

**LATINA PROTESTANTS' PARTICIPATION  
IN EVANGELISTIC WITNESS:  
AN ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT OF EVANGELISM**

**PAUL BARTON**

My talk this morning focuses upon the contributions that Mexican and Mexican-American Methodist women made to the evangelistic ministry of the church in the Rio Grande Conference and its predecessor organizations.<sup>1</sup>

The Rio Grande Annual Conference is a unique conference whose roots date as far back as the 1850s, with the first Methodist evangelistic mission to New Mexico in 1853 accompanied by Benigno Cardenas, a former Roman Catholic priest received into the Methodist Episcopal Church as an ordained minister. The conference was brought into being through the evangelistic efforts of both Anglo-American Methodist missionaries and the Spanish-speaking preachers they raised up from the first conversions. The conference was officially begun in 1885 as the Conferencia Fronteriza Mexicana (The Mexican Border Conference). For the first several decades of its existence, until 1930, the conference transcended the international border by including churches and pastors in northern Mexico and the U.S. My great-grandfather, the Rev. Máximo Villareal, was one of the founding preachers of the conference.

The earliest histories of the conference focus on the activities of the Anglo-American missionaries and the Spanish-speaking preachers. Unfortunately, there is practically no historical material that tells us about the contribution of Spanish-speaking women to the life of the conference in the 1800s. The primary materials that provide us with glimpses of the roles of women in this Spanish-speaking conference are provided by two ministers' wives, both of whom were born around the turn of the twentieth century. Clotilde Nández wrote an essay titled "Hispanic Clergy Wives: Their Contribution to United Methodism in the Southwest, Later Nineteenth Century to the Present" in the book titled *Women in New Worlds: Historical Perspectives of the Wesleyan*

---

<sup>1</sup> Latino/as joined the Methodist church in Texas as early as the 1850s. The first "Mexican" district was established in Texas in 1874. The district grew to the extent that a separate annual conference was established in 1885, the Mexican Border Mission Conference. Since the U.S.-Mexican border was very porous then, the conference included the Spanish-speaking work in Mexico and Texas. Other Protestant denominations followed and joined the Methodists in the evangelization and Americanization of the Spanish-speaking along the borderlands, among them Presbyterians and Baptists, Lutherans, and Congregationalists.

*Tradition*, published in 1981.<sup>2</sup> Minerva Garza also wrote an essay in 1996 on the contribution of Spanish-speaking women to the conference, titled “The Influence of Methodism on Hispanic Women through Women’s Societies.”<sup>3</sup>

With assistance from these two essays plus additional research I have conducted, I will explore the ways that Hispanic Methodist women engaged in evangelism and consider how their manner of evangelism was unique from that of their male counterparts. I will show that the Mexican and Mexican-American value of hospitality provided an organic means of sharing their Protestant faith with others. Before diving straight into the women’s evangelistic ministries, though, we need to consider first the issue of evangelism.

Evangelism in the Protestant tradition has often been conceived in terms of the spoken word. Since the chief place for the spoken word in the Protestant church has been the pulpit, and the proclamation of the Gospel in the church became the domain of men throughout most of the church’s history, men have often been perceived as the primary evangelists of the church. For example, in the minutes of the 1924 Mexican Annual Conference, the report of the Evangelism Commission states:

That in all the activities of the church and of the pastor, be it in his pastoral visits or in his continual contact with persons with whom he has dealings in daily life, or preaching the Word of God, never lose the view that the object of our church is to preach the Gospel that is capable of saving those that go without God and without hope.<sup>4</sup>

Notice that preaching the Gospel by the male pastors is conceived as the primary means of evangelism by this evangelism commission. Thus, women’s contributions to the evangelistic witness have been neglected because of the concept of evangelism as the preached word. Indeed, even the academic research and teaching on evangelism is predominated by men. For example, of the thirteen professors of evangelism in eleven United Methodist seminaries, only two of them are women. Clearly, a broader conception of evangelism is necessary to take into account the evangelistic ministry of women.

In addition to the preached word, the written word also became the hallmark of Protestantism since the beginning of the Reformation. Beginning with Luther’s emphasis on the written Word of God as the primary authority of religious truth and continuing with Wesley’s evangelistic witness, the written word has also served as a key means of communicating the Gospel. Luther’s

---

<sup>2</sup> Clotilde Nájuez, “Hispanic Clergy Wives: Their Contribution to United Methodism in the Southwest, Later Nineteenth Century to the Present,” *Women in New Worlds: Historical Perspectives on the Wesleyan Tradition* edited by Hilah E. Thomas and Rosemary Skinner Keller, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), 161-177.

<sup>3</sup> Minerva Garza, “The Influence of Methodism on Hispanic Women through Women’s Societies,” *Methodist History* 34.2 (1996): 78-89.

<sup>4</sup> “Actas del Séptimo Período de Sesiones de la Conferencia Anual Mexicana de la Iglesia Metodista Episcopal del Sur. Celebrada en la Ciudad de Chihuahua, México. Los días 29 de Octubre al 5 de Noviembre de 1924,” Imprenta Palmore, 46.

