

HISPANIC AMERICA:

SYSTEMIC POVERTY

&

the EVANGELICAL CHURCH

in

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

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Urban Borderlands
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METHODOLOGY

I chose this topic of research after spending the fall semester of my junior year at Tufts University in a Christian Missions training program, called YWAM or Youth With a Mission. I was able to study the Bible and receive teaching from missionaries of many cultures and ethnicities, and my lecture phase was followed by an outreach to Tijuana, Mexico.

In Tijuana and Ensenada, I was privileged to work in existing counseling ministries for Latino pastors, and work on the provision of shelter for Tijuana's poorest: those persons who dwell in the Colonias, often living in cars, run-down buses, in conditions that would be shunned by even the poorest low-income housing dweller in the United States. This experience led me to consider the issue of poverty and race, whether domestically in the United States, or globally.

I received a chance to further study the relationship between the Hispanic community and poverty by enrolling in Profesora Pacini-Hernandez's Urban Borderlands class.

Mostly, my questions centered around how, in a nation run predominantly by believers in Jesus Christ (if not in public position, certainly by constituency), poverty could be so rampant, and the same Christians can stand by without a solution to poverty, but enough money to band-aid its ramifications many times over. Was the "the land of opportunity" created to be opportune only for whoever could get there first?

My methodology was almost entirely random. I am not an anthropology major, and feel a great deal more skilled and at ease in the art of interviewing now than when I started, and I did make many a friend in the Latino evangelical Christian community, by attending the only Latino non-Brazilian church that I had ever seen in the Cambridge area: Iglesia Bautista Central. This being the contemporary (in the last 30 years) hub of Latino evangelical activity in Cambridge, I interviewed several members and lay leaders, and was referred by those interviewees to other historic members of the Cambridge evangelical Christian community. I was also privileged to hear two speakers during the semester that I have also referenced: a leader in the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, and a Dean of students from a predominantly Latino state-run community college in Lawrence. Having considered going abroad another semester to do an "Urban Missions School" with YWAM, I was pleased to find that God would be faithful to His call on my life through a Tufts Anthropology class.

I am now connected with one particular organization with which I hope to intern, possibly as a part of my Peace and Justice Studies Major, and I am looking forward to continued relationship with the people I met during the project. I hope my findings and research are useful, if only to invite a more specific look into Latino poverty and race relations that are sustained (or not) by persons of faith in the community.

Thank you to Profesora Pacini-Hernandez; were it not for your patient encouragement I feel I would have given up on this endeavor not two minutes after we began! Your work is truly meaningful and beneficial to the cause of achieving equity and justice in Latino communities.

A special thank you to Mireya, Jocelyn, Carmen, Paul, and the rest of the IBC congregation! This oral history would not have been possible without your generous support and patience! God bless you and your futures in Cambridge or wherever you may end up serving Him! I look forward to keeping in touch with you all in the future!

*City on a Hill**Hold out for the revelation, you're assured a transformation**You will be a new creation, Yeah, Yeah.**He'll restore you to mint condition, He will give you a newfound vision**Fill your heart with a worth mission, Yeah, Yeah.**It's a trip that's worth the taking, it will heal the heart that's aching.**You can feel it in your heart and soul always,**It will change the way you see the world every day.**Be a soldier in the light, a song in the language of love.**To the proud, to the meek,**To the strong, to the weak**Brown and yellow, Black and white**You are precious in His sight**Do it in God's will, be a city on a hill.*

Salvador- Christian band from Mexico

("City on a Hill" lyrics)

The history of Latinos in Cambridge, Massachusetts is far reaching, both geographically and personally—a complex of experience of family, politics, economy, education, labor, and arguably the most important personal experience of all: faith. Whether or not the initial reason for coming to the Boston area, faith certainly plays an integral part in the lives of many Latinos in Cambridge today. How did the evangelical (for information regarding Christian sects, including traditional/conservative, evangelical, and charismatic, see Appendix A) Christian faith history develop in the community? Where are its roots, and how has it grown, suffered and persevered through the last three decades? Who attends now (and where do they attend), and what is their vision of the church now to reach the Cambridge community and the greater Boston community of Latinos? These valid questions have uncovered the detailed and ongoing path of Christian Latinos in Cambridge. Churches are planted, split, rebirthed, continued, and their numbers are growing in the greater Boston area. The effects on the local Cambridge community are stemmed

from music ministry to Social Services provided by the church. The church has been one of (if not) the most successful mobilizing components of the neighborhood—what is it that a church offers that is so integral to so many Latinos?

As a majority of Latino immigration/migration to Cambridge has occurred in the last hundred years, the recent histories of its current Hispanic dwellers hold real meaning for both the city and its people. This report attempts to delineate the recent faith history of Christian Evangelicals of Hispanic descent and to track the resourcefulness of the church in dealing with issues of social justice and equality, and to analyze the demonstrated ability and future aptitude of Evangelical Christians of color and white Evangelical Christians to break down engrained racial systems in culturally, and ethnically diverse neighborhoods like Cambridge.

Located at the corner of Magazine and Putnam Streets, Iglesia Bautista Central (IBC) is currently the largest evangelical (see Appendix A) church in the Cambridge area holding only Spanish services. The building is shared with the slightly more charismatic (see Appendix A) Cambridgeport Baptist Church (CBC, a predominantly white congregation). Recently the building has housed three services on any given Sunday, CBC, IBC, and a Korean church held night services in the building, and prior to the Korean service, a Haitian congregation used the building on Sunday nights. In recent years IBC and CBC have congregations have maintained bonds of friendship often through joint, bilingual services that are held quarterly (see Appendix B). The building itself seems diversified, in large part due to the “mission-mindedness” of its congregations (Bothwell, Interview).

Attendance at IBC varies week to week but averages around sixty persons (including children) each Sunday service, which is held in the main sanctuary at 12:15 PM. Visitors receive a warm welcome after filling out a name card; during the announcement time, one is verbally recognized and greeted by the congregation—“en español”, of course. Praise and worship time consists of a mixture of both contemporary praise songs and traditional hymns, with a worship leader and several vocalists, generally accompanied by a drummer and synthesized keyboard rendition of songs. Words appear on an overhead projector, and the opening set goes approximately twenty minutes; it is followed by an hour-long sermon given by interim Pastor William Mitchell from Cuba. An appropriate ending to each service, home-cooked meals are served for all in the fellowship hall, and members linger to talk, meet new faces, and discuss church events.

***HISTORY OF IBC: the beginnings of Congregación Leon de Juda and Primera Iglesia Bautista de Everett,
as told by Mireya Vasquez:***

“... IBC, the old IBC as I now refer to it, has gone through a great deal of changes...Actually IBC, the original IBC, started back in 1980. It started off from a home actually and just in the South End. People used to meet at a home, probably maybe about 20 people. And then from there about a year in 1982 is when they found the church building in Cambridge. So then it moved in 1982 to Cambridge. [My mother, brother, and I] started going there a year later in 83. And so that’s the old IBC...You know it was a traditional conservative Baptist church up

til...around...1991/92 when it sort of went through a new change. At that point I would say that the congregation was larger (probably about 200/250 people), so...in 10 years the congregation grew significantly. But at the same time that it was growing I think the good thing was that part of the congregation was open to...deeper relationship with God, and...deeper sort of charismatic style of worship. But half the congregation...was not. And so it was sad to see that in 1993 there was sort of like a split of the congregation. You know those people that were not (...they didn't agree with a new style or something different that was not conservative), basically decided that they wanted to leave the church and...create a new church...What happened was that, just going back a little,...the pastor who founded IBC in 1980 and 82, he was a church planter. His name was Juan Vergara—he's passed away now...That basically was his ministry, planting churches. So he came to Boston in...[the] early 80s;...he came here and he planted [IBC]...Around...86 he went back to Puerto Rico with his family and his wife, and...[In order to find] the person who...[would be] the Pastor of IBC, we...had a different pastor come to preach every Sunday...In 1985/86 Roberto Miranda (who's the current pastor of Leon de Juda)... took responsibility for the church and the conservative Baptist association..."

"[Pastor Miranda] was ordained as the pastor of IBC, and so he was the current pastor when all this change came about...by that time Pastor Juan Vergara wasn't here anymore. ...Those people that were sort of more conservative and...wanted to keep that same style of church called Juan Vergara (at this point he was now in Florida planting a different church)...and...said you know "we don't agree with what's going on here; I think you should come and take a look." He came

and he didn't think anything was wrong at the church. But...within a year..., people were calling him again and saying "you know why don't you move back to Boston?", "we're willing to support you in a new ministry". [Eventually]... Pastor Vergara came back to the Boston area in 1993 and...a... number of the IBC congregation, ...around forty people,...left...the old IBC in 1993 and created Primera Iglesia Bautista of Everett."

"...The old IBC's...--back in Cambridge—congregation went through a different change...They grew to a number that...couldn't fit in the building...; usually the attendance there was like 300/350, and the capacity for the sanctuary...was much smaller than that, so I think also that the congregation had a new vision for the...church:...to move into the Boston area (come out of Cambridge, come to Boston, to a community that was really in need)...They ended up moving to Boston by 1997 and they're now by the Boston Medical Center."

"There's great need there and... the vision that...pastor Roberto [Miranda] had then was to... reach out to the community to reach out to the people that were really in need... , so they wanted to...buy a new building, and...have different programs available—programs like childcare, ...resources...to help students for higher education... [When] in 1997 they decided to move out from Cambridge..., Mission to the Americas said "we want to continue a Hispanic ministry here in Cambridge" so they got the idea to contact the Pastor (the founding pastor) of IBC, Juan Vergara, who was now in Everett, and asked him if he would be willing to...plant this new congregation again in Cambridge or if he would be willing to be part of the body...seeking for a new pastor to plant this congregation. So that happened—all the

planning happened...in 1997 as Lion of Judah (...the old IBC changed their name to Lion of Juda/Leon de Judah) and... in 1997 Pastor Vergara started... praying with the leaders back in Everett to see...how they could...build this new church back in Cambridge... Pastor Vergara actually became sick...; he knew that he wasn't going to be the one to pastor the church just because he was very weak, and so they did find a pastor who had just graduated from a seminary in Guatemala (see Miranda interview, Kerry Biggs), who... had to come to visit...a church in Brockton... We heard him preach at Everett and...several pastors really liked him and thought that he would be a good candidate..., he went through their process... Several churches were involved in...building /planting the New IBC, [and] those churches were the church in Everett, Mission to the Americas, and also Cambridgeport Baptist Church, and another church in Brockton and another church in Lawrence [see also Bothwell interview]. Those churches and Mission to the Americas... funded... the first three years of the life...of the new IBC...in 1997/1998.”

(Vasquez. Interview.)

