation, resolution, and transcending liberation. While this material revealed the distress, implications, and prospective presence of structural, cultural, ideological, and religious marginality in the social order, it also pointed at how the kingdom of God has been and can be disclosed to the marginalized in apparent and tangible ways. Clearly, the presented theological marginal considerations evidenced God’s active existence in the life of marginal individuals of faith as well as his transforming work while assisting them to become active agents in the future God has planned for them.

Significantly, the information denoted how the existence of marginality encloses numerous confusing practices that can create a great deal of uncertainty and despair. It also noted how marginality can endow the person with opportunity and directive growth. Thus, it depicts the reality of marginality as of great importance for the Church as she continues finding innovative ways to support future generations with the awareness of a loving God that undeniably is with them until the end of time.

Chapter III offered a modest biblical summary of poverty and marginality. It was done to provide clear examples that illustrate how individuals of faith, particularly the humble and trusting poor, have fruitfully used their marginalities and worked through them with selfless and hopeful spiritual intentions for service in the kingdom of God. Moreover, it also supplies a concrete assertion to the marginalized individuals, as the stories embody the variety of presenting marginal issues faced by U.S. second-generation Latino youth. The hope is to present the real possibility for transcending growth to and of these youth, as they can parallel those who allowed God to work in their lives in biblical times.

Ultimately, this chapter’s material intends to visualize the importance of understanding how God’s all-encompassing message is for every marginalized person, and how those who knowingly identify their marginality and their confidence in an empowering God are better situated to allow God to renovate, reconcile and set them free from any worldly enslavement. It also demonstrated how it is within the marginal circumstances that God assists the wounded people discern their true identity, empowering them to enter into a liberating mission. In this vein, the youth can benefit from this affirming biblical understanding as it can help create an environment where their marginal encounters become redeeming and transcending experiences. The Church, in turn, can realize the urgency to find a way to help the youth embrace this biblical message,
so that they can become active mediators in the building of the kingdom of God in the here and now.

Chapter IV looked into several essential features regarding the socio-cultural circumstances that directly influence the formational course of the self and the attitudinal patterns of Latino youth in the United States. It touched on issues concerning differentiation, social assimilation, integration, multiculturalism, language, family, social mirroring and many other facets that contribute to their identity formation as youth living in the margins. Meanwhile, it also pointed out the current demographics, growth, cultural composition, impact on social structures, and a number of harmful reactions in the treatment of the Latino youth by the mainstream society.

The purpose of this information was to point out the diverse sources and circumstances of marginalization, as well as to view them as a gauntlet of confrontations that the Latino youth must bear. As a result, the material highlighted significant socio-cultural and political features that eventually have an effect on the religious and spiritual life of the youth.

Thus, this information is vital for comprehending and creating future successful pastoral strategies and approaches in the service of the Latino youth. The chapter clearly demonstrates the youth’s lack of political representation and cultural depreciation along with the harmful consequences to their assimilation process into society, feeding the deeper additional uncertainty of their cultural identity. Hence, the critical necessity to have a positive assertion of the self is stated as primordial for these youth if they are to benefit their relational identity with a group as well.

Chapter V presented the pastoral condition of these youth and looked into some fundamental confrontations in the development of Hispanic ministry in the U.S., with a particular focus on the youth ministry. It considered past and present pastoral efforts, struggles, and overlooked opportunities to recognize a pressing need for a contextually targeted and integrated Latino youth ministry. Other essential factors that were taken into account were those relating the function and focus of U.S. Latino theology, along with the slight promotion and assertion of accepted religiosity with the awareness of cultural, racial and religious Mestizaje. A further matter addressed the important role of culture as a medium of evangelization along with the conservation and affirmation of one’s identity, and the differentiation process of these youth.

This information in turn highlighted the continual growth of the second-generation Latino population in the U.S., along with their belief in the Catholic faith, as well as their continuous disaffiliation to their Church.
This material clearly pointed out the youth’s connection with the future goals of the missionary life of the Church, meanwhile explaining how their urgent need of missionary pastoral attention. The chapter also presented the distinctive multicultural and bilingual identities and how these youth possess a unique character of belonging to more than one cultural world. Their overall measures, elusive beliefs, and religious practices also helped supplying a profile that would enhance a more beneficial Hispanic youth ministry, as it denoted the vital features and characteristics.

The aim of this presentation was to provide an understanding of the conditions these youth undergo and the need for the Church to recognize and make a more specialized missionary effort to respond to their unique pastoral needs. The evidence also illustrates that the institutional Church has not yet generated an actual integrated ministry that recognizes the socio-cultural and religious marginalizing situations of this young Latino population.

More importantly, the above material emphasizes the youth’s need to move from the state of simply existing to a more realistic and positive place, where their «cultural identity and difference» are used as constructive assets for their Christian growth, maturation and transcending liberation. Thus, it is the contention of this author that any expression for a flourishing targeted Latino youth ministry is required to embrace the conservation, assertion, and support of their unique mestizo identity.

Chapter VI focused on the Church’s new collective missionary call for an inward-directed Evangelization. It reiterated Pope John Paul II’s objectives of the triad’s relationship of a «New Evangelization, human development, and Christian culture,» as it produces sacramental encounters leading to human growth and advancement. It also presented two advances toward enduring and transcending liberation, namely, «Authentic Human Liberation» which considers personal conversion for social change, and «Latino American Theology’s Liberation» which stresses a needed social approach toward the destruction of structural sin through personal and collective participation. Moreover, it discusses some models of previous youth groups, a contrast between Latin American ministries and U.S. ministries, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses. The chapter also gave great emphasis to the role of Mary in the lives of these youth and discussed her value when presented in the appropriate manner, and taken advantage of her loving empowerment.

This material is helpful in that it demonstrates the circumstances, the veracity and need for a specific and integrated response to the second-generation Latino youth pastoral needs. It further elicits the Church’s
existence to evangelize, denoting her priority to reach out and aid the youth with the objective of purifying them from within their cultural contingent environment with a more integrative approach.

The inclusion of the integrated teaching of liberation was provided to demonstrate how it can aid the youth in experiencing a personal conversion meanwhile considering the birth and character of their structural marginality, which is essential for a transcending liberation and reconciliation. As for the diverse approaches and models of youth ministry and the empowering message of Mary, they were provided to better comprehend how an integrated holistic process can indeed be espoused and put into practice by the Church in assisting these Latino youth at the parochial level.

Furthermore, as one sees the reality the U.S. Latino youth face, meanwhile coming to understand their new hybrid identity of living within two or more cultures, one comes to see how the presence of the mestizo Mary who associates the Old and New Testament is vital when working with this population as she can be used to serve as a disciple, companion, friend, enabler and as a mother to them. Thus the role of Mary and her message also serves as a representation and a means that can be useful to the youth, as they relate with her marginal and multicultural experiences. Through this process the youth can come to acknowledge the realism of their marginality in their lives, and also unearth trust and reaffirmation in the Church’s teachings, which would naturally lead them through the negativities of marginality and find a way to bring about constructive aspects to reach the in-beyond state.

Overall, the chapter demonstrates that the Church does have all of the essential resources to attend the unique contextual needs of these youth, but must first discern how to develop and articulate them in a unified manner. It also outlines the necessity of attending to a Christian anthropological awareness of the self in order to make a true personal and social renovation possible through the close relationship with Jesus and his transforming mission. We see that this understanding can assist the youth through their marginal stages with the anticipation of experiencing the in-beyond state, as they move toward a satisfying life of transcending liberation and empowerment.
For this reason 12 sessions\(^1\) were constructed, integrating the material from all of the chapters as a way of offering a basic outline that could be taken into account when working with the youth at the parochial level. It was done with the hope of encouraging others to consider adopting a similar model in terms of content. Interestingly, the circumstances faced by the second-generation Latino youth in the U.S. is a movement that is also being played out with other ethnic groups in different parts of the world and can be specifically seen in European countries. This in turn highlights the great need to take a stance in addressing the issues regarding the proper pastoral approach to ministering to the new hybrid identities and the importance of nourishing a constructive role in society. In doing so the Church would be responding to its missionary call meanwhile affirming to the second and third generation Latino youth the process of recognizing God’s given personal identity and purpose.

Thus, by closely evaluating the presented conditions faced by these youth, one becomes fully aware of the urgency to implement an inculturated missionary pastoral response. In addition, the challenges posed by the second-generation Latino youth in the U.S. also represent the reality of people on the move in other places in the world and thus help highlight the need to address their unique issues in a global manner.