German translation of the New Testament in 1522 and later the entire Bible into German in 1534 made the written word of the Bible available to the masses. In England, a few decades after its publication in 1611, the King James Bible became the most popular English translation of the Bible.

The emphasis on the written word continued with the Protestant evangelization of the Spanish-speaking in the U.S. Southwest and Mexico in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Protestant missionaries were eager to mold their male neophytes into effective preachers. One of those persons, the Rev. Máximo Villareal of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was ordained a deacon in 1885 and retired from the active ministry in 1915. He maintained a small library for his own theological education. That library, which contains many books from the 1800s, was bequeathed to his grandson Roy Barton, who is my father. Upon his retirement, my father handed the library down to me. The Máximo Villareal Collection, which was supplemented by other books from nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Mexicano Methodist preachers, contains over 200 works, almost all in Spanish. Some of the books in this library pertained to preaching and rhetoric.<sup>5</sup> Some of the books were published in Spanish by the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and others were published in Mexico and in Paris. His collection included books of sermons by John Wesley and Charles Spurgeon, and other books on preaching and rhetoric.<sup>6</sup> Another part of the collection includes 38 materials written by the Rev. Juan N. de los Santos. Thirty-five of the 38 materials by J. N. de los Santos are leather-bound volumes of typewritten sermons, poems, compiled and translated cantatas, and biblical studies.<sup>7</sup>

Protestants had begun distributing Bibles and religious literature as a means of evangelization since the founding of the American Bible Society in 1816 and the American Tract Society in 1825. Methodists were very active in the distribution of religious literature; circuit riders traversed the frontier

---

<sup>5</sup> Among the books on preaching are: *Bravo y Tudela: A. Tratado de la Predicación Cristiana* 2nd ed. (Madrid: "Los pedidos a nombre del autor, 1871); *Confesión de un Pecador: Escrita por el Doctor Constantino Ponce de la Fuente en el Siglo XVI*, Reprinted by D. Luis Usoz y Río, 1863. 3rd ed. (Nashville: Casa Editorial de la Iglesia Metodista Episcopal del Sur, a Cargo de los Agentes Bigham y Smith, 1902); Antonio De Capmany, *Filosofía de la Eloquencia* (Madrid: M. DCC. LXXVII. [1877?]); D. Guillermo P. Harrison, *Sermones por el Rev. Juan Wesley: Catedrático Supernumerario que fué por algún tiempo en el Colegio Lincoln de la Universidad de Oxford*, Edición nueva y revisada, con notas introductorias, análisis y Preguntas para uso de los Estudiantes, translated by Primitivo A. Rodríguez; Mateo Simpson, *Conferencias sobre la Predicación*, translated from English by C. A. Gamboa, (México: Imprenta Metodista Episcopal, 1889); William H. Sloan, redactor, *Sermones de C. H. Spurgeon: Discursos Populares y Evangélicos. Tomo I. Números 1-13*, (México: Imprenta de "La Luz," 1897); Frey D. Pedro Maria de Torrecilla, *Biblioteca Selecta de Predicadores: Colección Escogida, Sermones Morales II* (Paris: Librería de Rosa, Bouret, 1854), 544 pp; Pedro Maria de Torrecilla, *Biblioteca Selecta de Predicadores: Colección Escogida, Sermones Morales III* (Paris: Librería de Rosa, Bouret, 1855).

<sup>6</sup> Máximo Villareal Collection, A collection of about 75 books and hymnals owned by Máximo Villareal, located in the personal archives of Paul Barton.

<sup>7</sup> Máximo Villareal Collection.

with religious literature in their saddlebags. The use of religious literature as a means of evangelization continued to move westward with the expanding frontier. It was employed extensively by Protestants among the Spanish-speaking in the U.S. Southwest and in Mexico. Protestant mission societies and publishers supplied Protestant missionaries in the borderlands with evangelical literature. Missionary societies, especially the American Tract Society and the American Bible Society, published Bibles and Protestant literature (including refutations of Roman Catholicism) and employed colporteurs to distribute their materials throughout the borderlands.

While Texas was still a province of Mexico, the Rev. Sumner Bacon, a Cumberland Presbyterian minister, received the first commission as a colporteur to Texas from the American Bible Society in 1833. David Ayers, a Methodist layman, distributed many Spanish-language Testaments and Bibles when he arrived in Texas in 1834. In 1859, at the annual conference of the Rio Grande Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Rev. P. Thompson was appointed an agent of the American Bible Society in Texas.<sup>8</sup> He distributed Bibles and religious literature ““in the valley of the Rio Grande and contiguous regions.””<sup>9</sup> Two key Methodist missionaries to the Spanish-speaking in Texas and northern Mexico, Rev. Alexander Sutherland, and later, Rev. Frank Onderdonk, also served as colporteurs.<sup>10</sup>