SERVING IN THE IBC COMMUNITY/CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Mireya Vasquez is in fact one of the parishioners in leadership at IBC. She sings on the praise team each Sunday with a team of three others and has just passed on the position of treasurer to Carmen Figueroa. Mireya co-leads the youth group, which has ranged from a few teenagers, to recent numbers of ten-fifteen youth (middle school and high school aged, one student from Northeastern). She comments on the intelligence of the youth, and their desire to read scriptures in English (as

opposed to Spanish); Mireya herself learned English at a young age in Honduras. From a privileged Honduran family (her father worked for a bank), she was able to attend the international school. She and her mother and brother emigrated to Cambridge after living in Florida briefly in the early 1980s. Upon arriving in Cambridge, her immediate family did not consider themselves Christian, though her mother had attended a Pentecostal/Charismatic church in Honduras on occasion. A series of events put the family in touch with Pastor Juan Vergara, of the Old IBC, and eventually the family began attending services there regularly. First her mother professed belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, then her brother, and Mireya was the last of the three to become a Christian, though she remembers that her decision (at the age of 10) was not brought into a full understanding of faith until she was much older (after high school), and later still she attended a Youth With a Mission Discipleship Training School (intensive Bible study and evangelism school, geared toward Christian missions). Mireya's passion and desire to work with the youth of IBC is truly encouraging in the face of the crime, drugs, and emotional problems that Latino youth are facing today, still the majority of these youth are not from the Cambridge area. Besides engaging regularly in Bible study and fellowship, the youth recently learned a drama, exemplifying the state of humankind and the need for the restored relationship to God the Father through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The youth performed the drama during the joint, bi-lingual IBC and CBC Good Friday service. The congregations were dually moved, and joined together in support of faith transcending language and culture. Mireya, currently just

moved into her own apartment in Malden and works at Fidelity; she has not resided in the city of Cambridge since coming to the Boston area. (Vasquez, Interview)

Another prishioner lay leader in the church is Jocelyn Sierra, who often leads the Sunday morning praise and worship. She came from Puerto Rico (where she also completed a Youth With a Mission Discipleship Training School ten years ago) to the Boston area, and for a short time she lived with one of her spiritual mentors (the only person she initially knew in the metro area). Jocelyn, like Mireya, is entirely passionate about her involvement at IBC. Today, worship consists of the three or four singers, the worship leader, a drummer, and prerecorded keyboard arrangements of various traditional hymns and contemporary praise songs. Coming from a Pentecostal/Charismatic background, Jocelyn is excited to become involved in “Consecration Ministries” (a worship team mostly comprised of—excluding herself—African-Americans and ministers through dance and song to congregations all over Boston, as well as in public spaces). (Sierra, Interview)

Carmen Figueroa, a Salvadorian, is the newly inducted treasurer of IBC, and came to know Christ through her husband, a Colombian, who has attended IBC for many year. Carmen is the director of legal services at Centro Presente in Area Four of Cambridge. She describes her conversion experience in terms of the law (she was not a Christian before attending law school at Boston College) and since law school, her perceptions are largely based on her legal training, “I realized that God had jurisdiction over my life.” Since becoming a Christian, she has attended IBC regularly, continues to work at Centro-Presente part-time, and on her her own practices law part-time. What would be a full schedule for others, is hardly

satisfactory for Carmen. She spends her nights in ministry talking on the phone with Hispanics from all over the United States, giving them free legal counsel regarding issues from immigration, to bankruptcy, to divorce. She and her husband also began a ministry/non-profit of their own called Amen-Amen.net, “el Buscador Cristiano” (the Christian Search Engine) that is run from their home. The web-page provides an array of Christian services in Spanish: Scripture, Bible studies, devotionals, current events concerning Christian Latinos. One of the daily devotional lists has over 15,000 subscribers from around the world, and Carmen and her husband employ persons from as far as Peru and New Zealand to update the site. These services are not common in Spanish, though multiple websites provide the same services in English. Carmen and her husband fund the endeavor entirely from their own personal income. Interestingly, Carmen describes herself as a “conservative” Christian, and suggests that a co-worker, Maria Elena Letona would provide a more liberal example of Christian living. (Figueroa, Interview)

Inter-rim Pastor William Mitchell of IBC preaches the sermon at IBC each week, and though not interviewed, Carmen says he is looking to increase the involvement of IBC in ministries to the community such as English as a Second Language (Figueroa, Interview). Paul Bothwell comments that this “transitional period” for IBC is picking up speed with new lay leadership having been installed in the last few weeks and Paul looks forward to more contact with the IBC congregation in the Urban Academy (see Hope for Cambridge section). The leadership team of IBC feels the need for more outreach into the community, but without a permanent

full-time pastor, it has lacked the necessary organizational resources for community endeavors in the last two to three years. (Bothwell, Interview)

Samuel Acevedo, who attended law school at Boston College along with Carmen Figueroa, heads up the community outreach at Congregación León de Juda, which is called H.E.R.C. (Higher Education Resource Center). HERC supplies English as a second language classes, and offers tutorials to minority youth (Hispanic and others), utilizing the help of Harvard student volunteers who assist with homework, and even standardized testing preparation (Figueroa, Interview). Acevedo, though difficult to get in touch with, runs the HERC ministries at the Emmanuel Gospel Center, in the South End of Boston (Bothwell, Interview).

Mireya, Jocelyn, Carmen, William, and Samuel are only a few examples of the outreach leaders among the Latino evangelical/charismatic population in Boston. Notably, each is bilingual, and as Carmen commented, “Latinos who speak Spanish and English already have plenty to do in service provision, whether church-run or secular,” and thus suggested that a shift and/or addition in overall leadership would be necessary to focus Latinos in Boston on policy change for the prevention of poverty and the forceful migration of Latinos from areas like Cambridge to the outskirts of the Boston area. Indeed, these servants are giving to their utmost ability are truly a blessing to their respective youths, congregations, and clients.

SYMPTOMS OF POVERTY IN CAMBRIDGE

The aforementioned brief history of Iglesia Bautista Central is merely a structural display/representation of the transformations that have taken place in the

Cambridge area. It is natural for churches to grow and split, grow and split again—ever maintaining that balance of size and ability to collectively seek truth.

Reformation and counter-reformation have been the cycle of growth for Christian churches since even the Early Church. But in fact, Mireya reports that over 98% of “old IBC” attendees followed Pastor Miranda to plant Leon de Juda in South Boston, seeking the “most needy” to provide service for them in the form of childcare, higher education services (see Miranda interview, Kerry Biggs). Statistically, a large portion of the part of that 98% that once lived in Cambridge, will have moved out by now.

More and more Latinos have been moving out of Cambridge, according to 2000 Census Data as presented by the Mauricio Gaston Institute. Only a small percent of Latinos remaining in Cambridge actually own a home—most rent. With several expanding universities in the area, rent prices continue to climb as more and more dollars enter the city via the college student. Small business owners face extreme difficulty in keeping their businesses open (see Meredith Gruen report). Yet many Latinos remain in the city, and one can only imagine the horror of waiting for the bottom to fall out of their homes and families. Education at the available public schools is mediocre at best, and some of the best programs remaining are being forced to relocate (see Lyndsey Parman report), while there is even talk of shutting down the local high school Cambridge Rindge and Latin (see Ligaya Lei report).

POVERTY AND PERSONS OF COLOR: surviving as a Hispanic American in the United States

All of these symptoms point to the heaping load of difficulty weighing down the minorities, including Latinos who live in Cambridge.

SERVANTHOOD: A call to action versus a call to subcommittee

Perhaps no one could put it so well as Carmen Figueroa, a Salvadorian who works as the Legal Services Director at Centro Presente (cite old report about CP), who said “God gave me the know-how and strength to restructure.” Centro Presente was on the verge of bankruptcy when she joined the board of advisers in the late nineties. She herself had only recently become a Christian, but the Legal Services department of Centro Presente badly needed restructuring and she chose to live out her faith in Centro. Nevertheless, having learned straight from the Bible about what service and justice really are, she knew that some compassion and patience would be required for the task that she had to do. Besides working at Centro Presente (with only one other lawyer and four paralegals, and a caseload of five thousand per year), and having her own part-time practice, Carmen has begun what she refers to as her own ministry outside of work. She freely gives out her name and home telephone number, and counsels Latinos from all over the United States during her evenings at home, regarding legal issues from bankruptcy and divorce, to perhaps the most frequently occurring issues of immigration. At Centro Presente though, a majority of her clientele come from East Boston, Chelsea, and Lynn, and even Providence, R.I. and Salem, MA. She discusses the “flight from Cambridge” with ease. She herself was raised in its neighborhoods, attending Cambridge Rindge and Latin for high school, later attending law school at Boston College. She notes that things have

“changed a lot” since she was there as a girl. She now lives in Rosaline, but attends Iglesia Bautista Central regularly with her husband (a Chilean), and is the newly elected treasurer.

Upon acknowledging the structural changes that IBC is undergoing (searching for a new pastor), she suggests that once that problem is solved, IBC will be able to really focus on outreach to the community as so many of its members desire to do. In the meantime, Carmen (as well as Mireya and Jocelyn) continue to serve the community as best they can with the jurisdiction they have been given—jobs, youth ministry, legal counsel, etc. Carmen considers her own social justice view to be on the conservative side, because she does not attend protests, but rather often petitions the government via the legal system to bring justice where immigration is concerned. While many Evangelical Christians would argue against all of her social actions as futile (after all the end is coming anyway), Carmen states “In my work at Centro Presente and in ministry, I am above all, honest. I will under no circumstances lie for my clients. But, I will fight against unjust laws. When a law is unjust, it is wrong. The church in general needs to denounce what is wrong instead of avoiding the subject completely.” Sometimes there is no time to resolve differences among denominations, races, and households, she adds, “and as a representative of Jesus Christ, I know that actions are what count the most.” Delayed action will not suffice.

PROACTIVE OR REACTIVE: SOCIAL WORK IN THE CHURCH

“The Loaves and Fishes Meals Program is located at the First Korean Church, 35 Magazine St., Cambridge, and has been operating for more than 20 years, feeding

up to 120 people each Saturday evening. In addition to feeding them, the program provides bags of groceries (of their own choosing) that each person may take with them. There is an experienced director and cook on duty each week to ensure quality and safety for those who attend.” Colin Grey is the director of this Park Street Congregational Church City Works Outreach ministry. Primary volunteer opportunities include setup, cleanup and serving. This outreach has been and continuous to be extremely successful in recruiting volunteers from its predominantly Caucasian and Asian congregation. Thousands of people who would otherwise go hungry have been fed through Loaves and Fishes.

Another extremely successful program: the Chelsea Community Kitchen. “The Chelsea Community Kitchen has been open since 1991, serving Continental breakfast and lunch to sixty to ninety people on Saturday mornings. It is located at St. Luke/San Lucas Episcopal Church, 201 Washington Ave., Chelsea.” This outreach was initially begun as a secular social work initiative, but later became church-run. Again, the church was able to successfully outreach to the poor.

In fact, Centro Presente itself began as a Catholic initiative, run by nuns. As time passed, the needs of the organization shifted from physical to policy, and the church stepped aside as United Way and other leadership stepped in to bring about change in the program’s direction, focusing Centro in the direction of legal services and advocacy.

These three outreaches have one thing in common, besides being located in largely Latino areas: the church volunteered to help. Feeding the poor, defending the immigrant—these are all righteous causes worthy of (and Biblically mandated in

Scripture—see Truth section) Christian service. But what would happen if the church stopped for a moment to mobilize toward transforming the racial systemization of life in Cambridge? Why are these men, women, and children of largely Latino areas experiencing such poverty in the first place? It is not a largely behavioral problem. It is almost entirely structural. Homelessness, poverty, immigration—for Latinos (and other persons of color), these issues are unquestionably linked with an American socio-economic system that (though perhaps unwittingly) discriminates against minorities.

Under this racialized system of poverty and economic viability, persons within the church are forced to limit their ministry to the poor (an ever-increasing population) due to the mass quantities of people who require social aid/services. While this interpersonal racial reconciliation has been somewhat successful (non-Hispanic white churches, congregations and neighborhoods of color partnering for relief against the problem of poverty via an array of programs that provide poor persons with at least the basic needs of survival), and many individual Christians, congregations, and ministries have dramatically changed the climate of (especially) impoverished communities, however the hard truth remains that the lower-class of America continues to increase, and opportunities for persons of color to transcend the economic barriers they face steadily disappear. Thus, ministries have succeeded in the alleviation of individual immediate-needs; but until non-Hispanic white churches and congregations of color can partner against the almost entirely white-run economy of the U.S., there is little hope that the problem of poverty will be resolved—

populations of impoverished Hispanics (including Cambridge) will experience continued downward spiraling viability in the economy.

THE TRUTH: Solutions in Scripture

The truth of the matter: these problems are factually and statistically rooted in (and obviously fed by) a racialized culture (evidenced in many spheres outside of poverty), politically run primarily by wealthy white Americans, a majority of who, profess belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior over their lives (Emerson).