\(^1\) These outlined sessions are offered as an appendix, right after the general conclusion. They were structured and developed by psychologist Patricia Murillo as part of her doctoral work.
APPENDIX A

Liminal Group Session Outline

These detailed sample sessions were comprised to serve as an outline to help facilitate and meet the needs of the second-generation Latino youth residing in the United States of America. They provide a general idea of how a youth group may be conducted. Hence, specific topics are given an elaborate amount of attention that I deem necessary for the journey toward the embracing of God’s giving identity, wholeness and transcendence. Each session introduces a distinct objective that will be used as the guide for that particular session. All of the activities and questions to consider have been thought out to directly meet the stated objective. The sessions are also comprised in a format that will naturally allow each individual to grow from partaking in them disregarding their current marginal state, given that each individual will be in a different state and progressing at a different pace. This is done to assist and monitor the progress each individual is experiencing toward the desired goal from a personal level, meanwhile offering group collaboration and cohesion.

The youth group meetings are set up to meet two distinct developmental aspects. The first addresses their personal journey and growth which can be found in the first major portion of the group. As already expressed, it lies within the carried out activities, objectives, and questions to consider. The second portion is dedicated to community building within the parish. This section is labeled «Living Our Faith.» This time-frame will be used to encourage the youth to create and carry-out ideas they find interesting, meanwhile partaking and strengthening their relationships as they building their faith communities. Given that each parish hosts distinct events and has its own atmosphere, both the youth group leader and the parish pastor
can assist in the brainstorming of ideas based on the Church’s current needs. Thus, the end goal is to assist the second-generation Latino youth transcend and experience both a spiritual personal conversion with Jesus so that they may experience the in-beyond state, meanwhile becoming active agents of the Catholic Church.
1. Session One Topic: The Many Faces of Marginality

**Objective:**
Members will come to understand the origination of their current circumstances and feelings regarding marginality as they share their personal experiences. This will also aid with fostering the initial sense of community for the group, as they live out each other’s marginal realities and find themselves jointly relating to the challenges being presented.

**Key Questions to Consider:**
- What is marginality?
- What does marginality mean to me as an individual?
- How have I experienced marginality?
- How do I relate to what other group members are sharing?
- Will I always be marginal?

**Necessary Materials:**
- Second-Generation Support Group Expectations (located in appendix B)
- Traditional Opening Prayer (located in appendix B)
- A Working Prayer In Progress (located in appendix B)

**Living Our Faith:**
- Brainstorm future opportunities for church community involvement.

**Activities:**
1. The group leader will initiate the first session with what will become the traditional opening prayer (located at the end of this appendix), and will proceed with a general welcoming.
2. An adequate amount of time will be taken to discuss the group policies specifically pertaining to confidentiality and communal respect. Members will also address any concerns they perceive could possibly hinder their participation along with answering the Second-Generation Support Group Expectations sheet (located in appendix B). The responses will be discussed by the group as a whole and then picked up to be redistributed on the final session as to be reanalyzed after group process participation as a way to physically measure personal growth.
3. The purpose of the group will receive significant attention along with the three states of marginality. This will clarify any confusion regarding the terms (given that they are the backbone of the sessions). The leader shall highlight the Golden Goal: To recognize the state of marginality as the creative and transforming locus of God in our human lives in order to reach the in-beyond state.
4. Questions or comments regarding this matter should be addressed soon after as to make sure that everyone understands the group’s mission.
5. The facilitator will then initiate group interaction by asking the group members to think back to when they were children and remember what they wanted to be when they grew up. The leader will continue expressing how many people don’t become what they actually aspired to be as a child.
6. Going around the group, each member will answer what their thoughts were as a child and address two cultural obstacles that might have kept them from reaching this dream. The answers will begin to generate the first group awareness of marginality.

7. The group leader can incorporate some of the *key questions to consider* at this moment making sure the member’s experience the session’s *objective* through the activity being conducted.

8. During wrap up the facilitator will ask each member to congratulate the person to their right as a sign of gratitude for their bravery and openness to sharing. He/She must remind them that acknowledgement of marginality is the first step to reaching the in-beyond and that despite where they stand the journey has begun.

9. The facilitator will then turn the member’s attention to the second phase of the group’s session by introducing «Living Our Faith». Members will be asked to suggest potential involvement ideas they find interesting and beneficial to the Church community. This will initiate the group’s active participation within the parish community allowing them to feel responsible and needed for.

10. Once all members have had the opportunity to share their thoughts regarding «Living Our Faith», the group leader will establish the concluding prayer. An explanation of «a working prayer in progress» will be proposed (located in appendix B) encouraging members to share a sentence or two when most inspired, contributing to the comprising of a final intimate group prayer.

11. Group members will then spend the closing 5 minutes establishing relationships with other group members as they share a snack and beverage.
2. Session Two Topic: Socio-Cultural Marginality in the United States

Objective:
Members will develop an understanding of what they can and cannot change in their present lives. Acceptance of self will be acknowledged along with the ridding of self guilt as the members grasp the awareness of social integration, assimilation, human longings, and fulfillments.

Key Questions to Consider:
- How do I feel about the idea of trying to identify with two cultures?
- Has marginality affected the way I perceive myself along with the goals I have set out to accomplish?
- How has my marginal state created confusion with my cultural identity?

Necessary Materials
- Guest speaker who has experienced the in-beyond state of marginality.
- Traditional Opening Prayer (located at the end of this appendix)
- A Working Prayer In Progress (located at the end of this appendix)

Living Our Faith:
- Relative topics will receive attention.

Activities:
1. Facilitator will initiate the session with the traditional opening prayer (located in appendix B)
2. Members will then be asked to establish the norm for future check-ins as they state their name, the mood they find themselves in, and any fear or concerns regarding their participation within the group. This process will allow the members to understand each other's current state of mind, along with establishing a sign of welcome for the new members. The leader will then address any of the stated concerns and ask for the group member’s contribution.
3. The Facilitator will then introduce the guest speaker by providing a brief history of the individual.
4. Guest speaker will then conduct a 30 minute presentation regarding the role marginality has played out in his/her life. The members will then have time to ask questions pertaining to the introduced information.
5. The facilitator will ask the members to ponder over the questions to consider and then have the members share their thoughts. This will allow the members to reach the objective for the day.
6. Soon after the group leader should assure the group of the reality of reaching the in-beyond state of marginality and that by partaking within the group they are beginning their journey. The members will come to understand the importance of group support along with the value each comprising member possesses.
7. Wrap-up will take place, as the leader asks the members to voice any final questions or concerns regarding the speaker or any of the discussed issues. Everyone will thank the guest speaker for his/her participation with a round of applause.
8. The leader will then address the second segment of the group’s session pertaining to «Living Our Faith». Members will re-visit and provide updates regarding future projects, meanwhile moving forward with their planning.
9. Once everyone has had the opportunity to share their ideas regarding «Living Our Faith», the facilitator will commence the concluding prayer by asking if any group member feels inspired to contribute one sentence or two to the formation of the «working prayer in progress.» If so, the member will be asked to add their thoughts (located at the end of this appendix) and the group will then recite the prayer incorporating the new reflection (otherwise, the prayer would be recited in its current state).

10. Group members will then spend the closing 5 minutes continuing to establish relationships with other group members as they share a snack and beverage.
3. Session Three Topic: Negative Marginality

Objective:
Members will notice the importance of shining light on their marginal realities as they come to understand the benefits of expressing the authenticity of its existence. They will be enlightened to recognize daily marginal encounters as they denote any unconscious emotions.

Key Questions to Consider:
- Can I admit to the existence of negative marginality within my life?
- How do I view the in-between state- in a positive or negative light?
- What have other members shared that leads me to appreciate them more?

Necessary Materials:
- Paper
- Pencils
- Hat
- Traditional Opening Prayer (located at the end of this appendix)
- A Working Prayer In Progress (located at the end of this appendix)

Living Our Faith:
- Relative topics will receive attention.