Not willing to rely solely on the national Bible and tract societies for the production and distribution of religious literature, Protestant missionaries established their own printing presses in Mexico and New Mexico. These presses produced books, evangelistic tracts, periodicals, anti-Catholic, and educational literature for their constituencies. A missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Rev. Frank Onderdonk established a printing press, *Imprenta Wesleyana*, during his tenure in San Luis Potosí, Mexico (1907-1914). The *Imprenta Wesleyana* in San Luis Potosí published the official periodical for Methodists in Mexico and Texas called *El Evangelista Mexicana*.<sup>11</sup> Thomas Harwood, the missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church among the Spanish-speaking in New Mexico, established *El Abogado Press* at the Albuquerque Boys' Industrial School.<sup>12</sup> *El Abogado*

---

<sup>8</sup> The Rio Grande Conference referred to in the mid-nineteenth century was the precursor to the current Southwest Texas Annual Conference, covering all of South Texas and reaching northward to Central Texas and westward to part of West Texas. The current Rio Grande Conference was organized first as the Southwest Mexican Conference in 1939, and was later renamed the Rio Grande Conference in 1948.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Barton, “In Both Worlds: A History of Hispanic Protestantism in the U.S. Southwest.” Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Methodist University, 38. See also Sterling Fisher, “The Rio Grande Conference,” *The Texas Methodist Historical Quarterly* 1.4 (1910): 348, 349.

<sup>10</sup> Roger Loyd, “Alexander H. Sutherland: Prophet of the Lord,” (Dallas, TX, Perkins School of Theology, 1971, photocopy), chronology appendix, and *Actas de la Misión Mexicana de Texas*, held in San Antonio, TX, October 21-23, 1924 (Chihuahua, Mexico: *Imprenta Palmore*, 1924), 28.

<sup>11</sup> Barton, “In Both Worlds,” 39-40. See also Alfredo Nájuez, *History of the Rio Grande Conference of the United Methodist Church* (Dallas, TX: Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University), 69.

<sup>12</sup> Nájuez, *History of the Rio Grande Conference*, 24.

[The Advocate] Press, begun in 1880, published the New Mexico Mission's official organ, *El Abogado Cristiano*.<sup>13</sup> "The first printing press established by Methodists in Mexico, Imprenta de Gante, began publishing materials in 1877. While Imprenta Gante, located in Mexico City, served the needs of central Mexico, another press, Imprenta Palmore, operating in Chihuahua, Mexico, provided books and literature for northern Mexico and the U.S. Southwest. Imprenta Palmore produced a prodigious amount of materials. The Mexican Annual Conference credited the institution with having printed and distributed 100,000 tracts in 1922."<sup>14</sup>

### **Non-Traditional Modes of Evangelism by Latina Protestants**

I am asserting that the evangelistic ministry of the Hispanic Protestant church favored men because they were normally the authorized preachers, and preaching was perceived as the chief means of evangelism. Likewise, the colporteurs were all male, as were the directors of the printing presses. However, even though Anglo-American missionaries stressed the education of Mexican and Mexican-American men for preparation for clerical ministry in the Southwest and Mexico, women at times broke through the gender barrier and became significant proclaimers of the Gospel. Even though women have traditionally not served as pastors and preachers in the "mainline" Hispanic Protestant tradition, there have been a few exceptions.

One of the most significant evangelists among Mexicano Methodists was Elodia Guerra. In a period during which women were prohibited from ordained ministry, they were occasionally recognized for their preaching gifts. Elodia Guerra served as the first full-time evangelist of the Rio Grande Conference's predecessor organization, the Texas Mexican Mission, from 1928-1933. Before then, she had served as the missionary evangelist for the Durango District, a district of the Mexican Annual Conference in 1924. In her 1929 report as the conference evangelist, she mentioned a long list of places where she had preached and led revivals, including:

San Antonio, where, assisted by brother Narro, we conducted an evangelistic campaign . . . . We carried out two evangelistic campaigns in Prospect Hill, where we had the joy of receiving twelve persons who were added to our church . . . .In East End there was held two campaigns, giving the result of eight persons joining the church. In Georgetown two campaigns were held, resulting in eight persons being received into the church. In Houston there were received 25 persons for baptism and 18 for profession of faith. In Seguin four persons, in Devine twelve [persons], in Kingsville 34 and 18 by profession of faith, in Port Arthur, four; which gives us a total of 80 persons being received [into the church] during the year in the

---

<sup>13</sup> Barton, "In Both Worlds," 40. Harwood established the official organ of the New Mexico Mission in 1880, *El Abogado Cristiano*, published in both English and Spanish (Thomas Harwood, *History of New Mexico Spanish and English Missions*, Vol. 1, 315).