“My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don’t show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, ‘Here’s a good seat for you,’ but to the poor man, ‘You stand there’ or ‘Sit on the floor by my feet,’ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of Him to whom you belong? ***If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.*** [emphasis added] For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘Do not murder.’ If you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. ***Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.*** [emphasis added] What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? ***Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, ‘Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.***” (*The Life Promises Bible*, James, Chapter 2, Verses 1-17).

James the apostle (a founding father of the Christian church) firmly cautions on the subject of generosity and compassion. He calls it “mercy.” James reminds his audience that without the mercy of God (as manifest in the Person of Jesus Christ of Nazareth), the Christians themselves would be condemned to an eternity of separation from relationship with their Father in Heaven. In this way, James profoundly encourages these followers and believers-in-Christ that faith is not only a matter of the tongue (speech), but also a determinant of action. If there is no evidence of faith, then there is no faith, he argues. If there is no mercy, in the same vein, then one has not truly understood the truth and fullness of God’s mercy for him/her. James also gives a lesson in economics: real wealth, for all people, believers and non-believers, cannot be seen in a person’s appearance. Instead, he argues, the most “royal” sign of all is the action of loving your neighbor as you love yourself (which according to Jesus himself is a commandment second in importance only to loving the Lord your God “with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength (*The Life Promises Bible*, Mark, Chapter 13, verse 30)). Another example of Biblical compassion and generosity:

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ***All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.*** Every day they continued to meet in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. ***And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*** [emphasis added]” (*The Life Promises Bible*, Acts, Chapter 2, Verses 42-47).

What is important to note is that these believers were gathered from all parts of the region. Most of them had recently converted in Jerusalem at the time of

Pentecost, shortly after Jesus was crucified and resurrected. These believers spoke many languages, and had actually very little in common with one another, but Luke (the author of Acts), tells his readers that upon receiving salvation in Jesus Christ they then “had everything in common” and gave generously and willingly to meet the needs of people they didn’t even know! These acts of mercy toward one another certainly manifested the presence of Christ (this was also the first body of believers to receive the Holy Spirit—the presence of Christ) and completely glorified God, whose name they publicly praised together with one another. Through all this exemplified mercy (compassion and generosity), “the Lord added to their number daily,” which indicates that many more people became Christians in the presence of such faith demonstrated by mercy.

One might object that the believers in the book of Acts did not share with those who did not believe, but knowing that these believers had recently received the Holy Spirit, and many actually knew Jesus (pre-and post-crucifixion), they truly were following His teachings, and that is how people were attracted to the faith.

In what is Jesus’ most widely known sermon in Christian circles, called the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Himself gives instruction on compassion and mercy:

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal. ***For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also...***No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. ***Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable***

than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? And why do you worry about your clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well...

Do not judge or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you...***Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.*** Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ***If you , then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him. So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.***” (*The Living Promises Bible*, Matthew, Chapter 6, Verse 19 to Chapter 7, Verse 12)

In Jesus’ most-famed and “quotably Christian” sermon, He presents what is perhaps the most difficult to believe and follow for most Christians. It calls for compassion and mercy in such abundance for others, that the only way they can possibly understand and give such love is by knowing the Creator of compassion and mercy. Unfortunately, our worldly white-run America has chosen a different route: what is known as evangelicalism. Many academics and scholars shudder at the word, as it is often accompanied by pre-millennialist rhetoric (the idea that nothing on earth will be perfect until Christ comes a second time, so the job of Christians is solely to preach the Gospel (words) to an unbelieving world) accompanied by graphic explanation of the apocalypse and guilt-inciting church sermons, followed by a collection. What academics/scholars, and workers for and advocates of homeless persons must know, is that the message of Christianity is mercy and compassion—

giving until one literally has nothing left to give, including life itself, because this is the example of Christ as told in the New Testament scriptures.

Additionally, Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures continually warn against the oppression of the widow, the orphan, and the poor. Many Old Testament prophets, like Isaiah, Amos and Hezekiah, make crystal clear the meaning of what Micah articulates: “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God,” (*The Life Promises Bible*, Micah, Chapter 6, Verse 8).

How then, is it possible that the Billy Graham crusades of the 1960s were segregated? Why would many preachers in the 1700s condone both loving one’s neighbor and slavery all in one breath of sermon? Why would revivalists such as D.L. Moody and Billy Sunday hold segregated revivals? Even George Whitefield, a founder of the Great Awakening (one of the greatest “evangelical” revivals of American history), is said to be the embodiment of the “contradiction of present day evangelicals,” because of he succumbed to the “brotherly reconciliation approach to slavery and poverty in America (Emerson, 30). This brotherly reconciliation approach currently fuels evangelical race reconciliation movements today, which often consist of individual sharing of experience and prayer together, but as stated by Emerson and Smith, “tears and hugs” are only a good start to mending the opportunity abyss that stands between whites and blacks, though they share one faith (67). These individualized reconciliations are useful, but often merely mask the greater problem at hand, thereby precluding any active solution to systemized racism,

which affects every sphere of society from television to crime prevention to education to church attendance.

The historic mistake of evangelical Christians is the perception that salvation alone is all that must be preached. As mentioned by the Apostle James, faith without good deeds is dead, and to show favoritism to any element of society, is decidedly wrong. It is an inconsistent Christian theology that would lead someone to preach the good news that Christ has risen from the dead, without—through generosity and compassion—giving everything that one possesses for the sake of loving his/her neighbors. In contemporary America, white Christian society has systemized the art of “I’ve done everything I can” to the extent that “compassion has turned to resentment” as mentioned in the first Hopper article. In fact, it seems that James, Luke, and Jesus Himself, would clearly encourage every believer to not only believe in the resurrection, but to give away *everything* that one has (implication includes economic power), for the sake of the socially “unfavored” and the oppressed.

To Act Justly and To Love Mercy: The Two Handed Gospel

Continued Hope for Boston and Cambridge

Before Iglesia Bautista Central began in Cambridge, a powerful move of faith had already begun in Cambridge. After the “white-flight” to the suburbs from the cities of the 1950s and 60s, many mainline churches were left vacant, and the overall number of churches in the Boston area decreased from 400 to 100. This trend permeated cities nationwide—New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and others. Even so, one Rufus Jones, dynamic man of God, from Chicago fought to keep the Body of

Christ alive in the inner-city, and sought the renewal of faith for the poor and downtrodden urban minority, whatever color. At the time, he was serving on the Board of the National Association of Evangelicals, who blasted the idea “planting churches” in the inner-city. “Why shouldn’t all resources be poured into overseas missions?” they asked. As a result, the Mission to the Americas was founded, and Rufus Jones headed up the ministry. Mission to the Americas remains to this day an arm of the Conservative Baptist Missions Association, whose vision is to “revive church planting in the inner-cities of the United States”. Out of this radical Christian movement, Ralph Kee signed on as a missionary with MTA (Mission to the Americas), and planted the South End Neighborhood Church of Emmanuel (SENCE) in 1971, which reached a variety of ethnicities that were living in the area at the time, including Latinos. The vision for MTA in Boston was further refined to “provide visible, viable, and credible representation of Jesus Christ” in these inner-city ghettos and slums. By 1979, from SENCE three other congregations had been planted: one in Roxbury, one in Dorchester, and one in the Elmwood District of Providence, Rhode Island, each congregation with a Latino component.

These first churches found great leadership in arriving: Paul Bothwell signed on to plant the Roxbury church (called the Jesus Helps Neighborhood Church) after having attended SENCE as a new missionary with MTA. In 1977 he and his family moved to Roxbury and have lived there ever since. As Paul himself describes it, these leaders quickly found the need for more leadership a necessity, and “pastor heroics” could only sustain the growth of new congregations to an extent. This difficulty/scarcity of leadership within the congregations and lack of long-term

discipleship led the MTA missionaries to design a new ministry for the Boston area: URBACAD (Urban Academy). In the early 80s there were really very few missions to inner-city areas, aside from the ones headed by MTA missionaries or affiliates. As a result, some Argentinians were recruited to formulate the plan of action for not only discipling (training in Christ-like character) individual members of the congregation, but also for the empowerment of the congregations wherever they are to be capable, creative, and courageous people of God. This kind of “active learning” slowly manifested itself in the growth and planting of other congregations all over Boston, almost all with a Latino congregation (MTA found that the most successful church plants held more than one congregation in one meeting—when IBC was founded, it was co-founded with Cambridgeport Baptist and another Haitian congregation that later moved to a new location because of sustained growth). The method of training taught to the URBACAD leaders by the Argentinian missionaries included a plan of action via: 1-Theology 2-Education 3-Extension. This method of learning has well served the congregations, and expanded them all over metro-Boston, with a message of both faith and works as evangelical Christians. Serving one another, these discipleship groups are outreaching via many cultures, including Latino, Portuguese, Italian, Haitian, and in mainline white-majority churches. The URBACAD constantly encourages consistency in faith and action, and as a result, just as the church in Acts, many are coming to know Christ. Hopefully the consciousness-raising nature of the Urban Academy will continue to break down barriers between cultures, and one day the people of color will no longer be systematically discriminated against by their white brothers and sisters, and persons of color continue to show themselves be

sufficiently trained in leadership to breakdown such systems via policy change, and serving one another.

The Problem of Poverty as It Relates to Hispanics in the United States, and thereby, Cambridge: Conclusions for the evangelical Christians of color

Jorge Santiago commented on the difficulty in mobilizing his fellow Latinos in Lawrence to speak up for policy change and other social needs. Paul Bothwell and the URBACAD (of which he is now the Director) have found that instead of seeking out people and telling them what their needs are and how they should act, it is far more effective to implement long-term training in choosing what is right in the world, via faith in Jesus Christ. This, more than anything else, has drawn multitudes of Latinos together all around Boston, and it will certainly happen again in Cambridge when IBC is back on its feet with leadership. Thirty years of change have seen some difficult times, and according to the Apostle Paul “[We] can do all things through Jesus Christ who gives us the strength we need.

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Vasquez, Elba Mireya. Personal Interview. Interviewer: Elizabeth Butler. Transcription

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Urban Borderlands Class Reports, 2003.

APPENDIX A

Definitions from www.webster.com to differentiate an evangelical Christian and a charismatic Christian.

**Iglesia Bautista Central is considered evangelical; Leon de Juda is considered charismatic. This factored largely when Leon de Juda split from the old IBC, and in the forming of both the New IBC, and Primera Iglesia Bautista de Everett.

Main Entry: **evan·gel·i·cal**

Pronunciation: "E-"van-'je-li-k&l, "e-v&n-

Variant(s): *also* **evan·gel·ic** /

Function: *adjective*

Date: 1531

1 : of, relating to, or being in agreement with the Christian gospel especially as it is presented in the four Gospels

2 : **PROTESTANT**

3 : emphasizing salvation by faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ through personal conversion, the authority of Scripture, and the importance of preaching as contrasted with ritual

4 a *capitalized* : of or relating to the Evangelical Church in Germany **b** *often capitalized* : of, adhering to, or marked by fundamentalism : **FUNDAMENTALIST** **c** *often capitalized* : **LOW CHURCH**

5 : marked by militant or crusading zeal : **EVANGELISTIC** <the *evangelical* ardor of the movement's leaders -- Amos Vogel>

- **Evan·gel·i·cal·ism** / *noun*

- **evan·gel·i·cal·ly** / *adverb*

Main Entry: **cha·ris·ma**

Pronunciation: k&-'riz-m&

Variant(s): *also* **char·ism** /

Function: *noun*

Inflected Form(s): *plural* **cha·ris·ma·ta** *also* **charisms**

Etymology: Greek *charisma* favor, gift, from *charizesthai* to favor, from *charis* grace; akin to Greek *chairein* to rejoice -- more at [YEARN](#)

Date: circa 1641

1 : an extraordinary power (as of healing [or speaking in tongues]) given a Christian by the Holy Spirit for the good of the church

2 a : a personal magic of leadership arousing special popular loyalty or enthusiasm for a public figure (as a political leader) **b** : a special magnetic **charm** or appeal <the *charisma* of a popular actor>

APPENDIX B (under construction)

To access a collection of photos taken during this research project, please visit the Tufts University Digital Archives

The photographs will be in the Urban Borderlands section.

