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polygamy and any male infidelity is adulterous, it seems quite feasible that he might have condemned unwarranted divorce equally forthrightly.

These dominical innovations were maintained by Paul and by the majority of the early Christian fathers, who insist on the mutuality of conjugal rights between married couples and forbid Christians to remarry after divorce.⁵ For them the loving husband totally loyal to his wife whatever her faults was a powerful image of the devotion of Christ to his church. And to this day married women still hope for the same loyalty from their husbands as their husbands expect from them, even though they are usually ignorant of who first formulated their expectations.

Dr. G. J. Wenham lectures at The College of St. Paul and St. Mary, Cheltenham. p. 156

The Power and the Powerless The Pastoral Vocation of the Hispanic Church in the USA

A. William Cook

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This lecture was delivered during the Hispanic Emphasis Week October 17–20, 1983 at the annual Convocation of the Hispanic Studies and Ministry Programme of the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary. The purpose of the week's activities was to highlight the importance of Hispanic culture in North America and the missional challenge which Hispanics posed for the Christian church in the United States during the last quarter of the 20th century.

The Hispanic Studies and Ministries Programme of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary has been designed for students who either out of ethnic origin and/or vocational commitment want to minister to Hispanics in the Americas. Its aim is to develop competency for an effective ministry with evangelical passion and ecumenical outlook. The programme includes theological, cultural and field studies. It seeks to create within the entire Seminary community an awareness of the challenge of Hispanics to the church as a whole, the beauty and depth of their spiritual and cultural traditions, the relevance and breadth of contemporary Hispanic theologies.

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⁵ Cf. [1 Cor. 7:3–4, 10–11](#). For the evidence of the fathers see H. Crouzel, *L'Église primitive face au divorce* (Paris, Beauchesne [1971]).

(Editor)

The experiences of Israel during the two periods when they were far away from their homeland (the Egyptian captivity and the Babylonian-Persian exile) constitute an attractive point of reference for a reflection on the Hispanic experience in North America, and its relation to the Church's mission here as well as in Latin America. What were the temptations that confronted the people of Israel in such situations? [p. 157](#) What were the challenges and opportunities that they faced as they struggled to maintain their national identity (their sense of people-hood) and to be faithful to their divine calling in the midst of hostile and overpowering cultures?

It may sound strange to North Americans, and in particular to white anglo-saxon Protestants (WASPS!), to speak in terms of 'captivity' and 'exile' in relation to the United States. Isn't, after all, 'America' the 'promised land'—the great 'melting pot' that beckons the peoples of the world with the shining torch of liberty and of a new hope which is symbolized in our national consciousness by the Statue of Liberty? I remember several years ago listening to an irate caller on a New York City late-night talk show roundly condemning the dissimulation (lack of assimilation) of U.S. Hispanics. 'Instead of learning English like my Polish parents did', he said, 'they are forcing us to pay millions in tax dollars while imposing upon us their tongue as a second national language!'

Whether or not the U.S. was ever the warm melting pot of our national myth, it most certainly is so no longer. The Statue of Liberty's torch has grown rusty, in more ways than one, and is badly in need of costly structural repairs (if not changes) if it is to truly shine forth with the brilliance that has become the stuff of U.S.-American legend.

For Hispanics the North American experience has been a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it has meant a relative economic improvement—for example, in the case of under (and non)-paid pastors coming from Latin America; but it has also signified for many wrenching social dislocation, cultural alienation, and anomie—in a word, dehumanization. With few exceptions, Hispanics and other dark-skinned minorities, have been treated as second-class citizens in this 'land of opportunity' by the social institutions and churches with which they have chosen to become identified, whether by citizenship, birth or affiliation.

BIBLICAL PARADIGMS

Does the experience of Israel have anything to say to my fellow-Latin Americans, to my Hispanic sisters and brothers and to the WASP church in the USA? I have chosen to focus schematically upon the experience of four great leaders of God's People in the Old Testament (Moses, Daniel, Esther and Nehemiah) whom I see as paradigms of the pastoral vocation of contemporary 'captive' and 'exiled' Hispanic Christians, and other minorities, in these United States. [P. 158](#)

Moses

Moses was born in Egypt, a sixth or seventh generation exile in an alien land. His forebears had been brought to this land by a very successful kinsman who, under God's guidance, had achieved the highest possible position next to the Pharaoh, during a non-Egyptian dynasty. Initially, Jacob and his family had prospered in very propitious surroundings. But had they 'kept the faith'? How much of their ethnic identity had they lost over several generations? Although we cannot be sure of the answers to these questions, the incident of the golden calf, many years later, hints at syncretism and a gradual surrender, at least on the part of some, to the idolatrous culture of Egypt.