Activities:
1. Facilitator will initiate the session with the traditional opening prayer (located in appendix B).
2. Facilitator will commence the session with the groups check-in. Every member will be asked to participate by sharing their name, the mood they are in, along with any anxiety or fears they are sensing from partaking in the group (will aid in welcoming new members). The leader will comment on any concerned issues meanwhile asking members to provide their thoughts on the matter (exemplifying future protocol of dialoging).
3. The members will be given a paper and pencil and will be asked to anonymously complete this statement: «A negative marginal state that I frequently encounter is...»
4. Once everyone has answered the question, the facilitator will collect the folded papers in the hat and mix them around. The hat will then be passed around as each person will be invited to take a piece of paper and read about someone's negative marginal experience.
5. After reflecting over what is on the paper, one by one, each group member will read the marginal experience of another group member and elaborates over what he/she feels that person was experiencing during the encountered marginal situation. No one is to comment on what the person says, just listen and move on to the next person.
6. If the reader doesn't elaborate much on the marginal state, the leader will ask them one or two questions. (Avoid implying or showing your opinion as to the marginal state being expressed, unless the person is disrespecting or completely misunderstanding someone's marginal state.) If the person doesn't elaborate after one or two questions, leave it and move on.
7. When all the marginal states have been read out and elaborated on, discuss what people felt and noticed by incorporating the questions to consider as they will lead the individual to live out the group objective for the session.

8. Wrap-up will follow as the members are asked to offer any final thoughts regarding their current states of negative marginality. The facilitator will once again commend everyone for their vulnerability reminding them of the growth they are enduring through the awareness of their realities.

9. The leader will then address the second segment of the group’s session pertaining to «Living Our Faith». Members will re-visit and provide updates regarding future projects, meanwhile moving forward with their planning.

10. Once everyone has had the opportunity to share their ideas regarding «Living Our Faith», the facilitator will commence the concluding prayer by asking if any group member feels inspired to contribute one sentence or two to the formation of the «working prayer in progress.» If so the member will be asked to add their thoughts (located in appendix B) and the group will then recite the prayer incorporating the new reflection (otherwise the prayer would be recited in its current state).

11. Group members will then spend the closing 5 minutes continuing to establish relationships with other group members as they share a snack and beverage.
4. Session Four Topic: The Media’s Contribution to Marginality

Objective:
Members will become conscious of their state of marginality (in terms of the negative, positive, and in-beyond), along with the diverse states of marginality embraced by other group members based on their responses and tolerance for marginal issues. Members will prepare for the transition to the positive state of marginality as they soak up the variety of forms negative marginality presents itself.

Key Questions to Consider:
- How much power do I perceive the media to have in influencing who I am?
- Have I come to accept all I read or see within the news regarding my culture? Why?
- What types of social mirroring have I experienced? How has it affected me on a personal level?

Necessary Materials:
- Newspaper article (See Appendix B)
- Traditional Opening Prayer (See Appendix B)
- A Working Prayer In Progress (See Appendix B)

Living Our Faith:
- Relative topics will receive attention.

Activities:
1. Facilitator will initiate the session with the traditional opening prayer (located at the end of this appendix).
2. Check-in will be facilitated in no specific order. The members will be asked to participate by sharing their name, the mood they are in, along with any anxiety or fears they are sensing from partaking in the group (will aid in acknowledging new members). Concerned issues will be addressed through open dialogue from both the members and leader.
3. Participants will be asked to read the provided article (located in appendix B).
4. Facilitator will begin discussion by asking members to comment on their thoughts or emotions the read material elicited. Members should be encouraged to share moments in their lives that parallel or bring significance to the emotions hidden within the context of the article. This will allow members to identify whether the drawn feelings are viewed in a negative or positive condition.
5. The leader will now incorporate the questions to consider as a way to help the members confirm their current state of marginality (in terms of negative, positive, in-beyond) leading to the satisfaction of meeting the objective. It is important at this point for each individual to understand their current marginal status as their knowledge of it will facilitate personal growth towards reaching the in-beyond.
6. As the leader normalizes the reality of being in different states of marginality and reaffirms they are not stages, therefore, one is not better than the other as we can bounce around within them. Members will then be encouraged to profess what they deem their marginal state to be. Giving them power to move forward through self-awareness.
7. Wrap-up will include final comments along with recognition and gratitude toward the individuals who vocally accepted their marginal state. The facilitator will ask members to closely watch their marginal states and their reactions to marginal experiences.

8. The leader will then address the second segment of the group’s session pertaining to «Living Our Faith». Members will re-visit and provide updates regarding future projects, meanwhile moving forward with their planning.

9. Once everyone has had the opportunity to share their ideas regarding «Living Our Faith»«, the facilitator will commence the concluding prayer by asking if any group member feels inspired to contribute one sentence or two to the formation of the «working prayer in progress.» If so the member will be asked to add their thoughts (located at the end of this appendix) and the group will then recite the prayer incorporating the new reflection (otherwise the prayer would be recited in its current state).

10. Group members will then spend the closing 5 minutes continuing to establish relationships with other group members as they share a snack and beverage.
5. Session Five Topic: Ideological Marginality

Objective:
Members will uncover how they deal with negative and positive marginality by analyzing patterns of exclusion or cohesion within their lives. The members will also understand how their responses within the group correlate to outside performances. Each member will become aware of their current participation and its effects on their positive marginal state as is exhibited through their distancing or recharging from the support group.

Key Questions to Consider:
- Do I run from my marginal truth, or do I try to instill change?
- In looking at my way of life can I honestly say that I abide to what I profess in terms of marginality?
- What steps are necessary to improve my marginal state? Am I open to assistance?

Necessary Materials:
- Paper
- Color pencils
- Liminality and Communitas (located in appendix B)
- Traditional Opening Prayer (located in appendix B)
- A Working Prayer In Progress (located in appendix B)

Living Our Faith:
- Relative topics will receive attention.

Activities:
1. Facilitator will initiate the session with the traditional opening prayer (located in appendix B).
2. Check in will consist of the members sharing their, name, the mood they are in, along with any anxiety or fears they are sensing from partaking in the group (will aid in acknowledging new members). Concerned issues will be addressed through open dialogue from both the members and leader.
3. The facilitator will introduce the concepts of liminality and communitas (located at the end of this appendix) in order to set up the topic of the day by making sure that everyone understands what they should be processing through discussion.
4. The facilitator will ask members to randomly state their age and as they do the group will try to determine the oldest and youngest ages of the group. The number that falls between these two ages will be used for the activity (e.g. oldest person 27 and youngest person 21, hence the year used will be 24.) Participants will then be given a sheet of paper and color pencils to express an encountered marginal state experienced within that year and ones reactions to it. Their representations will manifest the «then» state of marginality demonstrating if the person sees themselves in a different light.
5. Facilitator will then ask members to share the written experiences (emotions and thoughts) addressing the questions to consider as a way of making sure that all members reach the session’s objective. It will be important to emphasize the actions taken by the person (e.g. they avoid a store due to a marginal encounter and resent it every time they pass buy) in order to aid them in realizing how they deal with this issue (do they run from it or confront it paralleling liminality and communitas).

6. Members will then be asked to comment on each other’s marginal dilemmas and share what could have been done differently (e.g. they avoid the store but consider the situation an unfortunate one as the owners behavior is costing them business and you can purchase your chips somewhere else). In doing so all of the individuals see their marginal states in a positive perspective meanwhile acquiring skills to adapt this type of mentality.

7. Wrap-up will then be facilitated with final questions and concerns. The leader will ask willing members to share their current state of marginality (as it will strengthen the group’s cohesion and reality of members attaining the golden goal through self-awareness).

8. The leader will then address the second segment of the group’s session pertaining to «Living Our Faith». Members will re-visit and provide updates regarding future projects, meanwhile moving forward with their planning.

9. Once everyone has had the opportunity to share their ideas regarding «Living Our Faith», the facilitator will commence the concluding prayer by asking if any group member feels inspired to contribute one sentence or two to the formation of the «working prayer in progress.» If so the member will be asked to add their thoughts (located at the end of this appendix) and the group will then recite the prayer incorporating the new reflection (otherwise the prayer would be recited in its current state).

10. Group members will then spend the closing 5 minutes continuing to establish relationships with other group members as they share a snack and beverage.

**Objective:**
Members will begin to find their identity in the midst of negative and positive marginality through their re-analysis, awareness, understanding, and permanence of marginal situations. This framework will aid in converting negative occurrences into positive ones as the individual has learned how to submit himself to the reality of selecting who he aspires to be.

**Key Questions to Consider:**
- What must I do to convert the term marginal to mean fruitful, powerful, and unique?
- Does the way I perceive the world affect my ability to benefit and overcome my negative and positive marginal states?
- How often do I practice positive marginality? Is it difficult, why?