APPENDIX C

To access the audio recordings of interviews with Mireya Vasquez, Jocelyn Sierra, Carmen Figuera, and Paul Bothwell, please contact Profesora Deborah Pacini-Hernandez at the Tufts University College of Arts and Sciences Anthropology Department.

APPENDIX D

Interview Reports

Tufts University

Race, Povert, and the Evangelical Church in Cambridge

General Topic: secular non-profit work in the Latino community of Lawrence, Massachusetts

LECTURER: Jorge Santiago

INTERVIEWER: Elizabeth Butler

DATE: March, 2003

PLACE: Child Devolpment Bldg Library
College Ave.
Tufts University
Medford, Massachusetts

PERSONAL DATA:

TAPE: no audio available

Occupation: Professor, Dean
Northern Essex Community College
Lawrence, MA
Office phone: (978) 738-7601

Tufts University

Race, Poverty, and the Evangelical Church in Cambridge

General Topic of Interview: the history and current activity of Iglesia Bautista Central

NARRATOR: Elba "Mireya" Vasquez

INTERVIEWER: Elizabeth Butler

DATE: April 16, 2003

PLACE: Jocelyn Sierra's apartment
Charles Bank Apartments
Longwood
Boston, MA

PERSONAL DATA:

TAPE: #1

Occupation: Fidelity Bank

Member and Leader at IBC

Home phone: 781-324-4807

Cell phone: 617-650-3321

Tufts University

Race, Poverty, and the Evangelical Church in Cambridge

General Topic of Interview: the history and current activity of Iglesia Bautista Central

NARRATOR: Jocelyn Sierra

INTERVIEWER: Elizabeth Butler

DATE: April 16, 2003

PLACE: Jocelyn Sierra's apartment
Charles Bank Apartments
Longwood
Boston, MA

PERSONAL DATA:

TAPE: #2

Occupation: Harvard Public Health
Member and Leader at IBC

Home phone: 617-731-9725

Cell phone: 617-365-6639

Tufts University

Race, Poverty, and the Evangelical Church in Cambridge

General Topic of Interview: faith-based mobilization for policy welfare change

PANELIST: Lee Stewart

INTERVIEWER: Elizabeth Butler

DATE: April 28 2003

PLACE: Andersen Building
Tufts University
Medford, MA 02155

PERSONAL DATA:

TAPE: no audio available

Occupation: Greater Boston Interfaith Organization

307 Bowdoin St.

Dorchester, MA, 02122

Nehemiah Homes project

Office phone: 617-825-5600

Tufts University

Race, Poverty, and the Evangelical Church in Cambridge

General Topic of Interview: work/outreach of members of Iglesia Bautista Central, Carmen's personal story, working as a Christian at Centro Presente, the role of faith in service and community

NARRATOR: Carmen Figueroa

INTERVIEWER: Elizabeth Butler

DATE: April 30, 2003

PLACE: Centro Presente
54 Essex St.
Cambridge, MA 02139

PERSONAL DATA:

TAPE: #3

Occupation: Lawyer
Member and Leader at IBC
Home phone: 617-522-1434
Centro Presente: 617-497-9080

Tufts University

Race, Poverty, and the Evangelical Church in Cambridge

General Topic of Interview: beginnings of contemporary Latino churches (recent-last 40 years) in Cambridge, and greater Boston, Mission to the Americas, the two handed Gospel

NARRATOR: Carmen Figueroa

INTERVIEWER: Elizabeth Butler

DATE: May 7, 2003

PLACE: Iglesia Bautista Central Offices
Putnam and Magazine St.
Cambridge, MA 02139

PERSONAL DATA:

TAPE: #4

Occupation: Mission to the Americas-Urban Director
Curriculum developer and Director for URBACAD
Office Phone: 617-576-2651
Bothwellmta@juno.com

APPENDIX E
TRANSCRIPTIONS

DATE: May 7, 2003

NARRATOR: Paul Bothwell

**-founding inner-city church planter
-Mission to the Americas
-founding part of the Dudley St.
Neighborhood Initiative
-director of MTA's URBACAD**

INTERVIEWER: Elizabeth Butler

LOCATION: Cambridgeport Baptist Church Offices

CONTACT INFO: bothwellmta@juno.com

TRANSCRIPTION:

Elizabeth: Well hi, Paul, my name is Elizabeth Butler and today is May 7, 2003, and I'd like to thank you for agreeing to do this interview with me for the Latino Oral Studies, and I'd just like to get your verbal permission that it's ok to use this interview in the research paper and the transcription in the digital archives at Tufts. Do you agree to that?

Paul: Sure, yes, I do.

Elizabeth: Great; well the first thing I'd like to ask you is your full name?

Paul: Paul Bothwell; and we're being—we're talking here and meeting at work, this is with Mission to the Americas (MTA); my office in Cambridge, 459 Putnam Ave. in Cambridge; I live in Roxbury, but I work here.

Elizabeth: So the first thing I'd like to ask is how you've come to be involved with MTA?

Paul: Well I've been working in the Greater Boston area here with MTA for well over 25 years. I came to college in the 60s and the early 70s when those were wild radical times, and I was—a couple of reasons—kind of the worst or the best or whatever you want to call them—kind of the political radicalism. And then after that some more turbulent and tumultuous years, before ending up wonder of wonders, coming to Boston to go to seminary. So I came to Boston here to go to seminary, and during that time I became involved in ministry in the city, or the church in the city, and ministry in the city. After you finish in seminary, and I felt like well what am I going to do, and I felt like this represented and organization and was the kind of place I wanted to be connected with. Because it had to do with the city, a neighborhood in the city. It had to do with the establishing and extending of the kingdom of God in the city, and it had a lot to do with the power of the church in the city. And there are some good things, and rare, that are very costly things going on, in terms of the life and the work of the church in the city. And so I felt like it was a place I wanted to get involved with. So I got involved with them, to do urban ministry.

Elizabeth: And how did you first hear about MTA?

Paul: Well it's connected to the Conservative Baptist Denomination. And off and on I've been related to them. I was born and grew up in Africa, in the Congo. My parents were missionaries there so I lived there until I was almost 16 (15-16), and we were there with the Baptists, so in my wild years I swore I would never ever enter the building Baptist, or the church, or with God for that matter, and you know wonder of wonders, as the years went on I got involved with MTA, which is sort of the missionary arm, you know, to North and Central America, geographically speaking. So the "home of home missions" as opposed to foreign missions. Kind of our home for Baptists, so that's kind of the connector.

Elizabeth: And you said you attended seminary in Boston? Where did you go to seminary?

Paul: Well I went to Gordon-Conwell Seminary, and was incensed that it was out in the middle-of-nowhere, you know where it is, out in Wenham, and Beverly there...North Shore. And the fact that it was so unconnected to the city—and so a bunch of others that were there at the same time as I, and I and a bunch of others who were there at the same time, really just sort of turned the place upside down there, and you know sort of pushed for and demanded you know a constructive...[component]...be put into place an Urban Campus, you know not only sort of just a campus, but a center where all of us could come, and it's been here now for 25 years almost. It's called C.U.M.E.—the Center for Urban Ministerial Education, which is a very solid and well-reknowned Urban ministerial education. So for, city pastors and church leaders of many languages, many kinds, many traditions...so it was a very solid group once, so we you know we'd ring people's necks kind of institutionally, we had them set up kind of thing. So I was there probably the third year within the city here, and then continued on from there.

Elizabeth: So that became while you were there a subset of Gordon-Conwell Seminary—CUME?

Paul: Yes, yeah it's part of Godon-Conwell.

Elizabeth: Um, so then you were in the city, and once you graduated from seminary you just signed on with MTA at that time?

Paul: Well we did; then you have to raise support, you know kind of a faith mission kind of thing, and all , so it was a year and a half of raising support before we got started here—at least in full time ministry. We were connect during that time during seminary and during that time, with a small church in the South End called the South End Neighborhood Church of Emmanuel (SENCE). Still coming along, but anyway we got involved in that church. That church's vision was to reproduce itself, to see itself—to contribute to church expansion, the planting of other new churches in other new communities of need in places where churches were needed. And so our first assignment, my wife and I and our family, our first sort of job and the first placement we went up, settled in, and were sent by that church to Roxbury, we lived in Roxbury there, to plant another new church there, where some of the people from that area that were going to SE Church, so people kind of went back to their own neighborhoods so to speak, to establish a church there. So I pastored that church for 7 years, almost 8. Others were doing the same thing during that time, and so it was the beginning of the work of the church that began to be established in the city and in Providence and Lawrence. It was during that time when we began to grow a leadership development program, or a ministry training program as we call it, called URBACAD, it's short for Urban Academy. But it was during that time that we had to, we desperately had to design and build some sort of learning institute program that put sort of regular old people right off the street, you know, in sort of long term discipleship, and leadership development and ministry training. And by that we're not meaning "the ministry—vocational" only just to live a life of ministry. So that's where URBACAD got started during that time.

Elizabeth: So just a couple things, the church in Roxbury was called what?

Paul: Jesus Helps Neighborhood Baptist Church

Elizabeth: And about what year was it you moved to Roxbury?

Paul: 77 we moved there. The church was started in that year.

Elizabeth: And you pastored there how many years?

Paul: 7.

Elizabeth: And then you pastored at another church?

Paul: Well I was overseeing pastoring pastors, you know the churches, so I would sort of pastor with them for a while and so I was kind of overseeing pastors.

Elizabeth: And what were those other churches?

Paul: Well one of them was right here; this one in Cambridge. This is one that had declined, you know, very badly in what was so typical a way in kind of old big famous churches, and this one had declined to about literally 6 or 7 people who had no idea what to do, they kind of went through one inter-rim pastor after another...one room in the basement...and eventually when they sort of got connected with these new flourishing churches that were being planted, you know with the whole MTA team, and they finally were able to see that there were possibilities here that they hadn't thought of, mainly that they would the sort of thing to do was just sort of disband, and just took out the life of this church which was Emmanuel Baptist Church, one of the big churches on Magazine St. in Cambridge; so they disbanded the church and gave the building and you know the parsonage and so forth to MTA, on the condition that they were able to send new church planters over here to start over again. So one church ended on the condition that it was the seed for new churches started up over here, with them related to who was here now and what it was like here now. So I was part of the team that was over here, planting the church. So here we started an English and Spanish congregation at the same time. There's a history to that. We begun by that time to sort of plant multiple language/cultural congregations if it was possible physically, you know space-wise, and they all grew faster, and they all grew faster. So we started here with an English and Spanish congregation.

Elizabeth: So each of those languages grow faster...?

Paul: Each of those churches grows faster and is stronger than it would be alone. That is with just a Spanish church or just an English church or just a Haitian Creole church. Again spacewise permitting, there's something more than invigorating...there's something...it's really sort of powerful planting multiple congregations in the same place in the same time. They really do feed one another in terms of vitality, and creativity, and strength and stability and vision and the ability to maximize outreach and the multiple things that they are able to do.

Elizabeth: So the Emmanuel Church Disbanded in what year?

Paul: It disbanded in 82; I came over here in 84—they had already started.

Elizabeth: And it became Cambridgeport Baptist at that point?

Paul: The English congregation was Cambridgeport Baptist church, the Spanish congregation was Iglesia Bautista Central.

Elizabeth: So I noticed on your web-page that MTA is actually based in Denver; how broad is the organization and how did it end up in Boston and Cambridge, specifically?

Paul: Well it's...broad based. It's a national entity. Based up til very recently in the Chicago area. So it has about...this is the sort of fundraiser thing you know at the end of 2000 (shows brochure), it's a bulletin has things about...it just sort of illustrates the 4 or 5 dimensions of this thing. One is working internationally with those in Central America and in Canada. So through church planting and really other things internationally.