<sup>14</sup> Barton, "In Both Worlds," 40. See also: *Iglesia Metodista de México, Libro Conmemorativo de las Bodas de Diamante de la Iglesia Metodista de México: 1873-1948*, edited by Vicente Mendoza (n.p.: Imprenta Nueva Educación [Metodista], 1948), 191-192; and *Actas del Quinto Período de Sesiones de la Conferencia Anual Mexicana de la Iglesia Metodista Episcopal del Sur*, held in Torreón, Coahuila, Mexico, November 2-6, 1922, 29.

different places. In addition, we have special services, there being a vast field for the Gospel, in Waelder, Taylor, and Galveston, where there remained a good number of persons as believers or candidates. I received invitation from other places, but it was not possible accept due to my being invited on the same dates in which I had a commitment to direct services in other places.<sup>15</sup>

Satisfied with her work, the Texas Mexican Mission's Commission on Evangelism recommended in 1930 that the bishop reappoint Miss Guerra as the conference evangelist.<sup>16</sup> In her report for 1930, she conducted evangelistic campaigns with pastors in thirteen towns and cities and counted 212 professions of faith resulting from her ministry.<sup>17</sup> Miss Guerra reported to the Texas Mexican Mission in October, 1931:

Up until the present, I inform you that during the year 1931, I visited the following locations: Eagle Pass, Crystal City, Carrizo, Laredo, Derby, Pearsall, Bastrop, San Diego, Mission, Rio Grande, Raymondville, Kingsville, East End, Prospect Hill and San Antonio. In some of these places [evangelistic] campaigns lasted two weeks. I give thanks to God for the glorious opportunities that were presented to me during the year; I have become more familiar with the churches and have had the privilege of being in communion with the pastors. The evangelistic work this year was not what the workers and I had hoped it would be; in spite of all the efforts there were less persons who accepted the Lord. The total number of persons [who accepted the Lord] in the various locations added up to 114.<sup>18</sup>

Miss Guerra visited nineteen pastoral charges in her work as conference evangelist during the 1931-1932 conference year.<sup>19</sup> Despite her effectiveness, Miss Guerra could not continue in her position due the poor condition of the conference's finances. The Great Depression affected the financial health of the conference; for lack of funding, Miss Guerra was discontinued as the conference evangelist after November, 1933.<sup>20</sup>

The employment of Elodia Guerra as the conference evangelist demonstrates the Mexicano community's recognition of the gifts of women. Miss Guerra conducted evangelism in the style of the Anglo-American missionaries and their Mexican and Mexican-American converts—preaching revival services aimed at bringing the Spanish-speaking to make a personal decision to accept Jesus Christ as their savior. Women, let alone Mexicanas, rarely practiced this form of evangelism in the Protestant tradition in the Southwest. Miss Guerra's reports demonstrated a passion for evangelistic campaigns and an ability to bring new persons into the Spanish-speaking Methodist churches.

---

<sup>15</sup> Misión Mexicana de Texas, "Annual Conference Minutes of the Misión Mexicana De Texas" (San Antonio, TX, Oct. 3-6 1929), 15-16. [Translation by Paul Barton].

<sup>16</sup> Misión Mexicana de Texas, "Annual Conference Minutes of the Conferencia Mexicana De Texas" (Brownsville, TX, October 16-19, 1930), 27.

<sup>17</sup> Misión Mexicana de Texas, (October 16-19, 1930), 36.

<sup>18</sup> Misión Mexicana de Texas, "Annual Conference Minutes of the Conferencia Mexicana De Texas" (San Antonio, TX, October 8-11, 1931), 29. [Translation by Paul Barton].

<sup>19</sup> Misión Mexicana de Texas, "Annual Conference Minutes of the Conferencia Mexicana De Texas" (San Antonio, TX, November 10-13, 1932), 25-26.

<sup>20</sup> Misión Mexicana de Texas, "Annual Conference Minutes of the Conferencia Mexicana De Texas" (San Antonio, TX, November 2-5, 1933), 20.

Before serving as the official evangelist of the Texas Mexican Mission, Miss Guerra had served as the evangelist of the District of Durango in the Mexican Annual Conference in 1924. Miss Guerra was not the only woman evangelist of her period. The minutes of the 1924 Annual Conference of the Mexican Annual Conference show that other women functioned as missionaries in Mexico. Mrs. Carlota M. Vda. de Quesada gave her report on her mission work with the Tarahumara Indians. Another single woman, Herminia Bustamante, served as the missionary in the Chihuahua District and another single woman, Gertrudis Reyes also served as a missionary evangelist in Chihuahua.<sup>21</sup>

In terms of evangelistic preaching, the Rev. Lucía Escobar could be considered the successor to Elodia Guerra. She was gifted with a ministry of preaching, prayer, and divine healing.<sup>22</sup> After The Methodist Church approved the ordination of women in 1956, the Rio Grande Conference appointed her as the first woman minister in the conference. Rev. Escobar was appointed to San Lucas Methodist Church in San Juan, Texas, in 1957.<sup>23</sup> She served other churches in South Texas and became a well-known evangelistic preacher throughout the Rio Grande Valley in South Texas. She was invited to preach at several churches throughout South Texas. She accompanied her preaching ministry with a strong prayer ministry. In one pastoral appointment she established an “upper room” for prayer at her parsonage. One day she had seventeen persons come requesting special prayer from her. Rev. Escobar also made visitation an important part of her ministry. In the church at Falfurrias, Texas, she visited many persons who worked on nearby farms and ranches and established worship groups in these areas.<sup>24</sup> During 1962-1964 she served as a volunteer in the evangelistic work of the Rio Grande Conference.<sup>25</sup> She was known to preach energetic sermons that moved persons to make personal commitments of faith in Christ.