**Necessary Materials:**
- Poem (located in appendix B)
- Paper
- Pens
- Traditional Opening Prayer (located in appendix B)
- A Working Prayer In Progress (located in appendix B)

**Living Our Faith:**
- Relative topics will receive attention.

**Activities:**
1. Facilitator will initiate the session with the traditional opening prayer (located in appendix B).
2. Check-in will be facilitated in no specific order. The members will be asked to participate by sharing their name, the mood they are in, along with any anxiety or fears they are sensing from partaking in the group (will aid in acknowledging new members). Concerned issues will be addressed through open dialogue from both the members and leader. They will be reminded of the importance of honesty as this will lead to their growth.
3. The leader will hand out the poem (located in appendix B) scheduled for the day and ask willing members to read two or three sentences out loud as everyone else follows.
4. Facilitator will encourage members to dialogue solely over what the writer might have been feeling at the time he wrote this piece. An analysis of the positive, negative, and in-beyond states of marginality will be conducted as members discuss where they interpreted these states to be. Once every one is done commenting the leader needs to address the options we have, of choosing only those characteristics that suite us as individuals when it comes to both worlds.
5. Participants will then be given a piece of paper and a pen where they will be asked to write down their own story (how they came to be- their identity) regarding their surrounding world incorporating the three marginal states. The facilitator should express the importance of viewing life within all three states as
it helps with cognitively transforming the way we perceive situations and
demonstrates why we adopted certain traits over others.

6. Group members will then read what they have written and express what they are
feeling and thinking as they do so. The facilitator should then address the
questions to consider as the members begin to satisfy the objective.

7. As the facilitator begins to wrap-up, members will be asked to give their final
thoughts along with sharing their current state of marginality if they wish to do so. The leader will ask the members to focus on their benefits from marginality
by transforming the term to mean something «good» (members can individually
choose what the term will mean for them). To decrease fear of completion or
hesitation, the leader can simplify the assignment by stating, «They are going to
do what we have been doing in group all along- analyzing situations and giving
them different perspectives.»

8. The leader will then address the second segment of the group’s session
pertaining to «Living Our Faith». Members will re-visit and provide updates
regarding future projects, meanwhile moving forward with their planning.

9. Once everyone has had the opportunity to share their ideas regarding «Living
Our Faith», the facilitator will commence the concluding prayer by asking if any
group member feels inspired to contribute one sentence or two to the formation
of the «working prayer in progress.» If so the member will be asked to add their
thoughts (located at the end of this appendix) and the group will then recite the
prayer incorporating the new reflection (otherwise the prayer would be recited in
its current state).

10. Group members will then spend the closing 5 minutes continuing to establish
relationships with other group members as they share a snack and beverage.
7. Session Seven Topic: The In-Beyond State of Marginality

Objective:
Members will obtain a glimpse of the in-beyond state of marginality through the continual discussion of both cultures. Members will see their marginal state as a unique factor in their lives, seeing as they can have the best of both worlds. Participants will know how to transform negative and positive states to the in-beyond state meanwhile forming their identities.

Key Questions to Consider:
- What must I do to become masters of both worlds?
- Can I see myself in the in- beyond state?
- How is that path different than the one I am on now?
- What personal traits do I value?

Necessary Materials:
- Exercise- The Imagined House Exercise (See Appendix B)
- Paper
- Pens
- Traditional Opening Prayer (See Appendix B)
- A Working Prayer In Progress (See Appendix B)

Living Our Faith:
- Relative topics will receive attention.

Activities:
1. Facilitator will initiate the session with the traditional opening prayer (located at the end of this appendix).
2. Check in will consist of the members sharing their name, experience regarding the transformation of marginality to a positive term (homework assignment from last week), along with any anxiety or fears they are sensing from partaking in the group. Concerned issues will be addressed through open dialogue both by the members and leader.
3. The facilitator will conduct the exercise- The Imagined House Exercise (located in appendix B)
4. As members are sharing their experiences regarding their identity and personalities within their imaginary house, the facilitator will alert the members to furthermore focus on what culture lead you to have a certain object or trait within your house. The members will analyze the interaction of both cultures and realize their possible relations to both. In order to foster feelings of the in-beyond the facilitator shall incorporate the questions to consider allowing them to recognize the benefit of belonging to both cultures.
5. Wrap-up will follow as the members are asked to offer any final thoughts regarding their current states of marginality and their efforts of reaching the in-beyond. The facilitator will acclaim everyone for their exposure and willingness to grow as they continue to challenge themselves through their identification to both cultures.
6. The leader will then address the second segment of the group’s session pertaining to «Living Our Faith». Members will re-visit and provide updates regarding future projects, meanwhile moving forward with their planning.
7. Once everyone has had the opportunity to share their ideas regarding *Living Our Faith*, the facilitator will commence the concluding prayer by asking if any group member feels inspired to contribute one sentence or two to the formation of the «working prayer in progress.» If so the member will be asked to add their thoughts (located in appendix B) and the group will then recite the prayer incorporating the new reflection (otherwise the prayer would be recited in its current state).

8. Group members will then spend the closing 5 minutes continuing to establish relationships with other group members as they share a snack and beverage.

*Objective:* Members will gain knowledge of the meaning and symbolism of the image on the *tilda.* They will begin to understand the importance of its history in relation to the contextual reality of the indigenous marginalized people at the time. This in turn will help associate the significance of the Mary’s message to their current marginal history.

*Key Questions to Consider:*
- What do I know about the apparitions of the Virgin of Guadalupe?
- Who is The Virgin of Guadalupe for me?
- Can I see Juan Diego as a symbol and as an example?

*Necessary Materials:*
- Virgin of Guadalupe Post Cards
- History of Apparitions (See Appendix B)
- Symbolism Worksheets I and II (See Appendix B)
- Pens
- Traditional Opening Prayer (See Appendix B)
- A Working Prayer In Progress (See Appendix B)

*Living Our Faith:*
- Relative topics will receive attention.

*Activities:*
1. Facilitator will initiate the session with the traditional opening prayer (See Appendix B).
2. Check-in will be facilitated in no specific order. The members will be asked to participate by sharing their name, the mood they are in, along with any anxiety or fears they are sensing from partaking in the group (will aid in acknowledging new members). Concerned issues will be addressed through open dialogue from both the members and leader. They will be reminded of the importance of honesty as this will lead to their growth.
3. The facilitator will hand out the Symbolism Worksheet I (See Appendix B), and ask members to fill in the blanks to the best of their ability, recalling all the information they have learned or heard about the Guadalupe image (the *questions to consider* can be introduced). Members should be given sufficient time to write a couple of words for each character.
4. Members will then be asked to share some of their responses meanwhile focusing particularly on the resources that lead them to these answers. This will allow the individuals to elicit thoughts regarding their personal understanding of the Virgin of Guadalupe and the role she plays in their lives, as to partially meet the *objective.*
5. Once everyone has had a chance to share their personal knowledge of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the leader will distribute the History of Apparitions sheet as to stir up similarities between the marginal Juan Diego and the self (See Appendix B
and include key question to consider as to meet the objective). Once members have collaborated with the reading, any questions or comments should be addressed, so that all members are familiar with at least an overview of the «exterior message», given that this information will be essential before participating in Session Nine: The Guadalupe Message and Marginality II.

6. Subsequently, the Symbolism Worksheet II (See Appendix B) will be handed out along with the Image of Guadalupe post cards. Each representation will be thoroughly discussed to further develop the group’s comprehension of the Guadalupe apparitions. The image on the post cards will serve as a visual aid in which participants can compare and observe previous thoughts and current understandings.

7. Wrap-up will follow as the members are asked to offer any final thoughts regarding the Guadalupe apparitions. Participants will be asked to consider situations in their lives in which they relate to the marginal Mary or Juan Diego. This will enable them to apply the apparition history to present marginal conditions, thus in turn demonstrating their correlation.

8. The leader will then address the second segment of the group’s session pertaining to «Living Our Faith». Members will re-visit and provide updates regarding future projects, meanwhile moving forward with their planning.

9. Once everyone has had the opportunity to share their ideas regarding «Living Our Faith», the facilitator will commence the concluding prayer by asking if any group member feels inspired to contribute one sentence or two to the formation of the «working prayer in progress.» If so the member will be asked to add their thoughts (See Appendix B) and the group will then recite the prayer incorporating the new reflection (otherwise the prayer would be recited in its current state).