There's campus ministries all over the U.S., Central America, and Canada as well, Urban Ministries of different types and different kinds of focus that are very costly—ministry to and among the urban poor—the really poor—the people who used to be called the “disenfranchised” and so forth, which are the really poor parts of urban areas that are so often not ... (inaudible)...in places like this one here Cambridgeport/Emmanuel Baptist and many many others and not only Baptist. And then there's church planting teams and systems all over the metropolitan areas all over the US and Central America, and then this new ministry center was in Denver...moving into the so-called InnerCity of Denver. And I mean it's, we're not making fun of it...it certainly is a smaller city and a very different kind. Nonetheless, it was a conscious decision to move there as opposed to the suburbs where everyone else was moving into. So it's you know got several dimensions to it of ministry of sort of different kinds. But it is a national organization. And it's been around since the 50s and for the first 25 years or so of it's life had a tremendous visionary director that was WOW just sort of solid, hardly politicized ministry in the city when that was the dimensions, but also somebody like that was...could just sort of attract wild, risk-taking radicals like nothing else. It really is interesting, and there was very little of that at the time, let me tell you. It was probably before you were born!

Elizabeth: Probably! What was his name?

Paul: Rufus Jones. Yeah sort of a real legend. We got not only our denomination, there were just different Christian communities...he had a lot to do with the forming of the National Association of Evangelicals entity. He always was on the board of the National Black um Evangelical Association or something like that—really traditional black churches in the US. And other things; so part of transcending our own back yard here. So you were asking how I got connected to Boston here, and the reason here I think was again what part of MTA was interested in and determined to be doing was sort of “reviving” I'm going to say “reviving” the church in the city. And that is a little bit ludicrous, I realize, that is you've got that sort of illustrates that you're coming from a certain perspective of thinking, that is sort of the 50s and the 60s that the church...I'm saying that the White church had been fleeing like mad from the cities as white people had been fleeing from the cities and “taking the church with them”. And so those people flocked to the suburbs because the cities were getting bigger and “oh they were such a bad place and filled with all these people of color and all these immigrants and all these who knows what” and you know on and on, so the church just fled. And there was this mass exodus of white churches from the cities in the 50s and 60s including Boston here, such that in Boston the number of churches went down within a decade from 400 (which even isn't that big or that many churches for a city this size) from 400 to 100. which was just incredible. Of course the 100 that had been here all along and weren't going anywhere; black churches, Latino churches, a few other kinds, but you know the ones that couldn't move out and didn't and wouldn't. They weren't able to even if they wanted to. And so we're talking sort of about “reviving the church in the city” which is somewhat ludicrous because the Church never left the city, the church was still alive and strong, but sort of reviving the nature of—reviving awareness in the city for one thing, you know among white people from earlier from white church—reviving Church planting in the city. The renewing and reestablishment of the church in the city. So MTA was a tremendous forerunner in that, and hardly anybody else was doing that and

we took a lot of heat, abuse from the Christian community for this ridiculous notions of “planting churches in America” you know “I mean what we do is we plant churches overseas, we go everywhere else, we don’t need to plant churches in our own cities for crying out loud”. So MTA was at the forefront of sort of political activism coupled with realistic dynamic view of the church in the city. By the way there was one other person who was here already with MTA, Ralph Kee, maybe you’ve seen or met him—K-E-E—he was someone who had begun the South End church and that was one of the...so he was part of that church. Others were part of that church who ended up her in ministry as well. So he sort of was a magnet here for...

Elizabeth: Going back to the South End church, was that the church that Pastor Vergara ended up pastoring eventually?

Paul: Well that’s where he first began, then he was here. So the South End church, that was one of the things I was going to draw quickly for you (refer to digital picture: Reestablishing the Church in the City, Appendix B)

1971- South End Neighborhood Church of Emmanuel

1977-Paul plants Jesus Helps Community Church in Roxbury

1978-Dorchester church plant

1979-Dorchester plants a church in Elmwood District of Providence, Rhode Island

These four churches out of desperate need, wondered “how are these churches going to survive on anything other than pastoral heroics?” How do you build people? How do you disciple them? How do you build solid, capable, courageous leaders in the church? So that people will not only survive, but the church will grow and reproduce itself, but how do you do that? It just was not the—there was nothing that helped us at the time.

So it was during this time when we developed URBACAD...(inaudible)...those four churches really helped the initial shape URBACAD which we learned from overseas...(inaudible) People from Argentina for several years who helped us from their experience develop a whole training program here that was very much like South America. And so that really helped us—the reason we began to move these churches forward and was enabled this church planting effort in order to sort of progress much more strongly and more broadly than was happening only with the missionaries.

So for example then by 1981 or so, the South End church had been led to and been brought to a place where it was able to establish a Spanish congregation because there community of people had been increasingly Hispanic, and so it was hard not to get on it...(inaudible)...So about 81 or so they’d established a congregation there which was led by this Juan Vergara who had come from Puerto Rico with his wife here (she was finishing/working on her doctoral degree at BU). So then by 19 (that was in 81 or so) but by 82 that’s when (inaudible)...each of these churches...(inaudible)...sent people over to this church (CBC/IBC) to plant churches over here and shortly after that...(inaudible)...a

Haitian Creole church as well. And, so we began to get better at that, and then these churches were getting used to the English, and began to move over into East Boston. It was Italian at that time. And this church was able to help revive a church in Lowell, a dying church on the Fall River. So Fall River was able to renew its vision and plant a sister church... (inaudible) a Portuguese congregation, which was predominantly Portuguese speaking. And that church... (inaudible)... planted another in New Bedford. People from here (Fall River) uummm... there are connections that go through network wise... (inaudible)... and clusters continue to grow... This church IBC that was a planted church, planted a church in Lawrence, one in Brockton, one in Everett, one in East Boston, and then when this church and the IBC which moved and became Lion of Judah... (inaudible)... and as it was moving there, they quickly planted a new one here, which was the new IBC so there was a carnation there. These churches (Lawrence, Brockton, Everett, East Boston) together ended up planting more, so the generations go on and the church in Everett and the one in Brockton together planted new IBC here and one in Malden, and Melrose. There was 5 or six different languages, so you can see the fabric how something grows, where churches are learning how to reproduce themselves and do it well and do it with indigenous leadership... (inaudible)... So we've learned more about equipping people's lives for ministry and people's networks. Now, I don't know if that related to what you were talking about.

Elizabeth: Oh that related to everything.

Paul: Here's a quarterly bulletin thing, but this one has to do with Latino ministry and how again the percentages of Hispanic peoples in the US have grown and grown (in audible) and so forth. These are some of the people that are again MTA personnel that are working among Hispanics and most of them are Hispanics themselves... (inaudible).

Elizabeth: Well I do have one question, and this may be a little scattered: I actually have read a book as part of the research called *Divided By Faith*, have you ever heard of it?

Paul: Yes, sorry to say.

Elizabeth: Exactly, so according to their research something like 90% of Christian Evangelicals are white, and um, and I...

Paul: Are white?

Elizabeth: Mmhhh.

Paul: Ok.

Elizabeth: And as a result, there's kind of become this racialized society that gets played out in religion and segregated churches and what not. So I was really excited and surprised when you were talking about Rufus Jones being black and being on the National Association for Evangelicals, because that's very encouraging. So one of the things that I'm focusing my paper on specifically is how evangelicals can work to change the existing policies that exist politically, to kind of do the two-handed Gospel

thing... more than just having soup-kitchens type thing. So I was just wondering exactly how Mission to the Americas is doing about it here, and what you've found being successful and unsuccessful and in reaching out particularly to minorities, Latinos or African-Americans?

Paul: Well, I think that uh—let's see where to jump into that--I think in the book it talks about painful, awful manifestations of the nature of institutionalized, in this case, racism. That is that people can say nice things, and mean them, and can talk about "all my best friends are black", tolerate one another, in fact laud one another, but in terms of just sort of institutionally there've got to be infrastructurally, you know the framework of the church that is the Christian community, to say nothing of the world and sort of the secular institutionalism, that it does not know how to, and perhaps doesn't care to change. That calls for really massive, deliberate, very intentional systemic change. And uh, my sense is that the church, the white church at least has done nothing but reflect the nature of society as opposed to defy it and live about something different. And live about something different, so there's this kind of reflecting, same kind of ritual and kind of class divide as society. Well I think that just defies any Biblical notion at all; it's not only ridiculous, it's not only sad, it's not only—it's immoral, it's ungodly, and it is in defiance of what God wants and what the church ought to be—there is no divide between the nature of evangelical faith and a life of holiness and obedience to Christ and so forth. There's no divide between that and kind of social activism and the renewing/the redeeming of society, the redeeming of the world, of the city. There is no divide between those. You would say that there is, looking at what you see with your eyes. But there simply isn't any divide between those. And there's Rufus Jones and others who were really courageous prophets in a really bad time in the history of the church as well as the history of our society in the US. They were prophets of a very different gospel, and prophets of a different structure and fabric of society and the church, and we could not, would not, must not, cannot abide by that. So these churches in the city all over, not only here in Boston, but again the ones that I would know best are in Boston, whether New York or Chicago or Miami or Los Angeles, they were very very different churches in that regard, that is they were always right in the middle of the cities. They were all in very poor communities, very disenabled, they were all among peoples of color, although they were mixed as the churches. And that was the intent, it wasn't by accident. They had to be doing that intentionally. And that's one thing that this whole growing cluster began here in the Greater Boston area, as well as across the US and across North America, but that's one of the things that's a very die hard value that we live by, and that is: these churches will be and must be sort of truly urban churches that not only reflect who is there in that community, but in fact they are and they will be led by and be under the control of whoever the people are that are there. That they'll be under black leadership or under Hispanic leadership or African-American or black. And that the whole cluster and community of clusters will be owned by the churches, owned by, run by, and shaped by those churches. Ok so I don't know that that's stating it that well, but there has to be a severe intentionality about that or it doesn't happen, or it's not sustainable, and they start out one way but then it's constantly renewing the vision—keeping the fires going...(inaudible).

Elizabeth: One question, with URBACAD, how exactly when you're outreaching to communities, and training leaders to outreach to their communities, what are they trained for in terms of not only the Word of God evangelism, but also generosity, compassion, mercy type giving evangelism, because I think it's all one evangelism that has been somehow split over the years?

Paul: Well I think, for better or worse (in my perspective it's better) and as I have been directing URBACAD since we've been shaping it in the beginning, that it really reflects my perspective and my perspective has been shaped certainly by who I am coming into it, but also by my living and working in Roxbury, and particularly my involvement with DSNI, which is Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative. So this DSNI is 15 years old or so, but it's this big, powerhouse community organization that is really a leader in the field and in the whole world. There's folks that have written about it, in the news, documentaries have been made about it—it's an entity, this movement of people/the residents for the residents of that community of four different languages and four different cultures have worked over these years very hard to build, to rebuild that community in a way that is determined by, led by, and controlled by the community. Because it is us, the people in that community, that organize—tremendous organizing that goes on all the time—it's we who organize, it's we who plan for, it's we who create, and it's we who control this vibrant, high-quality, diverse community collaboration of community part of it. So I helped to found that group when I was pastoring the Jesus Helps church, so that church was a key part of the founding of DSNI. And so I've been actively involved with DSNI ever since then. And when we talk about there's been tremendous journey that has me and everybody else in that community highly active, highly politicized, highly going all the time in the ability to obtain or to get power and use power for the common good. So I've been highly influenced by that as well as highly giving to it. But I've been highly influenced by that. But needless to say that has had something to do with the shape of URBACAD.

Elizabeth: Definitely for the better.