Occasionally, like Elodia Guerra and Rev. Escobar, some other women transcended gender roles by serving as *de facto* pastors and preachers. These women followed the example of Susanna Wesley and other early Methodist women. In 1711, Susanna Wesley provided spiritual leadership for her husband Samuel Wesley’s parish while he was away. She read sermons found in her husband’s library and spoke about pursuing a righteous life to over two hundred interested persons who gathered in the church’s rectory.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Actas Oficiales de la Conferencia Anual Mexicana (Chihuahua, Mexico, October 29-November 5, 1924), 21.

<sup>22</sup> “60 Aniversario: 60 Mujeres en Misión. Ellas Salieron Sin Saber a Done Iban. 1933-1993,” Mujeres Metodistas Unidas. Conferencia Rio Grande. Iglesia Metodista Unida, 25.

<sup>23</sup> “Actas Oficiales De La Conferencia Anual Del Rio Grande” (Kerrville, TX, May 22-24, 1957), 20.

<sup>24</sup> Paul Barton, telephone interview with Romeo Escobar (Saturday, June 11, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> “60 Aniversario: 60 Mujeres en Misión. Ellas Salieron Sin Saber a Done Iban. 1933-1993,” Mujeres Metodistas Unidas. Conferencia Rio Grande. Iglesia Metodista Unida, 25.

<sup>26</sup> J. B. Wakeley, “Susanna Wesley and the Unauthorized Meetings.” In the web site “John Wesley: Holiness of Heart and Life” maintained by the General Board of Global Ministries. Accessed on June 6, 2011. <http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/wesley/susannawesley.stm>.

Rosaura Grado, whose husband, the Rev. Pedro Grado, served La Trinidad Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Pharr, Texas, in 1914, had to step in temporarily for her husband. During a period of great distrust between the Spanish-speaking and Anglo-Americans in the early part of the twentieth century, Rev. Grado had to flee from the Rio Grande Valley in South Texas across the border to Mexico when he learned that his name was in the “little black book” which contained the names of those who were shortly to be picked up by the Texas Rangers. He had attracted the Texas Rangers’ vengeance by preaching openly against the injustices being committed against Mexicans and Mexican Americans. Clotilde Nájuez states, “Grado narrowly escaped to Reynosa, Mexico, just across the Rio Grande [River]. La Trinidad [Methodist Church] was left without a pastor, but Rosaura Grado substituted for her husband magnificently. . . .” Mrs. Grado had assisted her husband by singing in the choir, but now, “she preached, visited the sick, and carried on the work of the church until the next meeting of the Annual Conference when [Pedro] Grado was appointed to Seguin.”<sup>27</sup>

Carolina Farías was another woman who stepped in for her husband. Upon the death of her husband, the Rev. R. G. Farías, in 1920, Mrs. Farías was appointed to continue serving the church in Mission, Texas, in her husband’s place. Clotilde Nájuez states, “Her effective service as her husband’s co-worker and her outstanding leadership qualities prompted the superintendent to ask Carolina, who had been left with seven children, to take charge.”<sup>28</sup> Since the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, did not allow for the pastoral appointment of women, Mrs. Farías was listed in the 1920 and 1921 conference appointments as *Propagandista*, “Propagandist.” From 1922 to at least 1929, she was listed in the conference appointments as “Missionary” for the church in Mission, Texas.<sup>29</sup>

Mrs. Farías was not the only woman listed in the conference appointments in the 1920s. There were several other Mexicana Methodist women who also served as either a “Propagandist” (that term was discontinued after 1921 and was replaced by the term missionary beginning in 1922), a missionary for a local church, or a teacher at a day school. Elodia Guerra’s name appears in the conference appointments from 1928 to 1933 as the conference missionary. The inclusion of these women in conference appointments, even though they were not official ordained ministers, demonstrates the esteem in which they were held by the male clergy and bishops.

### ***Hispanic Protestant Women’s Methods of Evangelism***

Even more importantly than the preached and written word, Mexican

---

<sup>27</sup> Clotilde Falcón Nájuez, “Hispanic Clergy Wives: Their Contribution to United Methodism in the Southwest, Later Nineteenth Century to the Present,” in *Women in New Worlds: Historical Perspectives on the Wesleyan Tradition*, ed. Hilah E. Thomas and Rosemary Skinner Keller (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), 167.

<sup>28</sup> Nájuez, “Hispanic Clergy Wives,” 170.

