

Pablo J. Rivera Madera. *Preaching to Hispanic Immigrants: Practical Advice for Effectiveness*. Bloomington, IN: Trafford Publishing, 2011. 101 pages. \$12.19.

As the Hispanic population of America continues to grow, preachers of all ethnicities may find themselves speaking to congregations that are changing. Regardless of where pastors and preachers find themselves throughout the country, statistics suggest that they will soon be interacting with more Hispanic immigrants. In *Preaching to Hispanic Immigrants: Practical Advice for Effectiveness*, Pablo Madera offers an introductory work for Non-Hispanics who want to preach faithfully to Hispanic immigrants in their congregation. Based on a survey of a diverse group of Hispanic preachers, Madera provides practical advice for preachers looking to speak to this growing population.

In the first chapter of this text, Madera describes both the sociological reality of the increase in Hispanic immigrants in the United States as well as some of the major issues facing this population. Madera is primarily concerned about the rampant poverty that is found in Hispanic immigrant communities as well as their feelings of marginalization in a culture that is not their own. After firmly stating the centrality of religion for recreating identities, stabilizing families and adapting to neighborhoods within the Hispanic community, Madera moves toward describing preaching in these communities (13). Leaning heavily on the work of Justo Gonzalez and Pablo Jimenez in *Pulpito* and David Kenneth Davis' *Preaching and Culture in Latino Congregations*, Madera describes preaching in Hispanic congregations as participative, personal, and acutely aware of context (15).

Madera uses the second half of Chapter One to give an overview of different models of preaching. He utilizes the categories for sermons that William E. Hull provides in his book, *Strategy Preaching*, namely biblical, rhetorical, and relational (20). This section would be of particular use to those unfamiliar with homiletic method as he provides a brief but robust introduction to some important homiletic works from each of those categories, including William H. Willimon's *Conversations with Barth on Preaching*, H. Grady Davis' *Design for Preaching*, and Justo Gonzalez' *Preaching as a Social Act: Theology and Practice*. Madera then poses his research question: Which of these methods is "the most effective paradigm of preaching in the Hispanic environment"? (32).

Chapters Two and Three describe the research methodology that Madera used in order to test his question and the results of his inquiry. He begins with the hypotheses that the biblical model of preaching and a style that encourages audience participation are most prevalent in Hispanic congregations. To test these hypotheses, Madera designed and distributed a questionnaire to thirty-six lay and ordained ministers with preaching experience in Hispanic churches (38). The results of this survey indicate that his hypotheses were correct. The survey also concludes that 75% of these preachers prefer to preach in Spanish and that "the message of salvation is the primary goal of Hispanic preachers in the proclamation of the word" (50).

In the final chapter, Madera recognizes the limitations of his work and outlines some potential areas for further research. He noted the lack of a central organization to gather information about Hispanic congregations and the lack of research on Hispanic preaching models and styles in the Hispanic environment as the primary limitations for his work. And while I agree that there is room for more research in this area, I might also add that future research may seek to narrow the definitions of style and model that Madera used in order to create even more fruitful information for Non-Hispanic preachers. Naming "biblical" as the most effective model may not be helpful to experienced preachers, as many already strive to create sermons that are biblical.

Rather these preachers would like to know how they should engage the Bible in order to reach Hispanic immigrants. Furthermore, instead of simply saying that Hispanic pastors preach with a style that involves “participation by the congregation,” it would be useful to know what type of participation (i.e. signifying “Amen” from the congregation, questions and answers, or some other form of participation). One of the most useful sections of the text actually comes at the end when Madera quoted directly from the preachers surveyed. For example, one respondent states that, “It is important for Non-Hispanic preachers to accommodate their message in order to be congruent with the needs of the Hispanic community. It is not possible to preach to Hispanics with a “white theology” (75). More exploration of these suggestions could have provided some more depth to the practical wisdom of this text. As a non-Hispanic preacher, this book introduced me to preaching to Hispanic immigrants. I envision more constructive work in the future, as research on Hispanic preaching continues to grow. In the meantime this book offers accessible and immediate advice for Non-Hispanic preachers who find themselves with changing congregations.

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