Paul: And so URBACAD, I have different fliers on that too, but there's this approach to learning that we learned from South America at the time. It's an approach that is used T.E.E. around the world. And that's Theological Eduational and by Extension. It was born in the early 60s and over several decades it garnered tremendous effectiveness, tremendous power worldwide. Mainly it's the process of taking theological education with training by extension, that is taking the learning to the learners as opposed to the learners who do everything and come to school somewhere or another. So it really was very very novel and unheard of approach in missions and in theological education worldwide. And it really has influenced the nature of education period world-wide. And that's just one of those concepts that have influenced the nature of education, education not only in the church but just education. So liberation theology and all that kind of thing--it was the empowering of people where they are to be capable, creative, courageous, people of God. And so you're sort of decentralizing the learning process so that everyone has access to it, and then it's highly integrated into life. But then it's been shaping URBACAD in that it's a program where learning is set to resume all these

churches that we talked about, Portuguese or Creole or whatever language. A learning group of each church...

END TAPE SIDE A

...keeping churches inter-connected. They're all involved in the same kind of highly directional, highly intentional learning and growing of the people in the churches, and they're doing it together. So that sort of is one element of it. The other element is that learning from T.E.E. and from other parts of the world, that's built in such a way that everything about it (inaudible) are always integrating learning through "head-heart-hand"—English is nice because it's all H's; other languages use other things—but learning, the act of learning must, must be evidenced by you must be seeing physical, long-term changes, in "head-heart-hands" (inaudible) thinking, acting, and being that affect life around you. So that's sort of a formal definition. But the learning process really must be resulting in visible, long-term, and short-term change in people's lives and in churches in thinking-head, acting—hands, being—heart...so growing in knowledge of the Bible, why we use it there's tremendous usage of head, but then it must make a difference in heart, mainly character. Christ-like character. We must be becoming someone different, someone new, and if it's not visible and if we don't see changes then don't tell me it's happening because it's not happening. And so that's built into the program. And then this issue of hands—that is you must be using them, you must be doing something with them—what are you doing with them? What is its impact? Not only on you, but on your family, on your church, on your community, on the prison/Criminal justice system or wherever you're involved. Is there an impact? Is it being seen or is it not? And so in the body and in the learning; are we learners all the time involved in cognitive development. And so we work in books and so forth every week, work in the Bible, every week. As well we're working on spiritual growth goals every week. Working with hands and ministry and practical ministry and so forth all the time. So they start off with little tiny things and they get bigger and bigger and then they develop into their own projects, but then all these are monitored all the time, in that sort of integrative nature is all the time a part of this whole thing, such there is just simply not those divisions you know between oh this is the gospel...this is something else...this is salvation...this is something else. That's not what this is about. That's not what life is about. That's not what the church is about. And we have to institutionalize that in a way that's very visible, and that struggling is keeping that alive and real.

Elizabeth: So I guess my last question is, how is Iglesia Bautista Central involved in the URBACAD right now?

Paul: Well it's very little involved; not much.

Elizabeth: And are there any plans for the future?

Paul: Oh yeah sure there are. And others of the Spanish churches are involved with URBACAD right now, and with English churches, Haitian Creole, French. IBC here has not, the first three years of the church here with the Church planting pastor who happens

to be not here anymore (inaudible)...After Roberto Miranda was the pastor here (inaudible)...Jose Luis was pastor until 2001, so it's been a year and a half that he's been gone. The interim pastor is doing a very fine job. But in this time the URBACAD usage sort of declined, so it's not good, but I know the Inter-rim pastor has sort of taken (inaudible) and said "hey you can't kind of keep floating for long, for this long" and so he's just—you know in March new officers were elected and then this and that, so he's eager to jump back in and get people going. So there's only one learning group here at the moment.

Elizabeth: So a learning group would come and meet with you?

Paul: When people are in learning groups it at this church, this church, and this church—anywhere from 5-12 people you know in a learning group...(inaudible) with this topic, this topic, and this topic. What is the work of deacons and elders? Or Community Development, sometimes general topics or more specific needs. So these learning groups are led by group leaders, and my job is training the group leaders then there's a facilitator in all of these learning groups.

Elizabeth: OK.

Paul: Over at Lion of Judah, they have as many as 250 people at any given time that are involved in URBACAD. They're always coming.

Elizabeth: The HERC ministry at Lion of Judah, is that related to URBACAD?

Paul: URBACAD certainly has been influential in just sort of contributing to the thinking over the years in the nature of how do you keep people growing, I guess learning and growing, and where does it go? Where are people going with this? Do people really have power? Are they really growing in the ways that significantly impact the church? And how are they growing in life? Because people were coming through high school and not even making it high school. And once they're through high school are they going to college? Are they even thinking about college? Most of them don't stay in college (inaudible). So URBACAD through the Emmanuel Gospel Center really had a lot to do with the establishing of what was called the Boston Educational Collaborative, and out of the BEC, one of the arms out of that is the HERC program. Funded in the Pew Foundation, so the HERC centers have grown out of the BEC, and I'm a part of that, the BEC. And the HERC centers and they're whole ministry is not directly related with URBACAD, but it's in the sense of sort of life as a whole, it's a different dimension that's trying to do the same thing.

Elizabeth: Well thank you so much for your time! END INTERVIEW.

DATE: April 9, 2002

NARRATOR: Elba "Mireya" Vasquez

-member, Iglesia Bautista Central

INTERVIEWER: Elizabeth Butler

LOCATION: Charles Bank Apartments, Longwood area

CONTACT INFO: Elba.Vasquez@fmr.com

TRANSCRIPTION:

Elizabeth: So Hi Mireya, my name is Liz Butler and I'm just going to interview you to ask questions about your experience in the in Cambridge Latino faith community, Massachusetts, and I just need to verbally get your permission to use this in research for an Anthropology class project through at Tufts University, so do I have your full permission to use this tape?

Mireya: Yes you do.

Elizabeth: And I'll just start by asking you for your full name.

Mireya: Elba Mireya Vasquez.

Elizabeth: And when and where were you born?

Mireya: Tegucigalpa Honduras on September 27, 1972.

Elizabeth: And over the years where have you attended school?

Mireya: Just here in the states?

Elizabeth: Oh starting from the beginning.

Mireya: I went to school in Honduras until the age of 10. Then that's when we moved to the US and were in Florida for maybe like 3 months where I went to school there which was fourth grade, and then we came to the Boston area and from there that's where I've been really in school. I went to middle school here and then high school and then I went to a two year college and got my associates degree and now I'm going sort-of part time on and off to finish my undergrad.

Elizabeth: And what are the names of those schools here?

Mireya: For my middle school it was William Howard Taft, that was in Brighton, I went for my MS then for HS I went one year to English High, and then the last 3 years of HS I went to Boston technical HS, and then I went to Bay State College in Boston. And part time I'm going to Northeastern.

Elizabeth: And are you currently working?

Mireya: I am.

Elizabeth: And where do you work?

Mireya: I work with Fidelity Investments.

Elizabeth: And what do you do for Fidelity?

Mireya: I am a information associate. I basically—there's a department for the equity research dept and we have sort of an info center where we are basically just support to all the equity managers, so any type of research that they're looking for that's what we're there for, to provide them and facilitate them with less information, you know they have to funnel through so much information so the more narrow information and sort of geared to their research we give them.

Elizabeth: And you mentioned you moved from the FL area to the BOS area? Why did you decide to move?

Mireya: Well my Mom had/has a sister living in Miami and so initially we came there and so my Mom was looking for work there but it was sort of hard in the _____ for her to find something permanent and you know she had to pay for school you know and be there for us, and so the reason why we moved to Boston was because at that time she had a friend who lived here in Boston who sort of told her you know if you come here with your kids there's more opportunity and also you don't you know Boston Public Schools are free...you would be better off, so she figured, she'd try it.

Elizabeth: And specifically where in Boston have you lived? Have you lived in multiple places or just the same place?

Mireya: Um most of the time I lived in Allston, I would say a good part of the 20 years that we've been in the states has been in Boston. We moved in one year to Randolph, I mean to Quincy, for one year but then we came back to Allston.

Elizabeth: Ok.

Mireya: And now I live in Malden, and I've been there for about 7 months now.

Elizabeth: Ok and so you mentioned that your mother brought you to the US and the rest of your family is here with you? Or still in Honduras?

Mireya: Um my brother and my mom they live here in Boston, then my dad and aunts and uncles are back in Honduras.

Elizabeth: When you first came to the United States were you or your mother or your brother, were any of you Christian already? Or were you non-Christian?

Mireya: Uh we were non, in Honduras we used to go to a Catholic church, and then it wasn't til just before we were coming to the United States that my mom sort of started seeking you know sort of like a change in church. So I know in Honduras she visited a couple of churches, but we weren't really committed to the Christian church.

Elizabeth: So how did the three of you end up eventually, in terms of attending church?

Mireya: Well it was through—what happened was my mom when we came to the States the reason why we were coming was because she was splitting up with my dad. And so when that happened of course that brought a lot of stress and depression to her and she was very sad and stuff. And so when we came to Boston that was even a more stronger reason to sort of seek God because she was you know, sort of you could say, a single mother here in the US, didn't know the language, and so you know she wanted to have a community I guess and so she had already to seek that and back home she actually wanted to find something here. So what happened there was that one day we were watching TV and we were watching a Christian sort of Jimmy Swaggart show and so she called, she asked me to call (cause at that time I already spoke English) she asked me to call and see if they had somebody that could speak Spanish for prayer. And so I called, they put somebody on the phone and then the person who actually spoke to her was the founding pastor of the church that we currently attend. So that's sort of how we go to the church that we attend now.

Elizabeth: oh ok. So your mom became Christian after that phone call?

Mireya: Yes, um we started basically, what happened was that after that phone call the person who was on the phone of course who was from Boston, even though the show we were watching was somewhere else, you know he took all my mom's information down. I think within that week, he and a couple of other people from his congregation came to our home and decided to visit us. And you know they basically arranged so that—you know we didn't have any transportation to get to church, somebody could come pick us

up. Um so we started attending Iglesia Bautista Central in Cambridge. It was very close to our home, probably about 10 minutes ride. And so it wasn't until maybe a year after we were attending church that you know my brother was actually the one who first decided that he wanted to accept Christ in his life and that he wanted to also get baptized, and at the same time, right around the same time, my mom wanted to do the same; she felt that you know she was ready for that. And I know that it's not until now after so many years where I've grown up that I know that what I've made—I also sort of decided ok I want to do the same just like my mom and my brother um at that time I was 12. so I think I didn't really have a lot of maturity of what I was doing, but I just didn't want to be left out. So I said "Yes I want to accept Christ." I mean I saw that everything that was going on in the church—I liked it. I felt really comfortable there, I was very happy. You know I had new friends from church and everything. So you would say that that's the first time that I sort of sort of opened my heart to at least what I thought was opening my heart to God. But it wasn't until my early 20s that I really made more of a serious commitment to Christ.

Elizabeth: So about what year was that when you were 12?

Mireya: That was around 1984.

Elizabeth: And what exactly, if you remember or not that's fine, what kind of services were offered then? Was it just Sunday service or were there other things that went on during the week?

Mireya: Yeah they had um there were Bible studies in the middle of the week that we used to go to and they mostly had mostly Sunday school, Sunday school and Sunday service, and we used to attend those.

Elizabeth: And was there any kind of networking through the church that maybe helped people learn English or um get more into the community?

Mireya: Not that I remember, no.

Elizabeth: And about how large was the congregation when you first joined? This is at IBC.

Mireya: I would say back in 1983-84 which is when we started visiting the church, I would say the congregation was maybe about 80 to 90 people.

Elizabeth: And you were saying that you lived about 10 minutes away from the church; did you find that most of your new friends in the church were also living close by? Or were people coming from all over?

Mireya: I think it—there was a mixture. There were some people from there, other people were from like Watertown or um Mission Hill or Jamaica Plain, Somerville.

Elizabeth: And so that was back in 1984.

Mireya: Uh huh.