<sup>29</sup> Minutes of the Texas Mexican Mission from 1920 to 1929.

and Mexican Methodist women engaged in evangelism at the grassroots level of the church. They practiced their own forms of evangelism through their educational ministries, ministries to children, youth, and other women, service to their community, and the hospitality they offered others. Clearly, evangelism in the Hispanic community was not done only by male clergy or by Anglo-American missionaries; it involved Spanish-speaking women who asserted their faith in witness and service to their communities.

### ***Home Bible Studies***

In addition to these few women preachers, women were involved in evangelism using modes that fit their traditional gender roles. They took advantage of their leadership in the home to transmit their Protestant faith to their family members, neighbors, and community through a variety of activities. For example, one of the most common modes of evangelism was to sponsor a prayer meeting or a Bible study in one's home. In San Antonio, Mrs. Mary Rodriguez and her sister, Hortencia, invited two Catholic neighbors to study the Bible with them so they would understand more about Christ. According to Mrs. Rodriguez, the goal of the Bible Study was not so much to convert their neighbors to their Protestant faith as much as it was to help them better understand their own faith.<sup>30</sup> Visitation and invitation of neighboring women like this were common methods of evangelism among Hispanic Methodist women.

### ***The Home as a Center of Mission***

Evangelism through service and hospitality was exemplified in the ministry of María de Jesús Carreon Moreno. She opened her home in Dallas to her neighborhood for worship and education.<sup>31</sup>

Working with the Dallas Board of City Missions, Mrs. Moreno founded the Floyd Street Mission on the corner of Floyd and Liberty Streets in East Dallas in 1930. The purpose of this mission was to meet the needs of children and young Mexican-American families living in the area. Working out of her house, she began by focusing on the children in the neighborhood. She observed that many neighborhood children were entering school with insufficient skills in English, so she started a kindergarten in her home that emphasized the learning of English. As this ministry progressed, the older siblings of these young children became interested in Mrs. Moreno's ministry. She eventually supported a Campfire Girls club and a youth ministry. Her husband taught crafts, carpentry, and sports to the boys.<sup>32</sup> In addition to the kindergarten and clubs for children and youth, Mrs. Moreno organized

---

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Mary Rodríguez conducted by Paul Barton in 1996.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Mary Rodríguez.

<sup>32</sup> Paul Barton, telephone interview with Sam Moreno (Saturday, June 11, 2011).

clubs for mothers, a clinic, a Sunday school and worship services.<sup>33</sup> She also taught sewing, quilting and homemaking to the women. Bible Study and worship services, were held in her home. Mrs. Moreno would be visited for counseling by women experiencing problems with their marriages and their families. She also spent much time visiting families in the neighborhood.<sup>34</sup>

The evangelistic strategy of Mrs. Moreno was to reach first the children of the neighborhood and then their mothers. She knew if she could minister to women and children that they would influence the men of the family to convert to Protestantism.<sup>35</sup> The mission grew over time and eventually became a congregation of the Rio Grande Annual Conference in 1949. When it joined the conference, it became known as Latin American Methodist Church and is now Agape Memorial United Methodist Church.<sup>36</sup> Mrs. Moreno was recognized for her service to her community posthumously when the Dallas Independent School District opened and dedicated the new María Moreno Elementary School in November, 1997.

María Moreno was respected as a charismatic speaker. She would lead Bible Studies and sometimes even preach at her mission. Because she received support from the Anglo-American women of the North Texas Annual Conference, she received speaking invitations from church women's groups to share about her ministry. One day she went to speak at a women's gathering in Bowie, Texas. When she arrived at the town, she saw a banner hung above the street at the entrance to the town informing Mexicans and Mexican Americans that they were not welcome to stay the night in the town. When Mrs. Moreno began her speech to the women, she stated that her address would be short because she had to leave town before sundown, in accordance with the sign. Mrs. Moreno's son states that the sign was taken down before she left town.<sup>37</sup>

### **How Hispanic Protestant Women's Evangelism was Distinct from that of their Male Counterparts**

While the Anglo-American Protestant missionaries looked to the men to provide pastoral and evangelistic leadership in the congregations, Mexicana Protestants had their own ways of witnessing. While a few women adopted the male-oriented style of preaching, such as Elodia Guerra and Rev. Lucia Escobar, most women engaged in evangelism in ways different from the male clergy. For example, women were not as concerned with Protestant doctrinal orthodoxy as the male pastors.

Mexicano Protestant pastors conceived of their evangelistic ministry to

---

<sup>33</sup> Wesley-Rankin Community Center, A Brief History of Wesley Rankin Community Center [Website] (Wesley-Rankin Community Center, June 25, 2003 [cited June 26, 2003]); online, <http://www.wesleyrankin.org/about/history.html>.

<sup>34</sup> Paul Barton telephone interview with Sam Moreno (Saturday, June 11, 2011).

<sup>35</sup> Barton, telephone interview with Sam Moreno.

<sup>36</sup> Larry Flores, "A Brief History of the Hispanic Ministry at Agape Memorial United Methodist Church," (Dallas, TX: n.d.).