10. Group members will then spend the closing 5 minutes continuing to establish relationships with other group members as they share a snack and beverage.

Objective:
Members will be familiarized with the divine message brought by the Guadalupe apparitions and the manifestations it has on the lives of the marginalized, as it will enhance their identity and assist with providing the potential to do great things beyond their imagination.

Key Questions to Consider:
- Under what circumstances have I felt unacknowledged, unheard, or disregarded?
- What am I worth?
- Do I know who I am?
- Am I aware of where I am from?
- How do I relate to the Guadalupe Message (similarities or differences)?

Necessary Materials:
- Presentation: Walk With Mary Through A Marginal Lens
- Traditional Opening Prayer (located in appendix B)
- A Working Prayer In Progress (located in appendix B)

Living Our Faith:
- Relative topics will receive attention.

Activities:
1. Facilitator will initiate the session with the traditional opening prayer (located at the end of this appendix).
2. Check in will consist of the members sharing their name, thoughts pertaining to conditions in which they saw themselves as the marginal Mary or Juan Diego (homework assignment from last week), along with any anxiety or fears they are sensing from partaking in the group. Concerned issues will be addressed through open dialogue both by the members and leader.
3. Once everyone has had the opportunity to express their marginal correlation to that of the apparitions, the facilitator will introduce the second topic of the Guadalupe message through the presentation: Walk With Mary Through A Marginal Lens (needs to be created incorporating the goal of the night), where the objective will be met as the participants learn of the deeper understanding of the apparitions (the questions to consider will also be addressed).
4. Wrap-up will follow as the members are asked to offer any final thoughts regarding the Guadalupe apparitions and its importance in their lives. The facilitator will encourage members to continually employ the Guadalupe message as it serves as a tool in their support toward the in-beyond state of marginality.
5. The leader will then address the second segment of the group’s session pertaining to «Living Our Faith». Members will re-visit and provide updates regarding future projects, meanwhile moving forward with their planning.
6. Once everyone has had the opportunity to share their ideas regarding «Living Our Faith», the facilitator will commence the concluding prayer by asking if any group member feels inspired to contribute one sentence or two to the formation of the «working prayer in progress.» If so the member will be asked to add their thoughts (located in appendix B) and the group will then recite the prayer
incorporating the new reflection (otherwise the prayer would be recited in its current state).

7. Group members will then spend the closing 5 minutes continuing to establish relationships with other group members as they share a snack and beverage.
10. **Session Ten Topic: The Marginal Guadalupe III**

*Objective:*
By imitating Juan Diego’s example, the marginalized group members will no longer be seen as passive objects of someone else’s history, but instead as human subjects empowered to create their new future. In this sense, they will realize meaning, dignity, hope, and reaffirmation of their potential in today’s society.

*Key Questions to Consider:*
- How can I receive empowerment in the midst of double marginality?
- How can I become an empowerment inspiration to other youth in the community?

*Necessary Materials:*
- Paper
- Pens
- Traditional Opening Prayer (located in appendix B)
- A Working Prayer In Progress (located in appendix B)

*Living Our Faith:*
- Relative topics will receive attention.

*Activities:*
1. Facilitator will initiate the session with the traditional opening prayer (located in appendix B).
2. Check-in will be facilitated in no specific order. The members will be asked to participate by sharing their name, the mood they are in, along with any anxiety or fears they are sensing from partaking in the group (will aid in acknowledging new members). Concerned issues will be addressed through open dialogue from both the members and leader.
3. The leader will ask group members to form several subgroups comprised of five to eight people. The groups will be given two sheets of paper and will be asked to label one «marginal commonalities» and the other «marginal iniquities.» They will then be asked to first make a list of all the common marginal experiences all the group members share. This will increase cohesion and allow members to become aware of each other’s marginal histories.
4. The subgroups will then gather and share with the entire group their list of marginal commonalities. The group as a whole will discuss the written encounters and compare other situations to that of their own group’s. The youth will be encouraged to share and discuss specific scenarios along with their feelings towards familiar encounters.
5. The groups will gather into their small groups again and make a new list on the paper labeled marginal iniquities, where the members will jot down a unique quality that each possesses and uses when encountering a common marginal experience. This is done to help the youth realize that they are able to overcome marginal circumstances, meanwhile providing hope, encouragement, and self empowerment.
6. The subgroups will reunite with the entire group and the facilitator will ask each person to share their own quality. They will ask them to relate their strength to
that of Juan Diego’s as they are imitating him given that he had to endure the unknown and was able to fulfill his mission.

7. The leader will then address the second segment of the group’s session pertaining to «Living Our Faith». Members will re-visit and provide updates regarding future projects, meanwhile moving forward with their planning.

8. Once everyone has had the opportunity to share their ideas regarding «Living Our Faith», the facilitator will commence the concluding prayer by asking if any group member feels inspired to contribute one sentence or two to the formation of the «working prayer in progress.» If so the member will be asked to add their thoughts (located at the end of this appendix) and the group will then recite the prayer incorporating the new reflection (otherwise the prayer would be recited in its current state).

Group members will then spend the closing 5 minutes continuing to establish relationships with other group members as they share a snack and beverage.

Objective:
Members will know how to take control of their marginal states as they will be better prepared for potential marginal experiences. They will know the benefits of thinking positive and acknowledging the marginal reality meanwhile identify that it is a strive to maintain in the in-beyond state.

Key Questions to Consider:
- How can my reconstruction of marginality help change the cultural conflicts present or endured by other second generation youth in the U.S.?
- Will I be a failure if I encounter a marginal experience and begin to question my ability to transform this to the positive or in- beyond state? What kinds of things might I question?
- How can I better prepare myself to maintain this change of state, and identity?
- Will I always be marginal?

Necessary Materials:
- Exercise Handout- Develop an «Abundance Mentality» (located in appendix B)
- Exercise Handout- Develop an «In- Beyond State of Marginality» (located in appendix B)
- Traditional Opening Prayer (located in appendix B)
- A Working Prayer In Progress (located in appendix B)

Living Our Faith:
- Relative topics will receive attention.

Activities:
1. Facilitator will initiate the session with the traditional opening prayer (located in appendix B).
2. Check-in will be facilitated in no specific order. The members will be asked to participate by sharing their name, the mood they are in, along with any anxiety or fears they are sensing from partaking in the group (will aid in acknowledging new members). Concerned issues will be addressed through open dialogue from both the members and leader.
3. The facilitator will hand out the exercise sheet (located in appendix B) Develop an «Abundance Mentality.»
4. The facilitator along with the participants will begin to read what it means to have a mentality driven by abundance and how they can benefit from this way of thinking.
5. The leader will then hand out a second sheet (located in appendix B) where the term «abundance mentality» is substituted with the «in-beyond state of marginality.» Members will then be asked to provide personal scenarios where they can apply the presented material or perhaps where they have used it.
6. The questions to consider will then be addressed; along with any other kinds of concerns the members may perceive to be crucial in order to fully understand the in-beyond state.
7. During wrap up the facilitator will congratulate every person for their bravery and openness to sharing and self-enhancement. He/ She must remind them that
acknowledgement of marginality is the first step to reaching the in-beyond despite of where they stand the journey always has room for improvements as it is a never ending one (only they can make that difference within their lives).

8. The leader will then address the second segment of the group’s session pertaining to «Living Our Faith.» Members will re-visit and provide updates regarding future projects, meanwhile moving forward with their planning.

9. Once everyone has had the opportunity to share their ideas regarding «Living Our Faith», the facilitator will commence the concluding prayer by asking if any group member feels inspired to contribute one sentence or two to the formation of the «working prayer in progress,» noting this will be their last chance. If so the member will be asked to add their thoughts (located at the end of this appendix) and the group will then recite the prayer incorporating the new reflection (otherwise the prayer would be recited in its current state).

10. Group members will then spend the closing 5 minutes continuing to establish relationships with other group members as they share a snack and beverage.
12. Twelve Topic: Living-Out the Marginal States

**Objective:**
Members will discern their development obtained from partaking in the group along with recognizing the central role they played in contributing to communal growth. The marginal states will be viewed as adaptable circumstances in which one has the authority to rationalize with unwanted inner emotions and cognitions occurring during negative marginal encounters.

**Key Questions to Consider:**
- What am I taking from the group?
- How can I recall what I have come to learn here if necessary?
- Is there anything I fear?