Elizabeth: Back in 1984 and now almost 20 years later, what kind of changes has IBC been through? Start wherever you want!

Mireya: Yeah, I would say that you know that IBC, the old IBC as I now refer to it, has gone through a great deal of changes. Ummm just looking back at, I would say that from—actually IBC the original IBC started back in 1980. It started off from a home actually and just in the South End. People used to meet at a home, probably maybe about 20 people. And then from there about a year in 1982 is when they found the church building in Cambridge. So then it moved in 1982 to Cambridge. We started going there a year later in 83. And so that's the old IBC. IBC you know it was a traditional conservative Baptist church up til I would say around um 1991/92 when it sort of went through a new change. At that point I would say that the congregation was larger probably about 200/250 people so that in 10 years the congregation grew significantly. But at the same time that it was growing I think the good thing was that part of the congregation was open to more deeper relationship with God, and more deeper sort of charismatic style of worship. But half the congregation, you know, was not. And so it was sad to see that in 1993 there was sort of like a split of the congregation. You know those people that were not that they didn't agree with a new style or something different that was not conservative, basically decided that they wanted to leave the church and sort of create a new church cause what happened was that, just going back a little bit, um the pastor who founded IBC in 1980 and 82, he was a church planter. His name was Juan Vergara, he's passed away now. But, um you know that basically was his ministry, planting churches so he came to Boston in, at that time, probably a little bit early 80s, then he came here and he planted this church, so I think around probably around in 86 he went back to Puerto Rico with his family and his wife, and so the person who stayed behind to be the Pastor of IBC, we actually had maybe an interim pastor or a different pastor come to preach every Sunday. But um I believe that in 1985/86 Roberto Miranda who's the current pastor of Lion of Judah—he actually took responsibility for the church and the conservative Baptist association—what do you call it, you know when they dedicate the pastor and all?

Elizabeth: Uhhhh...I know what you mean, yeah.

Mireya: He's basically after going to school and stuff, he's...

Elizabeth: Ordained

Mireya: Ordained exactly that's the word I was looking for; thank you. Um he was ordained as the pastor of IBC, and so he was the current pastor when all this change came about, ummm and so by that time Pastor Juan Vergara wasn't here anymore, and so those people that were sort of more conservative and uh wanted to keep that same style of church called Juan Vergara (at this point he was now in Florida planting a different church because he went down to Puerto Rico and planted more churches there but then went to Florida to plant a few churches there). And basically they called him up and they

said you know “we don’t agree with what’s going on here; I think you should come and take a look.” He came and he didn’t think anything was wrong at the church. But it wasn’t until probably within a year that again, people were calling him again and saying you know why don’t you move back to Boston, we’re willing to support you in a new ministry and um you know and be there and that way we wouldn’t have to I guess see this happen in our old congregation. And I think that’s what happened. Basically Pastor Vergara came back to the Boston area in 1993 and um you know a good number of the congregation, well not a good number I would say maybe around 40 people, um left IBC the old IBC in 1993 and created Primera Iglesia Bautista of Everett. This is a church in Everett. And so they, they went over there, and me, personally, I stayed in Cambridge, I was happy there I (excuse me) didn’t have a problem with what was going on, but then a year later I decided to actually move to Primera Iglesia Bautista in Everett and the reason that I had in moving, and the reason that I had in moving it wasn’t because I didn’t like what was going on in my—the old IBC—it was more because the congregation had grown significantly and at that point sort of in my heart I wanted to serve God in a different ministry, more really hands-on—I didn’t want to be somebody just sitting and doing nothing, just a spectator—I wanted to do something. And so while, before the division came, I used to be part of a (the only ministry that I was involved in) in IBC was a singing group. Um our name was Nueva Creacion, New Creation, and so we had started that ministry I believe around 1986 and so we had been together for already a long time. And so half of those people went to the other congregation and so um me staying behind I couldn’t be part of that ministry anymore. And so I sort of missed being part of the ministry, uh and seeing that at IBC I—there wasn’t—because there were so many different—there were so many people there, there wasn’t really—I just didn’t feel that I, I had a place there anymore. And so I, you know during that year of transition, I was actually visiting both churches; I was in IBC but I was also visiting PIBE, I was just not getting involved, um but once I made the decision that I would go to PIBE, meaning Primera Iglesia Bautista of Everett, I um over there you know I went back and I started serving God in the worship ministry and maybe a year after being there I also got involved with the children’s Sunday-school ministry. So to—you know since it was a smaller congregation I think there was more opportunity for me to serve, and I think that’s what sort of you know motivated me to go over there.

Elizabeth: I was just going back a little, the Nueva Creacion ministry: what kinds of things did you all do? You were a singing group?

Mireya: Yeah, basically we used to—the director subscribed to you know different sort of music houses that he would get sort of all the music and then he would translate it to Spanish most of the time, and so once we would you know practice there was maybe 12 of us, we had like sopranos, you know altos, and basses, I don’t know if that’s how you say it in English, but...so we would do it in different voices. We would learn the song and then we would either sing at our local church but we also did—we went elsewhere, we went to different other churches where they used to invite us you know during special occasions or different things. So and we actually had we did actually a couple of evangelistic campaigns in Cambridge where we sort of had like in a park just basically concerts, so we did that as well with the group. So it was a really great ministry; I really felt that you know God would use us in different ways.

Elizabeth: Was there much response in the Cambridge area with kind of open-air ministry?

Mireya: Uhh I think there might have been. At this point I don't remember if there were um you know I don't have examples specific of people that from there came to our church. I know we did it several times; we used to try to do it a couple of times a year.

Elizabeth: And how do you feel like your own personal faith change kind-of in being a part of ministry there, as a youth and as someone who kind of came to be a Christian through your family?

Mireya: I think initially when I started the group I was just like 14/15. At that point, to be honest with you I don't think that I—I think I was there and I liked the fact that I could sing and the fact that I had a microphone in front of me and the fact that I was part of this group, but it wasn't until later until almost hitting my 20s that I realized you know, it's almost like all this time that I've been in church I felt like I was really just sort of living a religious life, not really knowing God, and not really going deeper—I could see everything around me, but you know, and my faith was there, but I just knew that God wanted more of me. There were things in my life that I needed to change: my personality, you know my conduct (conduct in some areas). I know that many—most of the teenage time it was very hard for me, because I wasn't—you know it was almost like one of my foots was in church and the other one was not even though I was part of this group. But I think at the same time what I did see that this ministry did for me, was basically sort of gave me a reality check, you know in the sense that it sort of gave me the opportunity to see that I couldn't play with God, that I needed to be serious about what I was doing, uh because if any—you know one of the things I was up there testifying and I was up there using God's name, and so many times it really brought me to my knees. And I and I was convicted of sin, and that God wanted something different of me, and that I couldn't be out there preaching what I was not living.

Elizabeth: So when you reached that place with the reality check, did you find many options from there? How did you decided which way to move with your faith after that point?

Mireya: You know I think I tried to probably with getting more involved again in church, and this is when I was already ok at the church in Everett, you know and I was teaching children, and I was also on the worship team there. But I think I wasn't seeking deeper, it was just, I mean it was better than before I would have to say because it was making me grow a little bit spiritually, but I still wasn't satisfied. But I think that—I mean I don't know what else besides what I was doing then was helping me; it wasn't really other—I didn't think about anything else outside of my home church.

Elizabeth: So um for you personally what happened between then and where you feel like you are now? How did you transition to that point where you can look back and say “this is how I was and maybe that wasn't right but now I understand and I'm to a different place”?

Mireya: Um I think it was—part of it has been you know most what I've seen around church, you know I think that has influenced a lot of who I am now because I guess in a way I was hoping you know with this whole division—I was in the middle of all that and I could recall how everything happened and the different things that—you know negative things within the church that to me was sad, and I think in a way it did turn me away, but at the same time I think it sort of brought me to the sense that this is not what God's people should be doing, and if I am part of God's people I should have a different attitude—I should be different and so there was this constant thought in my mind that there needs to be sort of like a radical change in my life. If I really want to be backed up by God with what I say and with what I do, you know if I want to grow spiritually, if I wanted to be a blessing to other people um there needed to be changes in my life. So it was almost like I couldn't continue to look outside; I needed to look within me and see you know one thing at a time, what is it in my life that's not making God happy.

Elizabeth: So you're at Primera Iglesia Bautista Everett, and then what happened?

Mireya: I was there for about 5 years and what happened then was that the old IBC that was back in Cambridge congregation went through a different change in the sense that they grew to a number that they couldn't fit in the building in the location where they were, but usually the attendance there was like 300/350, and the capacity for the sanctuary there was much smaller than that, so I think also that the congregation had a new vision for the, for the church and it was basically to move into the Boston area—come out of Cambridge, come to Boston, to a community that was really in need where they are and they ended up moving to Boston by 1997 and they're now by the Boston Medical Center. So that area out there is a lot of um you know a lot of low income...it's a low-income community, there's a big Hispanic community close by—the south end. There's great need there and I think you know the vision that the pastor Roberto had then was to really be the—to reach out to the community to reach out to the people that were really in need um and so they wanted to have/buy get a building, buy a new building, and have the new...build a new church to be able to even have different programs available—programs like childcare um you know resources for you know to help students for higher education and things that I have seen that have been able to happen. So that's basically what happened there, so that in 1997 um they decided to move out from Cambridge, one of the congregat—the English congregation in Cambridge, um Cambridgeport Baptist church is also part of Mission to the Americas (MTA), this association that has funding to plant churches all over America, and so um basically that Mission to the Americas said “we want to continue a Hispanic ministry here in Cambridge” so they got the idea to contact the Pastor (the founding pastor) of IBC, Juan Vergara, who was now in Everett, and asked him if he would be willing to you know plant this new congregation again in Cambridge or if he would be willing to be part of the body who's going to be seeking for a new pastor to plant this congregation. So that happened—all the planning happened like in 1997 as Lion of Judah (they changed their name—the old IBC changed their name to Lion of Juda/Leon de Judah) and so in 1997 Pastor Vergara started you know praying with the leaders back in Everett to see um how they could you know sort of build this new church back in Cambridge, and so I believe, because at the point Pastor Vergara actually became sick, um he wasn't—he knew that he wasn't going to be the one to pastor the church just because he was very weak, and so

they did find a pastor who had just graduated from a seminary in Guatemala, who um was for the summer had to come to visit you know a church in Brockton, so um you know he came and we heard him preach at Everett and so um several pastors really liked him and thought that he would be a good candidate, um so I guess he went through their process, and so once a decision was made to hire him as a pastor, actually several churches were involved in the new IB—building or planting the New IBC, those churches were the church in Everett, Mission to the Americas, and also Cambridgeport Baptist Church, and another church in Brockton and another church in Lawrence. Those churches and Mission to the Americas together really funded for the first three years of the life of IBC the new IBC—that would include you know building expense, salary for the pastor, and you know any other expenses for ministry for evangelism and things like that. So that—all that planning took place like in 1997 so like in January of 1998, a group of leaders from Everett decided to you know come to Cambridge and plant uh the new IBC as we called it back then, the new IBC, and so I know that at that point, I still lived in Allston, so from Allston to Cambridge was a shorter commute than from Allston to Everett so I ki—excuse me—I kind of considered that, but I also think that one of the things that motivated me to move back to Cambridge was the fact that we would be starting a new congregation, we would be starting right from the beginning; and it was just um to me it was just a challenge. To me it was something that I wanted to be part of, and so I, initially I was hesitant, and so I was sort of back in Everett but I was coming to Cambridge, and sort of like helping out in different areas, sometimes in worship, sometimes in children’s ministry. So that’s how I actually came back, I came back to the new IBC in Cambridge.

Elizabeth: So just going back a little, um so it’s the Cambridgeport Baptist Church that Iglesia Bautista Central... what is the relationship between the two?

Mireya: We are co-owners of our building, of our church, but I believe um our church even IBC and CBC and several other churches within the Boston area, one way or another they came from the they are linked to Mission to the Americas. They are also...