Then there arose an Egyptian Pharaoh 'who knew not Joseph' and with him, I suspect, the temptation to 'go along', to 'play ball' with the system—or, in contrast, to develop an attitude of resistance to an alien culture. But, for most, this was not to be. Bondage became their lot.

[Heb. 11:23–29](#) is a theological reflection (a 're-reading', if you please) of Moses' role as leader of the Exodus. Just as Stephen had done earlier in his defence before the Sanhedrin, the author of Hebrews adds new insights and makes new applications of the basic story ([Exod. 2:11–15ff](#)). Hebrews cast the story of Moses' personal pilgrimage in the context of a 'power encounter', or, to put it differently, of cultural attraction vs. counter-cultural resistance. Notice how many times the words 'Pharaoh', 'Egypt' and 'Egyptians' are used. These are code words for the absolute system which had enslaved the Israelites and now tempted Moses to 'go along.' Take note, also, of the expressions 'king's edict' (([11:23](#) NIV) and 'king's anger' (v.[26](#)) which reflect a system of coercive laws, customs and mores which limited Moses' options.

In the face of this—and in spite of his having received the best education available to the priestly and military classes of his day—Moses makes his own decisions. He chooses to identify with ('to become solidary with', is the way we would put it in Latin America) a despised and oppressed people. The Book of Hebrews states this in the strongest possible terms: Moses 'refused' a position of princely privilege (v.[24](#)) and 'chose mistreatment' with the people of God 'rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin (the temptations of power?) for a short time.' (v.[25](#))

This statement omits the long and agonizing process which Moses underwent in order to reach these decisions. As we know, he first—impulsively—struck down an Egyptian taskmaster who was mistreating one of his fellow-Israelites. But it was perhaps not so impulsive a gesture as it might seem. Stephen Martyr gives us an interesting insight. p. 159 Moses, 'powerful in speech and action', took the conscious step at age forty to let himself be confronted by the social reality of his people. Then, he killed the Egyptian, says Stephen, not in the white heat of anger, but 'because he thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not' ([Acts 7:22–25](#) NIV). Delusions of grandeur? Or perhaps the first stirrings of a political awareness? Exposure to the reality of marginalized and oppressed peoples—and particularly our own—is a first and necessary step for understanding, not only their plight, but God's concern for the poor.

But what guided Moses in his momentous decision—or series of small decisions which eventually became a major decision—according to the author of Hebrews, was his sense of history. That is, he was able to relate his newfound socio-political concern, if you will, to a particular world-view, which we today know as 'Salvation History.' Social concern, bereft of a theoretical frame of reference, will usually degenerate into a paralyzing vicious circle. This did not happen to Moses.

Over against the relatively 'short time' in which he could have enjoyed the trappings of power and all of the comforts and advantages of Egyptian civilization, he weighed—in faith—the Messianic hope, and the former was found wanting. 'He regarded the disgrace (humiliation, identification with an outcast people) for the sake of Christ (the Messianic hope) as of greater value than the treasurer of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the King's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible' ([11:25–27](#)). To take the side of the downtrodden, according to one prominent Brazilian theologian (Leonardo Boff), is to believe that 'utopia' is more concrete than current history and that the justice of the Kingdom of God is even more real than the weight of concrete facts.'

The powerful of this world, be they governments, socio-economic interests, ecclesiastical authorities, or just plain people like most of us, will usually view with displeasure the conscious decision of a minority (be it a person or a social grouping) to 'buck the system' to 'refuse to play the game.' But, for the Christian, this refusal is more than a political statement. It is in a very real sense, a liturgical act—a way of proclaiming the sovereignty of Jesus Christ over all of the powers of this age. 'By faith (Moses) kept the Passover ...' (v.28). 'So Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make his people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.' ([Heb. 13:12-14](#) NIV) p. 160

Moses' decision was also the end process of forty long years of tending mindless sheep on the back-side of an arid desert. How discouraged he must have been! How much reflecting and planning he must have done! God never calls his servants in a vacuum. He meets them in Burning Bushes and on Damascus Roads while they are in a process of awareness of His actions within their own particular history.

