

to eradicate prejudices. (9) Our "basic consensus" in the doctrine of justification must be mutually witnessed to in common prayer and praise, if not for the present in eucharistic fellowship, then at least in joint liturgies of the Word.

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HISPANIC/LATINO THEOLOGIES

- Topic: A Discussion on Eldin Villafañe's *The Liberating Spirit: Toward a Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethic*
- Convener: Orlando Espín, University of San Diego
- Panelists: María Pilar Aquino, University of San Diego
Todd Salzman, University of San Diego

Professor Eldin Villafañe is a Latino Pentecostal social ethicist at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston. His book *The Liberating Spirit: Toward a Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethic* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) has become a landmark study for Latino Pentecostals. Villafañe attempts to retrieve Pentecostalism's tradition of social commitment and reflect on its implications for today's United States Latino Pentecostal churches. Villafañe challenges Pentecostals to acknowledge their cultural and religious ancestry (including their historical Catholic roots), and to recognize the social dimensions and consequences of Pentecostalism's understanding of gospel and church. The author makes and supports his argument in five chapters, presenting the Latino context, his understanding of various other Christian socioethical elaborations, and then his proposal for a Pentecostal social ethic that is both legitimately Latino and authentically Pentecostal. The Group on Hispanic/Latino Theologies decided to review Villafañe's book. Professors María Pilar Aquino and Todd Salzman provided distinct and complimentary perspectives on Villafañe's work.

Both Aquino and Salzman praised the author and his book for raising serious questions that confront all Latino Christians today, and especially for bringing up the social responsibilities of Latino Pentecostals. Both reviewers recognized Villafañe's theological service to the Pentecostal community and to the larger Latino Christian tradition. Aquino and Salzman also noted the respectful tone of Villafañe's discussion and critique of Catholicism in the United States Latino context.

The two reviewers paid special attention to Villafañe's model for a Pentecostal social ethic. The author roots his proposal not in the texts of a theological or ecclesial tradition, or in a sustained social analysis, or a combination of these. He prefers instead to establish social ethics as social spirituality—and this is the key to his book. Although Villafañe employs some of the philosophical reflections of the so-called "Boston Personalist" school, as well as some critiques of religion and conflict, he always returns to the spirituality model. He roots the latter in a Pentecostal reading of Scripture and in his community's central emphasis on the experience of the Spirit.

Aquino and Salzman had reservations on Villafañe's use of Boston Personalism. The author's use of some of that school's terminology does not seem warranted or univocal. There were serious objections raised to Villafañe's naive assumption that machismo and sexism do not compromise personalist ethics. Indeed, one of the major flaws in the entire book, according to the reviewers, is the author's constant inability to critically deal with sexism and its harm to Latino families. Villafañe assumes, without argument, that male dominance is a good and a given.

Another difficulty Aquino and Salzman found with Villafañe's book was his use of Scripture. Both reviewers pointed to Villafañe's naive and uncritical use of scriptural texts. One of the reviewers indicated that even within American Pentecostalism there is greater acceptance and use of modern biblical scholarship than Villafañe wants to acknowledge. The author, it was noted, does not justify his disregard for contemporary biblical exegesis.

Aquino and Salzman did point out that one very important contribution Villafañe makes is to insightfully point out, by comparison, the pastoral and theological lacunae and failures of the Catholic community, especially in reference to United States Latinos. Both reviewers recognized the timeliness of Villafañe's *The Liberating Spirit* and praised the author for his courage and prophetic stance, especially vis-à-vis the Pentecostal community.

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