STOP TAPE (CHANGE SIDES)

Elizabeth: Ok so I think you were just saying, sorry about the tape stopping there, you were just talking about Mission to the Americas, and several churches in the area...

Mireya: Yeah there’s um there’s a ministry or I don’t know what it’s called but I believe it’s Boston Urban Cluster of Churches um and it’s headed by different leaders within the Boston area, and so in some way or another we’re always trying to stay like a community of churches through this cluster and so um I believe that that’s how the relationship continues.

Elizabeth: So that’s a Latino organization of churches?

Mireya: Um no. Not necessarily Latino. It’s got several Latino churches in it; but it’s a conservative Baptist, it comes from the conservative Baptist association.

Elizabeth: And um, if you know anything about this at all...when um IBC became Lion of Judah and moved downtown to Boston, did many people from the Cambridge area move to downtown Boston, or did many people stay in Cambridge to plant the new IBC?

Mireya: It's funny that you ask that question because initially I think several people that I knew from Lion of Judah, several people that I knew that were either living in Cambridge or were closer to the Cambridge area, when I used to talk to them about their move to Boston they used to say "oh well we're not sure if we're going to move because it's a totally different area there, it's not a safe area, I don't know if I want to be there," but it was surprising, it was a good thing in a way, to see that most of those people that had said that actually did move. And they felt I think—the fact that, Lion of Judah almost took about 4 years to build their building, to get their building ready, so I think in those four years Pastor Miranda really shared the vision to the congregation and really I think the Spirit really put that burden on people's heart to really support this vision and to support that ministry and I think that's why most, I would say 98% of his congregation then moved to the Boston congreg—to the Boston church. I would say maybe we had a couple of people that started the new IBC with us that's you know visiting, but I think shortly after that either they moved or they moved elsewhere. At that point the church was beginning.

Elizabeth: And um just kind of a random point of interest...you mentioned this kind of cluster of churches that are connected all over the Boston area, um are there functions that happen where a majority of Latino church in the Boston area, like knowing that cluster isn't Latino affiliated, is there another method by which Latino churches in the Boston area kind of get together, any big events that happen during the year...?

Mireya: I think there are; I'm not too familiar with them.

Elizabeth: Ok so um in that change when you moved back to the new IBC, what kinds of things were going on with your faith personally, that you felt called to start a new congregation versus attending this wonderful new downtown church with the other 98%; what made you stay?

Mireya: Um because I wasn't really part of the old IBC or Lion of Judah I was coming from Everett; the reason why I went to the new IBC was my whole um, my whole perspective about me wanting to serve God and have the opportunity to do it with a new group...sort of like building something together. I don't know that really sort of caught my heart and you know and I was I had a passion to sort of be able to build a church...plant a church. I had seen this done through you know my first pastor, and even when I was in old IBC, these churches that I mentioned the Brockton Church and the Lawrence Church...really those churches came about because the old IBC gave funding and gave of its leaders to go and open these churches in other locations.

Elizabeth: What are the names of those churches? The Lawrence and the Brockton?

Mireya: Um the Brockton church is Iglesia Bautista de Lawrence St. and the Lawrence Church is Iglesia Bautista Hispana de Lawrence.

Elizabeth: Ok so, going back to your specific experience at the new IBC, was there anything personally that went on for you in that new transition period? Any experiences that you had that gave you an even greater desire to serve this new community? Anything that grew your faith in particular?

Mireya: At first, I mean even though this was a challenge, at the same time it was a little bit difficult, because you know I came in as part of the leadership group, as part of the planning group. You know we didn't know what we were going to be doing next or how to do something. WE knew in order to get people in the church we needed to do a lot of door to door activities you know trying to visit the community of Cambridge and also the community of Allston. And why I say Allston just because I lived there and there was a lot of Hispanic people there, and our target was the Hispanic community, whether it be in Cambridge or in Allston. So you know, personally, in my faith I think I realized that I need to sort of you know grow in knowledge of the Word of God, and to sort of grow as far as as a leader. You know in the past I had just been really serving, you know not really in charge of anything. Um so coming to the new IBC, you know the first year that I was there I was like Sunday School superintendent, I'm like I've never done any Sunday school curriculum you know. And what did happen actually at the beginning before we started going out and doing door to door evangelism, we had a sister who came and she was a part of the congregation at that time, and she basically did a leaders' workshop for all of the-for probably about 12 people which came from Everett, and um she talked about Sunday school curriculum and she talked about a lot of different things but I wasn't part of it cause I was with the kids, so I missed out on the learning part of it, so I felt that I wasn't really prepared, and I continued to have this struggle that I need to be prepared, I need more—I need more sort of something. And it wasn't up until probably 2 years later or a 3rd year of us being in IBC, that one of the leaders, one of the guys that was part of the leadership that came from Everett, he went out and took a Discipleship Training with YWAM, you know Youth With a Mission. And when he came back he basically tried to share all the teaching with the leadership at IBC and you know just all the different teachings just really made a big impact in my life to the point that I said you know I need to try this, I want to go and do this myself so I can really get the full blown uh discipleship training, and so I did that in 2000, you know we started the IBC in 1998, and so 2 years after that I went and I was part of the Discipleship Training school.

Elizabeth: So what exactly is a Discipleship Training School?

Mireya: Well basically the slogan for Youth With a Mission is “knowing God to let Him be known”. It's almost like it brings you to a point that really teaches you who God is, who are you before God, and what God—that God has a calling for you. And it also has a lot to do with missions as well whether it be urban missions or out—you know far away—and so it's almost like the first 3 months of that training it's teaching you how to really come about and know who you really are before God, and at the same time know Him, you know that He's your Father, that He's the characteristics of God, that He is faithful, that He is true; I think one of the things that really made the greatest impact on my life during that time was the fact that for most of my Christian life I would say that I

saw God as a distant god...He was God and He was so great and so big that I was so little and not—I couldn't get close to Him. That perspective totally changed when I did the discipleship training school because it was—I was able to see Him so close to me, you know so interested in my life, so interested in every little small detail...it didn't have to be anything the most simple and small detail in my life He cared for and He wanted—His biggest desire in His heart was for me to share those things with Him, rather than just sort of live independently, you know, which is what I was so used to. So um I think that's what really helped—I would say it was a beginning, to me I renewed my faith, I even got baptized again. And this time I did it with more knowledge of what I was doing and who I was doing it for and you know what was going to come forward—that God had great plans for me, but it was all a matter of how willing was I to do it, how willing was I to really seek Him daily and hear His voice and what He wants for my life.

Elizabeth: And so where did you do this discipleship training school?

Mireya: I did it in Puerto Rico.

Elizabeth: And is that the only place...?

Mireya: No they have over 600 bases worldwide.

Elizabeth: Oh ok. And that's Youth with a mission? And so it was—was it a Spanish school?

Mireya: Yes. Even though a lot of the professors that come in and give you different teaching, most of them are English speaking so they would translate many of the classes.

Elizabeth: Oh ok. Great. So you went off and you were able to kind of have this discipleship/leadership training, and you really found purpose in this relationship with God that you were able to develop while you were away, and even when you came back, how did your purpose kind of affect your vision for Iglesia Bautista Central as it is now? Or was that how many years ago was that when you came back?

Mireya: Uh I came back in 2001, so I was just gone for 6 months. So I left around September 2000, and I came back around March of 2001. Well when I came back I was on fire and I just wanted you know to change my whole congregation. I wanted everybody to really have this perspective to really really say no to sin at all times and you know really make so many different changes in their lives but it almost like—you come to an environment of people that are so used to doing the same thing over and over again, and so you know at one point I sort of started to fight that, but then I sort of said, my responsibility is to share with people what I've found, and share it in a humble way so people could receive it. And so after that, rather than—I was actually given the opportunity to share it on a Sunday morning you know I was able to take the whole hour of the sermon to really share my whole experience, and that was a great experience because actually afterward I was just so thankful that many people came back to me and said "this really touched my life and I really you know want to really—I can see that something happened in your life while you were there and that was really good, and so

the next thing that in my mind I sort of started praying about was ok where can I sort of focus more and share these teachings. And when I came back I actually got involved again with the children's ministry and so I sort of like was able to spend about the first 6 months with the youth and the children's ministry,, and sort of sharing different things with them and one of the things that I can recall that with the kids we actually did a—we had had a sort of like evangelism event at a park in Jamaica Plains and we taught the kids along with a friend of mine um you know from my local church (who had also done a Youth with a Mission discipleship training school), we taught the kids a song through movement, and we actually—the kids really enjoyed it. They really got into it and we were able to do this you know on the street at a park, and so that was just really great for us to be able to do that. And so after that, shortly after that I started getting involved with the Youth ministry, actually the pastor asked me if I'd like to get involved with the youth ministry and so I said yes. And so little by little when I got the opportunity to teach them I would sort of go back to my notes you know from my experience with YWAM and sort of share different teachings with them.

Elizabeth: So that was the same pastor that was from Guatemala?

Mireya: Yeah I mean he went to school in Guatemala, but he was originally from Ecuador.

Elizabeth: Oh ok. So that's where you're still involved now is with the youth ministry?

Mireya: Yes with the Youth ministry and I'm also in the worship ministry. Uh I lead worship sometimes on Sundays.

Elizabeth: And as a leader I guess just in general in the church, where do you see Iglesia Bautista Central in the community in the future?

Mireya: I would like to see it more involved in evangelism. The only issue right now that we're having though, that pastor that came to serve and to build a new IBC he actually resigned from the position as a pastor, and so we've had an interim pastor for about a year now. And so um most of the elders in the church really their concentration this past year has been in the pulpit committee—so there's been a searching for a pastor. So many other things sort of like the outreach ministries, sort of like evangelism and even follow up—following up on visitors, hasn't had a lot of potential this year. So that has sort of harmed us in a way because we've seen—we've had many visitors throughout the year but there hasn't been a follow-up so people come and they don't come again, and so we've been struggling with that in the past year/year and a half or so. So I think we have to sort of get over this hurdle first about not having a permanent pastor, because I think, I still think that there's a lot of room for our congregation to grow (including myself) that we need to grow, you know spiritually we need to grow and in love for one another. And so until we are not—if we're not in that—at that point—then it's going to be so hard for us to sort of give love to others who are not in our church. Ideally if I were to say what I would like to see our church involved in in the next few years is once we have a pastor for that pastor to be able to build us as a congregation and at the same time for him to have a passion for the lost, for people that are not in a relationship with God and really

seek out people in the community, and also not necessarily in Cambridge but all over Boston, and also at the same time be involved with short-term missions, that our church work to sort of provide for missionaries who go out and do sort of short term missions. Right now we're only—we're supporting, we're financially supporting, a missionary in Cuba, but that's it, we don't really hear about what happens or anything. And I'd like to take it more home, somebody from our congregation going out on short trips.

Elizabeth: Ok. Well that's a great vision for the future and thank you so much for all of the information that you've shared with us tonight. Kerry is there anything that you wanted to add? Ok then...no further questions (laugh 😊).

Mireya: Well I hope this is very helpful and if you need more let me know.

Elizabeth: Certainly, thank you so much Mireya!

APPENDIX F

Future Research

I would highly recommend the following topics to be pursued more specifically than time allowed for this semester:

1) White-Latino Relations in Cambridge: i.e. where is the contact taking place? in what ways might each come to transcend systemic racialization of Cambridge? (read the Emerson book to find out about racialization)

2) Follow up on Iglesia Bautista Central: this church is a powerhouse waiting to happen, and with its URBACAD involvement, and passionate membership, I expect we'll see great outreach with TWO HANDS in the near future! will it be effective?

3) Should this project ever expand beyond Cambridge, specifically, to the greater Boston area, research URBACAD! This organization has trained multi-racial leadership to outreach and serve communities all over Boston like no other non-profit! does systemic racism have to be addressed from a holistic point of view?