Moses' decisions weren't his alone to make. Neither are our choices individual acts—a sort of 'men and women against the tide,' the stuff of the legendary 'American Dream.' His decision was, I repeat, a part of a lengthy pilgrimage during which he became increasingly conscious of his cultural and religious identity (of his '*hispanidad*,' or 'Blackness,' if you please). There were undoubtedly many unrecorded interactions with people—beginning with his childhood upbringing—before he reached his momentous decision. And, of course, the final outcome of his 'option for the poor' was the liberation of an entire nation, the salvation of a whole race, the seed of the Messiah. 'By faith the people passed through the Red Sea' (v.29).

Daniel

Our second example was born in Judah of noble, and perhaps royal, blood. He may have been the product of the religious revival under Josiah. He was probably taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar during the second of his three sweeps through Palestine ([2 Kgs. 24:15-17](#) and [Dan. 1:1-3](#)). Daniel was a Hollywood image-maker's dream. A sort of Hebrew Ricardo Montalban. It is recorded that he was 'without any physical defect, handsome,' apt for 'any kind of learning, wellinformed and quick to understand'—in a word, uniquely 'qualified to serve in the king's palace. (NIV)' And, on top of this, he was given the best post-graduate training in political science and administration in the empire, as were his colleagues—Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah ([Dan. 1:3, 4](#)).

Like Moses, Daniel also faced momentous choices. But compared to Moses' options, these choices seem rather insignificant and unworthy of the risk of throwing away a brilliant career in 'his majesty's service.' But, as we know, what was at stake was infinitely more than counting calories and sticking to natural food diets. It was, once again, a power confrontation between Yahweh the only true God and the God of Daniel's people, and an idolatrous socio-economic and religious system. A confrontation between the God of the downtrodden and a world empire. That clash between culture and counter-culture came to a head, of course, at the foot of Nebuchadnezzar's image on the plain of Dura and in the fiery furnace. Much later, the rival powers— p. 161 God and empire—met head on in Belshazzar's drunken banquet hall and, under a later empire, in a lion's den.

Dare to be a Daniel; dare to stand alone.

Dare to have a purpose firm;

Dare to make it known.

But Daniel, my childhood chorus notwithstanding, did not stand alone. Aside from the obvious fact that God was always at his side, Daniel stood in solidarity with his people. This is an unwritten presupposition of the entire Book of Daniel. As a provincial governor and imperial counsellor in Babylon, and later a chief minister in Persia ([2:48](#); [6:1, 2](#)) he may have been responsible, according to some authorities, for administrative matters relating to the large number of Jews now living under imperial jurisdiction. Nonetheless, Daniel did not lose his sense of historical perspective. To him was given the wisdom to interpret historical events—past, present and future—and to pronounce judgment on a dying empire ('Mene, Mene, Tekel, U-parsim'). But he could only do this while he remained faithful to God and to his own cultural heritage.

Esther

The winner of the Miss Persia Pageant of c. 480 B.C. was a member of a minority race which still conserved a strong sense of national identity despite some six decades of exile. In spite of this handicap (which she was instructed to conceal, probably to avoid racial discrimination) she became the favourite queen of Xerxes, a despot who ruled a vast empire of 127 provinces from Pakistan to the Sudan.

Esther got her chance to ask all for her people because her predecessor (the first women's libber) refused to flaunt her body before the gaping nobles of the royal court. Is this not an unlikely scenario for an heroic stand against the 'principalities and powers'? Yet it was this beautiful and shy niece of a partial contemporary of Daniel—and maybe even of Nehemiah ([Esther 2:5-7](#))—who saved her race—and who knows, perhaps the Davidic line from which our Saviour was born—from total extinction. And it was Mordecai, another member of a minority, who would someday become Xerxes's chief minister, who strategically thrust her from the king's harem into the vortex of history. When an egomaniac with genocidal tendencies made his grab for power he was thwarted by Mordecai's astuteness and by Esther's decision to risk, not only her reputation and social status, but her very life.

It is clear that Esther had been placed in a position of privilege and potential influence, not because of her feminine graces, but to accomplish [p. 162](#) a mission on behalf of her people. Yet, she was not indispensable. God had other instruments that He could use if she failed to rise to the occasion. In the blunt words of Mordecai,

Do not think that because you are in the king's house [at the seat of the empire] you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance ... will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?