<sup>37</sup> Barton, telephone interview with Sam Moreno.

include preaching, teaching, and writing against the particular doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. They perceived their role as spiritual leaders to convince the Spanish-speaking of the “errors” of the Roman Catholic Church and to lead them into what they considered a more biblical, and hence orthodox, form of Christianity. For example, the Rev. Máximo Villareal had several books dedicated to Methodist and Protestant doctrine. Many of these books were published solely to provide Protestant refutations of Roman Catholic doctrine using Biblical citations as proof. Among such books was *Roma y la Palabra de Dios*, published in Madrid, Spain in 1870. In several chapters, the author repudiates several doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church regarding the eucharist, purgatory, the Bible, the church, the sacraments, marriage, confession, eucharist, and prayer. He places the official Roman Catholic doctrine at the beginning of each section and then cites several biblical passages that seem to contradict that particular Roman Catholic teaching.<sup>38</sup>

Two other books dedicated to refuting Roman Catholic teaching were T. H. Horne's *El Romanismo, Enemigo de la Santa Biblia* [*Romanism: Enemy of the Holy Bible*], translated from English by Rev. G. H. Rule, published in Spain in 1840, and *Las Enseñanzas de Roma y la Palabra de Dios* [*The Teachings of Rome and the Word of God*], translated from French and published by the Casa Bautista de Publicaciones in Leon, Guanajuato, Mexico in 1915.<sup>39</sup> Apart from the books that expressly refute Roman Catholic theology, Spanish-speaking Methodist preachers also read books dedicated to doctrinal teaching. In the Máximo Villareal Collection, there are such books as P. M. Geronimo De Ripalda's *Catecismo y Exposición Breve de la Doctrina Cristiana*, [*Catechism and Brief Exposition on Christian Doctrine*] published in Paris and Mexico in 1892.<sup>40</sup> They also read Spanish-translated books titled *Doctrinas y Disciplina* [*Doctrines and Discipline*], published by the Methodist Episcopal Church and *Doctrinas y Disciplina de la Iglesia Metodista Episcopal del Sur* [*Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South*].<sup>41</sup>

In one case a Methodist Mexican preacher conflicted publicly with a Roman Catholic priest. At some point in time, either in the late nineteenth or the early twentieth century, the Rev. Pedro Grado held a public debate in Durango, Mexico, with a Roman Catholic priest, Father Irineo Durán. The two agreed that the loser of the debate would join the winner's church.

---

<sup>38</sup> *Roma y la Palabra de Dios* [Obra Traducida del Francés por C.W.] (Madrid: Imprenta de J. M. Perez, 1870). This book is located in the Maximo Villareal Collection.

<sup>39</sup> T. H. Horne, *El Romanismo, Enemigo de la Santa Biblia*, Translated from English by Rev. G. H. Rule. “En la Imprenta de la Biblioteca Militar de Gibraltar, a costa de la Sociedad de los Estados Unidos de America para Tratados Religiosos,” 1840; *Las Enseñanzas de Roma y la Palabra de Dios*, translated from French (Leon, GTO: Casa Bautista de Publicaciones, 1915).

<sup>40</sup> P. M. Geronimo De Ripalda, *Catecismo y Exposición Breve de la Doctrina Cristiana* (Paris/Mexico: Libreria de Ch. Bouret, 1892).

<sup>41</sup> David G. Downey, ed. *Doctrinas y Disciplina* Translated from English by Albert B. Báez, Methodist Episcopal Church, Iglesia Metodista Episcopal, *Doctrinas y Disciplina de la Iglesia Metodista Episcopal del Sur*.

According to Clotilde Náñez, after the priest lost the debate, he became a Methodist.<sup>42</sup>

Hispanic Protestant women generally did not practice such a crusading spirit in their ministry. While they were rooted in their Protestant tradition, they did not engage in antagonistic behaviors, such as conducting public debates with priests and publishing tracts outlining the heresies of the Roman Catholic Church. Hence, the level of anti-Catholic rhetoric and behavior was much more subdued among Mexicana Protestants. Indeed, Mary Rodriguez, who was raised in a Protestant household, attended the ordination of a Catholic priest and allowed the cardinal who conducted the consecration to give her a blessing.<sup>43</sup> A generation before her, no Mexicano/a Protestant would have considered stepping into the doorway of a Roman Catholic church.