**Necessary Materials:**
- A memento
- Refined- Working Prayer In Progress (located in appendix B)
- Positive and Negative Criticism (located in appendix B)
- Second- Generation Support Group Expectations (located at the end of this appendix)
- Traditional Opening Prayer (located in appendix B)

**Living Our Faith:**
- Thoughts on future developments will be addressed.

**Activities:**
1. Facilitator will initiate the session with the traditional opening prayer (located in appendix B).
2. Check-in will be facilitated in no specific order. The members will be asked to participate by sharing their name, the mood they are in, along with any anxiety or fears correlating with the group coming to an end. Issues of concern will be addressed through open dialogue from both the members and leader.
3. The facilitator will then initiate the final activity by expressing one positive quality they have seen in each present group member (this act will then be repeated by all of the comprising members toward each other in a circular fashion). This will allow the individuals to become aware of the growth they have endured, providing them with a constructive foundation for future marginal encounters as they practice all they have gained from the gatherings.
4. The Second-Generation Support Group Expectations sheet (located at the end of this appendix) will be redistributed to the corresponding person and analyzed by each individual for personal growth. Meanwhile, the questions to consider will be addressed along with further concerns that deem to be critical pertaining to any previously discussed subjects, making sure that the session’s objective is met by each member.
5. During wrap up the facilitator will thank everyone for their participation and dedication to the group, meanwhile distributing the memento and expressing its representation of the lived personal encounter with God and their communal bond with the church.
6. The leader will then address the second segment of the group’s session pertaining to «Living Our Faith», as members will re-visit all they have
accomplished and also provide changes regarding future projects. The leader will also take some time to ask members for honest feedback regarding the structure of the group’s overall sessions using the Positive and Negative Criticism sheet (located in appendix B), in hope of making adequate modifications for prospective groups.

7. Once everyone has had the opportunity to share their ideas concerning «Living Our Faith» and alterations, the facilitator will commence the concluding prayer by distributing the final outcome of their «working prayer in progress» (located in appendix B). The group will then recite this personal prayer as the leader reminds them of its creation during an intimate journey toward transcendence.

8. Group members will then spend the closing 5 minutes exchanging farewells with other group members as they share a snack and beverage.
APPENDIX B

Session Handouts

1. Traditional Opening Prayer

   -The Lord’s Prayer-

   Our Father who art in heaven;
   Hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;
   Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
   Give us this day our daily bread;
   And forgive us our trespasses
   As we forgive those who trespass against us;
   And lead us not into temptation
   But deliver us from evil.

   Amen.
2. Second-Generation Support Group Expectations

**Directions:** Think about each question being asked and respond honestly. Please be sure to put some thought into your responses as they will be taken into consideration for following sessions. There are no right or wrong replies only personal ones!

NAME: _______________________________________

1. What are some concepts you hope to learn from partaking in this youth group?

2. What other youth groups have you participated in and how do you expect them to be similar or different to this one?

3. What are your current feelings regarding your presence in this youth group? Do you see yourself contributing to the group, if so how?

4. How familiar are you with marginality? Can you relate to it?

5. How would you describe your current personal relationship with God and your church community?
3. A Working Prayer in Progress

**Directions:** Members will be asked to share a sentence or two, for the composition of an intimate group prayer. The concluding prayer will be recited at the end of every meeting, and will continue to develop throughout the life of the group.

Dear Lord,

We ask that you be our guide and strength, as we commend ourselves into your hands. Be our source of inspiration and our light of hope as you have been for all of those who turn to you…

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We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.
4. Article: University of San Diego Professor Supports Changes for Immigrants

Jonathan Gluchowski

Issue date: 4/30/09  Section: News

According to the North County Times, USD professor and former U.S. Attorney Peter Nunez has endorsed instituting an initiative regarding U.S. born children of undocumented immigrants. This initiative would require two separate types of birth certificates.

If passed, it would stipulate that children born in this country illegally would not have access to public healthcare. This initiative has some precedence as it may remind people of Proposition 187, which aimed to disallow children of undocumented immigrants from public education. That proposition was declared to be unconstitutional.

According to students, Nunez has stated that he believes the U.S. should suspend all immigration for at least 10 years, and review the state of the nation before deciding to allow people to enter this country any more.

Anti-illegal immigration activists prefer a policy regarding citizenship, which would entail that only children born to U.S. citizens would have legal status as citizens. The location of birth would become irrelevant under this system, as it is in most developed countries. Nunez said to the North County Times, "Anything we can do to make it clear who is here legally and who is here illegally hopefully will discourage people from coming."

Supporters of this effort such as the Federation for American Immigration Reform believe that immigration is the main cause of poverty, crime and disease in this country. In an attempt to dismantle the validity of that and other claims, the Southern Poverty Law Center has classified FAIR as a hate group.

Even though the majority of voters were in favor of Proposition 187, it is believed that the lower courts would most likely reject this idea as it is common practice to respect the interpretation of constitution led by the Federal and Supreme Court.

The issue of U.S. born children of undocumented immigrants is one which should spark some healthy debate among USD students and faculty, especially since a member of our community is so heavily involved.

- Through rituals people manifest past, present, and future forms of community building and sustenance. Because rituals reflect cultural traits and traditions, there are different approaches and interests in the way they are exercised and celebrated.

- In the luminal process the marginal person experiences the ambiguous yet creative process of transformation. Here one can appreciate people’s internal processing, their defining sense of belonging, identity and purpose in life, and finally the wisdom and resolute for reintegration to the wider community.

- This concept of liminality is rich and promising for the understanding and realization of the socio-cultural transformation of society.

- People within the liminal phase do not live inside the framework of norms and fixed categories of the mainstream social system. Their sense and purpose for change is «anti-structural.»

- The dynamic elements of this unique process of liminality result in communitas – referring to a communion of equal individuals who find support and fulfillment in an egalitarian sharing and inclusive fellowship among people within developing socio-cultural forms.

- The intentional factors that prompt these liminal people to form such communities are triggered by «ideological» marginality as they affiliate to confront, renew, and transform the normative society in response to «structural» marginality.

- The anti-structure emphasis of communitas is viewed as a positive characteristic, because they abolish all imposed and manipulated social distinctions that might otherwise be obsolete and ineffective for sustaining a creative, progressive and integrated socio-cultural unity.

- Communitas manifests and maintains the tense ongoing liminal state as the creative force that recreates the responsive change to the new socio-cultural needs and demands within a dignified and inclusive social life.

- Exaggeration of structure may lead to pathological manifestations of communitas outside of or against the law. Exaggerations of communitas may be speedily followed by despotism, over-bureaucratization, or other modes of structural rigidifications. Accordingly, this dialectical tension becomes the locus of symbolic social creativity sustaining and renewing healthy inclusive communities.
6. Du Bois Quote

During the first quarter of the twentieth-century William Edward Du Bois (1868-1963) was already describing the suffering of experiencing ambiguity as having a «double consciousness,» from an African American perspective. He also expressed the need to better understand and appreciate the cultural duality of their personality, to capture the richness of their marginal state, as well as their normal longings for a constructive and creative reality. His perspective can be considered an «in-beyond» desired manifestation of marginality. Du Bois said that the Negro man is,

… born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, -- a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, -- an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, -- this longing to attain self-conscious manhood to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In the merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for man to be both Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face. This, then, is the end of his striving: to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture, to escape both death and isolation, to husband and use his best powers and his latent genius.
7. The Imagined House Exercise

The web page: http://www-usr.rider.edu/~suler/house.html

Objective:
Members will be able to explore their identity/personality through this exercise within the mental imagery in which they explore a house. The house often is a symbol of the self, one's own personality. This will lead each member to acknowledge characteristics they «unconsciously» accept from each culture.

Set up for the game:
Members will be asked to sit in a comfortable, relaxed position and asked to close their eyes as they mentally walk through the following narration. They will be asked to pay attention to detail as they try to absorb all that is going on through the process. Facilitator should pause between sentences to allow students time to form the image in their imagination:

Narration:
You are walking down a road.... As you are walking, you see a house. Look at it. Notice its details... walk towards it. What do you notice about it?... You start to walk around the house, looking at it as you walk.... Now you are halfway around. Notice the details of the house as you continue to walk around it.... Now you come back to where you were when you started... As you walked around the house, you noticed a way to get in. Now go into the house.... What do you see?... Explore the house, what's inside?... As you were exploring, you noticed a secret door leading to a secret room. Go inside that room. What do you see?... Now leave the secret room and go back into the main part of the house... Now leave the house. As you are walking away from it, you look back at it one more time... You are back on the road once again, walking.