[\(4:12-14 GNB\)](#)

Esther is galvanized into action. Flouting convention, and willing even to resort to 'civil disobedience,' she risks everything for the sake of her people. 'I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish' ([4:16](#)). Once again, a member of a despised minority who had managed to 'make it' within the dominant 'power culture,' through an unlikely set of events, has made a conscious 'option for the poor,' her own people. She has been willing to give up the trappings of power for the sake of solidarity with an oppressed people. For she was not alone: She called her people to join in her valiant stand. 'Get all the Jews in Susa together, hold a fast and pray for me,' ([4:16](#)).

Nehemiah

Let us look briefly at a fourth exile, Nehemiah by name. He had attained the privileged position of cupbearer to Artaxerxes of Persia. As one who protected the king from food

poisoning, he literally held the sovereign's life in his own hands. Here we have again another Israelite who had 'made it' in the halls of power of a world empire. Probably a second-generation exile with no first-hand remembrance of his ancestral land, Nehemiah could have been thought to have only a small obligation to the land of his forefathers, which was, after all, in ruins. He could have sustained the same attitude as the majority of the Jews of the Diaspora who chose to remain in the capital of empire rather than return to Jerusalem.

But not so. We read that Nehemiah (1) kept in touch with the current historical situation of his people through relatives and other travellers; (2) demonstrated an active concern for the miserable state of his nation in prayer and fasting; (3) became solidarious with the sins of his people ('I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you'); (4) challenged God to live up to His Word and (5) involved himself in specific actions on behalf of his people in Jerusalem (cf. [Neh. 1](#)). [p. 163](#)

And so it happened that Nehemiah returned to the land of his forebears with authority to act. God had paved the way for him, first in his dealings with the king, and later in his westward journey. Yet, at no time does he act arbitrarily. He is always conscious that he is a member of a nation, and acts in solidarity with his people. Nehemiah first takes stock of the situation, noting the damage that had been done seventy years before. Only then does he gather the leaders of the people—who we can suspect were sceptical at first—and mobilizes them, and through them, an entire discouraged community. The end result, of course, is the reconstruction of a city and the revitalization of a nation.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HISPANICS

What do these somewhat similar experiences of four great Jewish leaders have to say to Hispanics in the USA today? Permit me to close with some additional observations.

1. Although the situation of Hispanics in the US may seem to us far removed from an Egyptian-type bondage or Babylonian exile, there is a very real sense in which cultural minorities the world over—and certainly not excluding the USA—are often in socio-economic bondage and cultural captivity. To a greater or lesser degree, depending upon historical circumstances, the cards have been 'stacked against them.' This is especially true in the case of peoples who have come from the so-called 'Third World.' They are even looked down upon by one-time ethnic minorities from Europe.

2. Ultimately, it is a question of power. Of who wields it, and for the benefit of whom. Marcel Garaudy, the French Marxist turned Catholic, defined the condition of the people at the base of the social pyramid as 'that sector of society that has been bereft of possession, power and knowledge' whose cultures are manipulated by the dominant cultures in ways that serve to legitimize the prevailing social order.

How much of this is true in the USA, and in relation to Hispanic minorities? More to the point, how much of this is true in Hispanic churches? To what degree are our own Latin American sisters and brothers (including, of course, US Hispanics) in socio-economic bondage and cultural and political captivity to powerful ecclesiastical and missionary institutions? Perhaps we need to pay more heed to the voice of the liberating God who once again commands us: 'Let my people go!' I like the way in which my friend, Fr. Joao Batista Libanio, the Brazilian Jesuit theologian puts it: 'It is of no use to discern the will of God in actions which attempt to deal with the contradictions and conflicts of society if these actions do not change history by their application [p. 164](#) to it.' (*Spiritual Discernment and Politics*, [Maryknoll: Orbis, 1982], p.2)

3. But, you say, 'Hispanics have just as much of a chance to move upward on the social and ecclesiastical ladder as anybody else—just as our own forebears did. All it takes is some hard work!' True, and yet not true. For the socio-economic system is far more complex today, and the resources and opportunities are far less available than they were to Eastern and Southern Europeans, as we all know. The unlimited frontier of the American Dream has come to a screeching halt. Furthermore, are we not failing to take our deep-seated racial prejudices into account? Prejudice was not, to the same degree, a hindrance to the success stories of our Middle and Southern European immigrants.

