



A Future for the Latino Church: Models for Multilingual, Multigenerational Hispanic Congregations

By Daniel A. Rodriguez

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Many assume that Hispanic ministry in North America still necessarily focuses on Spanish-language congregations. But over 60 percent of all American Latinos were born in the United States and are now English dominant. Daniel Rodriguez argues that effective Latino ministry and church planting are now centered in second-generation, English-dominant leadership and congregations. Based on his observation of dozens of cutting-edge Latino churches across the country, Rodriguez reports on how innovative congregations are ministering creatively to the next generations of Latinos. In-depth case studies reveal how gifted leaders are reaching beyond their own demographics to have lasting impact on their wider communities. The future of the Latino church is multilingual, multigenerational and multiethnic. Those who "live in the hyphen" between Latino and American can become all things to all Latinos, sharing the gospel in ways that language is no barrier.

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Editorial Review

Review

"*A Future for the Latino Church* is a great reflection tool for the Hispanic church in America. Daniel Rodriguez calls us to meditate on the religious, sociohistorical, and cultural context in which many Hispanics live, direction our attention to the gap between foreign-born and United States-born Latinos." (Jonatan Toledo, *Africanus Journal*, April 2013)

"*A Future for the Latino Church* is must reading for Hispanic church leaders and pastors. It provides a solid basis for consideration of a new ministry paradigm that is transformational in implementation and effectiveness in ministry. I highly recommend this book to non-Hispanic pastors/church leaders desiring to begin or sponsor a vibrant Hispanic ministry within their congregation or in their community." (Efraim Espinoza, *Enrichment*, Winter 2012)

"Rodriguez has written a useful and needed addition to the discussion of Hispanic churches in America . . . The book should be read by Hispanics who aspire to leadership positions in local congregations as well as Anglo leaders of churches engaged in and considering outreach to the growing population of Latinos in the U.S." (Billie Silvey, *The Christian Chronicle*, July 27, 2011)

"For decades native-born, English-speaking Latinos have endured the neglect of their spiritual and cultural formation at the hands of Spanish-dominant Latino church leaders who refused change that would address the needs of this growing population of Latinos in the United States. Dr. Rodriguez clearly articulates the resistance present and the transitional shift needed for holistic English-language ministry to flourish in the lives of second-generation Latinos. Every Christian leader who is serious about understanding the complexity and diversity of Latinos must read this insightful contribution to the advancement of the gospel to all Latinos and to the future of the church as a whole in America." (Rev. Orlando Crespo, national director of InterVarsity Latino Fellowship and author of *Being Latino in Christ*)

"*A Future for the Latino Church* takes you 'back to the future' of Hispanic ministry in the United States. It is about the growing second and third generations of English-dominant Hispanics who represent a kind of *nepantla*, an Aztec Indian word for both/and, of in-betweenness in American life. "Memory and destiny frame the five paradoxes in the life of Hispanics of 'living in the hyphen,' that is, two languages (Spanish/English), two cultures (native/American), two philosophies (indigenous/contemporary), two strategies (tradition/missional) and even two religions (Catholic/Evangelical) competing as the twins in Rebecca's womb, constituting the challenge of ministering to future generations of Hispanics. "This book highlights some groundbreaking creative, holistic yet prophetic ministries that have begun to steer the way toward the future of Hispanic ministry in the United States." (Dr. Jesse Miranda, president, The Miranda Center, CEO, National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference)

"English-dominant Latinos have great capacity to strengthen churches everywhere. But these Latinos are neglected by church leaders who are fixated on the idea that the only authentic Hispanic ministry is Spanish-language ministry. Dr. Daniel Rodriguez's research into effective multilingual, multicultural churches demonstrates how churches and individuals can draw, nurture and activate this vital group." (Rodolpho Carrasco, board member, World Vision USA, and director, Two Forty Group)

"Daniel Rodriguez challenges us to recognize the increasing diversity of the Latino community and to

develop ministries that reach out across that diversity. He also provides examples of churches that are developing models to respond to that challenge. Latino churches have an important future in the United States. Rodriguez helps us understand an important part of that future." (Juan Francisco Martínez, Fuller Theological Seminary, author, *Walk with the People: Latino Ministry in the United States*)

"Daniel Rodriguez presents the framework for twenty-first century Hispanic American Christian viability and sustainability. As one of the most prominent Hispanic scholars in the church, Daniel captures both the obstacles and opportunities embedded within America's fastest-growing segment of Christianity, Hispanic evangelicals. This book contextualizes the narrative of successful church models that engage, empower and enrich multiple generations for the glory of Christ. Every pastor and church leader committed to reaching the Hispanic American demographic must read this book." (Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, president, National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, The Hispanic National Association of Evangelicals)

"*A Future for the Latino Church* is an attempt by my good friend Daniel Rodriguez to awaken us to two realities: the coming 'Joseph' generation which looks differently, acts differently and speaks differently, but is nevertheless Hispanic and potentially the hope for revival in America; and secondly, the reality of crosscultural pollination that is occurring within every ethnic group in the second, third and fourth generations in this country." (Rev. Daniel de León, senior pastor, Templo Calvario, Santa Ana, CA)

"Daniel Rodriguez's *A Future for the Latino Church* is a truly informative and inspiring book. Based on solid theological, demographic and sociological research from the perspective of the author's own cultural and spiritual pilgrimage, this book presents a compelling argument for reaching U.S.-born Latinos with the gospel message. The carefully selected case studies of highly effective transgenerational Latino churches provide valuable insights as well as a clear sense of direction regarding the future of Latino work in this country. I wholeheartedly recommend this book to everyone who is interested in seeing America's fastest-growing ethnic group become a missionary force in this country and throughout the world." (Daniel R. Sánchez, author of *Hispanic Realities Impacting America* and director of the Scarborough Institute of Church Planting & Growth, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary)

"*A Future for the Latino Church* is an important book for all who are concerned about the mission of the church in the context of urbanization and globalization. . . . I am delighted with the hard work and devotion of Daniel Rodriguez presented in this book, which will help us get on with the Great Commission." (From the foreword by Manuel Ortiz, author of *The Hispanic Challenge*)

About the Author

Daniel A. Rodriguez (Ph.D., Intercultural Studies, Fuller Theological Seminary) is associate professor of religion and hispanic studies at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California. He serves on the board of directors for the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference and on the steering committee for the Global Missions Conference of the Churches of Christ.

Manuel Ortiz (1938–2017) was professor of ministry and urban mission and director of the urban program at Westminster Theological Seminary. His books include *The Hispanic Challenge: Opportunities Confronting the Church*, *One New People: Models for Developing a Multiethnic Church*, and *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City and the People of God* (coauthored with Harvie Conn). Ortiz was passionate about integrating urban ministry, education, and the gospel, and he spoke and consulted around the nation. For fourteen years he ministered to Hispanics in Chicago, founding five urban congregations, two elementary schools, and an extension school for theological education. He was also the founder and senior pastor of Spirit and Truth Fellowship (Christian Reformed Church), a multiethnic congregation in Philadelphia, and the codirector of the CRC Philadelphia Initiative for Church Planting.

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