Afterwards:
The members will then be asked to write down the various characteristics of the house, paying close attention to details such as: how the house appears on the inside as opposed to the outside, what can and cannot be found inside the house, how one gets into the house, what's inside the "secret" room, colors, textures, how space is experienced, etc., followed by the sharing of their description to other members (addressing how this may say something about their own identity and what has helped shape it). Feedback will also be encouraged by the comprising group members.
8. Abundance Mentality

Develop an "Abundance Mentality"
The web page: http://www.careerknowhow.com/mentality.htm

In any endeavor, our success is dependent on many factors. One factor that might be overlooked is having an abundance mentality.

An "abundance mentality" is more than having a positive mental attitude, although a positive mental attitude is very important. When you have a positive mental attitude, you look at how things can be done rather than why they can't be done. You believe that "where there's a will, there's a way." You look at possibilities and opportunities rather than obstacles and problems. This mindset is important for success in any endeavor.

An abundance mentality will take you beyond a positive mental attitude. It will eliminate small thinking and offset negative energy. It can mean the difference between success and failure, excellence and mediocrity, and prosperity and despair.

People with an abundance mentality believe the following:
- "The more I sell, the more there is to sell."
- "The more I give, the more there is to give."
- "The more I know, the more there is to know."
- "People are great. They will help me reach my goals."
- "If I need money, I'll find the money."
- "If I need people, I'll find the people."
- "If I need ideas, the ideas will come."

People with an abundance mentality believe there are enough resources available to accomplish their goals. They also believe that their success doesn't mean failure for others. On the contrary, the more successful they are, the more others are affected in a positive way. They can be happy when friends and associates prosper. They can enter every business transaction with a "win/win" attitude. They win when their clients win.

Here are some things that you can do to boost and enhance an abundance mentality:
- Make a commitment to continuous growth. Set up a reading, listening, watching and learning schedule. Read books on personal and professional development. Listen to personal development and motivational tapes. Participate in seminars and corporate training and development programs.
- Help others grow. A wise philosopher once said, "When you help another person get to the top of a mountain, you will arrive there also." Teach the people on your team what you know. If you have a talent for coaching or teaching children, volunteer. Seeing people grow as a result of your efforts will enhance your abundance mentality.
• Have a written, specific goals program. If you haven't started a goals program, start now. If you've started, update it. Review your goals daily, and update your action steps and accomplishments.
• Use abundance affirmations on a daily basis. Put abundance affirmations on 3 x 5 cards, in your plan of action, on your calendar, or in a separate notebook. Schedule a time each day for reading your affirmations.
• Utilize the synergy of a support group. Join one or more organizations that have members who share your interest in personal and professional development and who support you in the process.

Abundance starts in your mind. The more you think abundantly, the more abundance you can enjoy. The more abundance you enjoy, the more success you will enjoy.
In any endeavor, our success is dependent on many factors. One factor that might be overlooked is being in the in-beyond state of marginality.

The "in-beyond state of marginality" is more than having a positive mental attitude, although the in-beyond state of marginality is very important. When you are in the in-beyond state of marginality, you look at how things can be done rather than why they can't be done. You believe that "where there's a will, there's a way." You look at possibilities and opportunities rather than obstacles and problems. This mindset is important for success in any endeavor.

The in-beyond state of marginality will take you beyond a positive mental attitude. It will eliminate small thinking and offset negative energy. It can mean the difference between success and failure, excellence and mediocrity, and prosperity and despair.

People with the in-beyond state of marginality believe the following:

- "The more I sell, the more there is to sell."
- "The more I give, the more there is to give."
- "The more I know, the more there is to know."
- "People are great. They will help me reach my goals."
- "If I need money, I'll find the money."
- "If I need people, I'll find the people."
- "If I need ideas, the ideas will come."

People with the in-beyond state of marginality believe there are enough resources available to accomplish their goals. They also believe that their success doesn't mean failure for others. On the contrary, the more successful they are, the more others are affected in a positive way. They can be happy when friends and associates prosper. They can enter every business transaction with a "win/win" attitude. They win when their clients win.

Here are some things that you can do to boost and enhance the in-beyond state of marginality:

- Make a commitment to continuous growth. Set up a reading, listening, watching and learning schedule. Read books on personal and professional development. Listen to personal development and motivational tapes. Participate in seminars and corporate training and development programs.
- Help others grow. A wise philosopher once said, "When you help another person get to the top of a mountain, you will arrive there also." Teach the people on
your team what you know. If you have a talent for coaching or teaching children, volunteer. Seeing people grow as a result of your efforts will enhance your abundance mentality.

- Have a written, specific goals program. If you haven't started a goals program, start now. If you've started, update it. Review your goals daily, and update your action steps and accomplishments.
- Use abundance affirmations on a daily basis. Put abundance affirmations on 3 x 5 cards, in your plan of action, on your calendar, or in a separate notebook. Schedule a time each day for reading your affirmations.
- Utilize the synergy of a support group. Join one or more organizations that have members who share your interest in personal and professional development and who support you in the process.

The in-beyond state of marginality starts in your mind. The more you think in the in-beyond state of marginality, the more in-beyond state of marginality you can enjoy. The more the in-beyond state of marginality you enjoy, the more success you will enjoy.
10. Post Evaluation

Positive and Negative Criticism
Support Group Post Evaluation

Directions: With an ample amount of time between each question as to make sure that thought is put into the responses, ask the group members to honestly answer the following sequence of questions. Meanwhile the leader should take notes of what is being said and solicit necessary repetitions as to make sure that the proper feedback is correctly written and understood.

1. Was this group beneficial to you, and if so how?

2. In what area of your life did you make the most significant changes as a result of your participation in this group?

3. How helpful was the group leader and why?

4. What topics were the most compelling and useful for personal growth? Why?

5. What general feedback would you like to provide concerning your experience as a group member in this youth support group?

6. Would you recommend a support group such as this one to other marginal youth and if so, why?
11. Our Lady of Guadalupe History

THE HISTORY OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

Saturday December 9, 1531 Juan passes the little hill of Teyepac on his way to mass. Beautiful music and a glowing white cloud emblazoned by a brilliant rainbow formed by rays of dazzling light, caught Juan's attention. Then he heard the gentle voice of a woman call him by name. He climbed the 130 foot summit to meet a beautiful lady. Her first words to him were "Know for certain, my dearest of my sons, that I am the perfect and perpetual Virgin Mary, Mother of the True God, through whom everything lives, the Lord of all things, who is Master of Heaven and Earth. I ardently desire a teocalli (temple or literally House of God) be built here for me where I will show and offer all my love, my compassion, my help and my protection to the people. I am your Mother, the Mother of all who live united in this land, and of all mankind, of all those who love me, of those who cry to me, of those who have confidence in me. Here I will hear their weeping and their sorrows, and will remedy and alleviate their sufferings, necessities and misfortunes. Therefore, in order to realize my intentions, go to the house of the Bishop of Mexico City and tell him that it is my desire to have a teocalli built here. Tell him all that you have seen and heard. Be assured that I shall be grateful and reward you for doing diligently what I have asked of you. Now that you have heard my words, my son, go and do everything as best as you can."

Juan agreed and made his way to the Bishop. It took an hour of waiting in the cold to finally see the Bishop and relate to him the lady's request. The bishop replied, "You must come again, my son, when I can hear you more at my leisure. Meanwhile, I will reflect on what you have told me." Juan felt he had failed. On returning home he passed the summit and climbed up to the spot where again the lady awaited him. He asked her to entrust this message to someone more important and well-known and to forgive him for his failure.

She told him she had many servants whom she could charge with the message, but it was necessary for him to undertake this mission. Juan agreed and said he would return with the Bishop's response on the next day, Sunday. Juan went to mass on Sunday, then went to the Bishop's house. After a long wait, he was brought to the Bishop and repeated the Lady's message with tears and pleading. Moved, the Bishop then questioned and cross-examined Juan. To be sure the Bishop asked Juan for a sign from Heaven. Juan said he would go to the Lady and request it. When Juan left, Bishop Zumarraga ordered several trusted aides to follow Juan secretly. But they could not follow him and lost him at the ravine by the hill.