Nevertheless, we must recognize that, here and there, representatives of minorities, Hispanics included, have 'made it to the top.' This continues to give credence to the American success myth. And it provides a false utopia for the struggling minorities. Sadly, those few that do succeed often forget their roots and become part of the system that continues to hold their people down. It is at this point, precisely, that the difficult choices of Moses, Daniel, Esther and Nehemiah are not unrelated to the situation of some successful Hispanic church leaders, for example. When the siren song of a seemingly superior culture and of an overpoweringly alluring and materialistic system rings in our ears, how, my Hispanic sisters and brothers, shall we respond? May Moses, Daniel, Esther, Nehemiah and the people whom they lead provide us even today with the inspiration for right action.

4. As each of these Bible personages have demonstrated, success is not inherently wrong. Power is not intrinsically evil. But its 'scope is enormous.' As J. B. Libanio observes 'Power ... is the locus where one finds demonstrated most clearly both the greatness and depravity of human nature' (*Ibid.*, p.2). It is what we do with success and how—and for whom—we use power that counts. In the up-side-down logic of the Kingdom, the servant of all is the one who has true power—and not the one who pulls the strings from on top (cf. Jesus' remarks to his quarrelling disciples in [Mk. 10:42-45](#) 'You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many'). Hispanics have just as much right to success and to leadership positions as do their 'Anglo' sisters and brothers. But it would be a sin against God and a crime against God's people to use [p. 165](#) whatever privilege we may attain for self-aggrandizement, instead of for the spiritual, cultural, economic and political liberation of our fellow Latin Americans, at whatever personal cost.

5. To conclude, the example of Nehemiah challenges the Hispanic church in the US to undertake its pastoral responsibility in relation to Latin America and to the Latin American church. By 'pastoral' I, of course, do not mean the autocratic idea that so many of my Latin American colleagues have concerning the pastoral ministry—which they learned from bad missionary example and carried to even further extremes. 'Pastor' and 'shepherd' in Greek and in Spanish are the same word. Except for references to shepherds of sheep and for the one mention in [Eph. 4:11](#), the term always refers to our Lord Jesus Christ. It is He, therefore who provides us with the model for a pastoral ministry in the Hispanic and Latin American context. 'The Good Shepherd gives his life for the sheep.' Was not the Cross the greatest of all power confrontations?

The servant vocation, the martyr role, that willingness to risk all and to give up everything for the cause of Christ and of our people—that is the true pastoral vocation of the Hispanic church in the US today. And, as was the case with Nehemiah, it may be a vocation which involves a return to the land of our forebears to rebuild in the words of Isaiah, 'what has long been in ruins, building again on the old foundations,' so that we might 'be known as the people who rebuilt the walls, who rebuilt the ruined houses,' even

as we shout aloud 'and do not hold back,' raising our voice 'like a trumpet,' declaring to our people their rebellion and proclaiming the full-orbed justice of the Lord, and His love for the poor and oppressed ([Isa. 58](#)). And for those whom God calls to remain in the capital of the Empire, there is a responsibility to perceive one's present privileges and opportunities in the light of our *Hispanidad* and Latin American heritage to look upon all of this in the context of a pastoral vocation to *all* of Latin America: 'who knows but that you have come to the Kingdom for such a time as this!'

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The Reaction Against Classical Education in the New Testament

E. A. Judge

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This is one of the most incisive and scholarly articles ever published by the Evangelical Review of Theology. Its implications for Christian Education are indeed profound.
(Editor)

In talking of 'Christian Education' one advances well beyond the framework of New Testament thought. Indeed, insofar as we are talking about schooling, we have to say that it is a matter that is not dealt with in the New Testament at all. The fact that some of the ministries in the churches, notably teaching, are described in educational terms, and that educational metaphors are sometimes used of church life, is not at all a good reason for thinking that the principles of upbuilding in Christ can be transferred to schooling in particular. The subject is available for metaphor because it is not being dealt with in itself. This only sharpens the problem of why the New Testament writers were not concerned with schooling. In other cases, such as economics, where the New Testament does not seem to face a subject in our way, we may say that it is because such questions were not conceptualised in our way at the time. But with education the opposite applies. By New Testament times the Greeks had for centuries both practised education and discussed it in essentially the same terms as we do.¹

Hellenistic education proceeded through primary, secondary and tertiary levels roughly corresponding to ours. Grammatical and literary studies were dominant at the lower levels, but linked with mathematics, music and physical training. Girls and boys were treated alike. But from adolescence boys were admitted to the privileged ephebic

¹ F. A. G. Beck, *Greek Education, 450–350 B.C.*, London: Methuen, 1964; id., *An Album of Greek Education*, Sydney: Cheiron Press, 1975; H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, London: Sheed & Ward, 1956.