The lady told Juan to return tomorrow and she would give him the sign the Bishop requested. But when Juan returned home, he found his uncle sick. Tradition passed down from generation to generation by the inhabitants of Tolpetlac says that Juan found his uncle in the nearby woods fatally shot with a arrow as a result of the eminent insurrection against the Spaniards and the Christians who were thought to be
collaborators. Perhaps this is why Juan tried to avoid the Lady the next day when he passed Tepeyac on his way to the Church in order to get a priest for his dying uncle.

Juan was startled to see the Lady descending from the hill in a blaze of light. She said to him, "Listen and let it penetrate your heart, my dear little son. Do not be troubled or weighed down with grief. Do not fear any illness or vexation, anxiety or pain. Am I not here who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not your fountain of life? Are you not in the folds of my mantle? In the crossing of my arms? Is there anything else you need?" She added, "Do not let the illness of your uncle worry you because he is not going to die of his sickness. At this very moment, he is cured."

With these words as a personal message of deep love and maternal solitude Our Lady discloses to all her suffering children the exquisite tenderness of her Immaculate Heart. Joyously Juan climbed the hill to receive the promised sign. On the hill he found many flowers, including Castilian roses, growing in the frozen, stony soil. She told him to gather them carefully. When he had them in his tilma, she rearranged them with her own hand and sent him on his way instructing him not to unfold his tilma or reveal its contents to anyone except the Bishop and give to him her instructions to build a teocalli here. Again the servants made Juan wait to see the Bishop. They even tried to snatch his tilma and expose the flowers. The exquisite fragrance overcomes them, but the flowers seemed to disappear into the sides of the tilma. Amazed, they finally alerted the Bishop who then ordered Juan to be admitted. With Bishop Zumarraga was Bishop Don Sebastian Ramirez y Fuenleal, the new governor of Mexico who had finally arrived. Juan related the events of the day on Teyepac and then opened his tilma to allow the flowers, mingled with the Castilia roses for which the Bishop had secretly prayed, to fall to the floor. At the moment they looked up, the image of Our Lady appeared on the tilma.

The tilma was placed in the Bishop's private oratory and news spread quickly. Later a small chapel was built.

When Juan returned home, his uncle was healed and related to Juan his own encounter with the Lady. A light flooded his room and a beautiful lady appeared, telling him of Juan's mission to the Bishop. She requested that her title be known as the Ever Virgin, Holy Mary of Guadalupe. This further astounded the Bishop. Guadalupe had no meaning in Mexico. It was the name of a famous Marian shrine in Spain. Housed there is the statue of the Blessed Virgin holding the Child Jesus in one hand and a crystal scepter in the other signifying her "Divine Motherhood". In 711 during the Moorish invasion it was concealed in an iron casket and hidden in a cave. It was lost until 1326 when it is said Our Lady appeared to a herdsman Gil Cordeno and told him where the statue and its authenticating documents could be found. The cave was located the bank of the Guadalupe, a word which means Wolf River. In 1340 the Franciscan monastery, Royal Monastery of Guadalupe, was erected to house the statue. Christopher Columbus prayed there before sailing to the Americas.
She indeed was to stamp out the god Quetzalcoatl the dreaded feathered serpent god by the greatest mass conversion to Christianity in history. Today in areas of Mexico where the Aztec language is still spoken, she is referred to as Santa Maria Te Quatlasupe an easier form of Coatlaxopeuh instead of the Spanish version Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. We can correlate the Spanish and the Aztec meanings to incorporate the Immaculate Conception and the Divine Motherhood of Mary which the image on the tilma depicts.

Until 1531 the Aztec had resisted the advances of the missionaries in embracing Christianity which would have entailed abandonment of polygamy. But as the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe spread great numbers began to long for this new moral code based on the example portrayed by a Mother, Mother of the True God, clean, radiantly pure, in virtue and love.

While in Europe the Reformation was taking 5,000,000 Catholics, the Aztec conversions replaced 9,000,000. Under the new Governor the exploitation of the Mexicans became less frequent and the two races merged. Juan Diego, living a life of austerity and humility, continued in charge of the little hermitage of Tepeyac where the tilma was housed and devoted the rest of his life to propagating the story and explaining the significance of the apparitions.

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The web page: http://www.geocities.com/franciscanhistory/OLOG.html
The miraculous image produced on the Tilma of Saint Juan Diego is rich in symbolism. To the best of your ability, in the blank space under each symbol write what you think they represent. As you answer the questions, take note of what led to the development of your answer.

1. The aureole or luminous light surrounding the Lady is reminiscent of:

________________________________________________________________
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________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

2. The Lady is standing upon the moon this symbolism is that of:

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3. The eyes of Our lady of Guadalupe are looking down with humility and compassion, this is a sign of:

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4. The angel supporting the Lady testifies to:

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5. The mantle of the Lady is blue-green or turquoise, this symbolizes:

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________________________________________________________________
6. The limbus or gold border of her mantle is another sign of:

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________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

7. The stars on the Lady’s mantle shows:

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8. The color of the Madonna’s dress is rose or pale-red. Some have interpreted this as:

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9. The gold-encircled cross brooch under the neck of the Lady’s robe is a symbol of:

________________________________________________________________

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________________________________________________________________

10. The girdle or bow around her waist is a sign of:

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________
13. **Symbolism Worksheet II**

*The Symbolism of the Image- Worksheet II*

The miraculous image produced on the tilma of Saint Juan Diego is rich in symbolism. An explanation is given for each symbol.

1. **The aureole or luminous light surrounding the Lady is reminiscent of:**

   the "woman clothed with the sun" of Rev. 12:1. The light is also a sign of the power of God who has sanctified and blessed the one who appears. The rays of the sun would also be recognized by the native people as a symbol of their highest god, Huitzilopochtli. Thus, the lady comes forth hiding but not extinguishing the power of the sun. She is now going to announce the God who is greater than their sun god.

2. **The Lady is standing upon the moon this symbolism is that of:**

   the symbolism is that of the woman of Rev. 12:1 who has the "moon under her feet". The moon for the Meso-Americans was the god of the night. By standing on the moon, she shows that she is more powerful than the god of darkness. However, in Christian iconography the crescent moon under the Madonna’s feet is usually a symbol of her perpetual virginity, and sometimes it can refer to her Immaculate Conception or Assumption.

3. **The eyes of Our lady of Guadalupe are looking down with humility and compassion, this is a sign of:**

   to the native people that she was not a god since in their iconography the gods stare straight ahead with their eyes wide open. We can only imagine how tenderly her eyes looked upon Saint Juan Diego when she said: "Do not be troubled or weighed down with grief…Am I not here who am your Mother?"

4. **The angel supporting the Lady testifies to:**

   her royalty. To the Meso-American Indians only kings, queens and other dignitaries would be carried on the shoulders of someone. The angel is transporting the Lady to the people as a sign that a new age has come.

5. **The mantle of the Lady is blue-green or turquoise, this symbolizes:**

   to the native people, this was the color of the gods and of royalty. It was also the color of the natural forces of life and fecundity. In Christian art, blue is symbolic of eternity and immortality. In Judaism, it was the color of the robe of the high priest.

6. **The limbus or gold border of her mantle is another sign of:**
7. The stars on the Lady’s mantle shows:

that she comes from heaven. She comes as the Queen of Heaven but with the eyes of a humble and loving mother. The stars also are a sign of the supernatural character of the image. The research of Fr. Mario Rojas Sánchez and Dr. Juan Homero Hernández Illescas of Mexico (published in 1983) shows that the stars on the Lady’s mantle in the image are exactly as the stars of the winter solstice appeared before dawn on December 12, 1531.

8. The color of the Madonna’s dress is rose or pale-red. Some have interpreted this as:

the color of dawn symbolizing the beginning of a new era. Others point to the red as a sign of martyrdom for the faith and divine love.

9. The gold-encircled cross brooch under the neck of the Lady’s robe is a symbol of:

Sanctity.

10. The girdle or bow around her waist is a sign of:

her virginity, but it also has several other meanings. The bow appears as a four-pedaled flower. To the native Indians this was the nahui ollin, the flower of the sun, a symbol of plenitude. The cross-shaped flower was also connected with the cross-sticks which produce fire. For them, this was the symbol of fecundity and new life. The high position of the bow and the slight swelling of the abdomen show that the Lady is "with child". According to Dr. Carlos Fernández Del Castillo, a leading Mexican obstetrician, the Lady appears almost ready to give birth with the infant head down resting vertically. This would further solidify her identification with the woman of Rev. 12 who is about to give birth.
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