The Mexican and Mexican-American practice of hospitality furthered Protestant evangelism. It was this cultural value of hospitality among Mexicans and Mexican-Americans that provided an opening for the Protestant message to enter into Mexicano homes. Mexican and Mexican-American women helped evangelize their own families by allowing missionaries and other Protestant evangelists to enter their homes. Referring to the first few generations of Mexicano Protestants, Minerva Garza writes: "Who were there to greet the missionaries as they began their ministry among the Mexican people? Women! They were taking care of the household duties while men were out working."<sup>44</sup> This was the case with Minerva Garza's mother, who received a Methodist missionary into her house while her father was out working.<sup>45</sup>

Mexicana hospitality provides us with a helpful way to conceive of evangelism. Joon-Sik Park provides a helpful understanding of evangelism by placing it in the context of hospitality. He notes that the "verbal proclamation of the gospel is an essential dimension of evangelism" and that "evangelism is definitely a word event."<sup>46</sup> However, he acknowledges that evangelism is not solely a verbal activity, "as demonstrated in Jesus' incarnation."<sup>47</sup>

Park asserts that evangelism requires that the person sharing the gospel enter into fellowship with the one receiving the gospel.

---

<sup>42</sup> C. F. Náñez, "Hispanic Clergy Wives: Their Contribution to United Methodism in the Southwest, Later Nineteenth Century to the Present," *Women in New Worlds: Historical Perspectives on the Wesleyan Tradition* H. E. Thomas and R. S. Keller, eds. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), 166.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Mary Rodriguez conducted by Paul Barton in 1996.

<sup>44</sup> Minerva Garza, "The Influence of Methodism on Hispanic Women through Women's Societies," *Methodist History* 34.2 (1996): 79.

<sup>45</sup> Garza, "The Influence of Methodism on Hispanic Women," 79-80.

<sup>46</sup> Joon-Sik Park, "Evangelism and the Practice of Hospitality," *Considering the Great Commission: Evangelism and Mission in the Wesleyan Spirit* W. Stephen Gunter and Elaine Robinson, eds. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 147.

<sup>47</sup> Park, 147.

Evangelism practiced in the context of hospitality is not simply the sharing of our knowledge of the gospel, but of our lives redeemed, transformed, and sustained by the grace of God. When the good news is shared, the lives of the witness and the one invited to Christian faith are also to be shared. In this way, hospitality is more than simply a context for evangelism; it is integral to the gospel.<sup>48</sup>

Park's envisioning of evangelism as hospitality fits most closely with the Mexican and Mexican-American practice of evangelism, especially for women. For Mexicanas, the practice of hospitality was integral to their culture. Hence, there occurred a confluence of the Mexicano value of hospitality with the practice of evangelism. By being hospitable, especially by welcoming Protestant ministers and women into their homes, women were often the first to hear the Protestant message. They often became evangelists to their own families, eventually bringing with them their husbands, children, and other family members into the Protestant church.<sup>49</sup> The spiritual leadership of Latina Protestants occurred also because this role had traditionally been delegated to them by their Mexicano culture. Clotilde Nández states:

Especially among Mexicans, the Hispanic tradition of machismo delegates the observance of religion to women. Anticlericalism has long pervaded male culture, and frequent church-going was considered effeminate. It is not strange therefore that Protestants made converts first among women.<sup>50</sup>

It is likely that more women than men attended the early Spanish-speaking Protestant churches in the late 1800s and the early 1900s. This assumption is based on the fact that in the Spanish-speaking Roman Catholic tradition, women were the primary participants in the Roman Catholic worship. Mexicana Protestant and Catholic women shared the same roles as spiritual leaders in their families. Just as in the Mexicano Roman Catholic tradition, where women typically provided spiritual leadership in the family by practicing and transmitting the faith to the next generation, Mexican and Mexican-American Methodist women were often the spiritual leaders in their families. The United Methodist minister Rev. David Maldonado refers to this in his autobiography: "Above all, Mother has been the spiritual leader of the family. Her faith and spirituality, especially her way of life, have been sources of strength and guidance for all of us. In a real way, she has become the Mamagrande [his grandmother] of today. Her prayers are powerful and moving. When she prays, tears flow from her eyes as well as from the eyes of all gathered around the table or in the room."<sup>51</sup>

Bishop Minerva Carcaño's memories of her grandmother are consistent with those of David Maldonado's memories of his mother. Her grandmother Sofia and her grandfather Rafael had received a stranger into their sharecropper farm in south Texas, where he shared the good news of Christ with them.

---

<sup>48</sup> Park, 148.

<sup>49</sup> Park, 80.

<sup>50</sup> Nández, "Hispanic Clergy Wives," 169.

<sup>51</sup> David Maldonado, Jr., *Crossing Guadalupe Street: Growing up Hispanic and Protestant* (Albuquerque, NM: U New Mexico P, 2001), 85.

Over time, they held worship services for the family under a mesquite tree. Having given her life to Christ, Bishop Carcaño's grandmother made sure the family lived a devout life. She states:

Our week was framed by Sunday worship, each day began and ended with prayer, meals were consumed only after giving thanks to God, Scripture was read with great discipline, and life was lived in the confidence that we were not alone for Christ Jesus abided with us in the fullness of his grace and his power.<sup>52</sup>

### ***Women's Societies***

Another example of spiritual leadership employed by Latina Protestants was the women's societies. Women's organizations provided much support for the Mexican and Mexican-American Protestant church. Originally formed to support the mission work of the church, they also engaged in evangelism through their hospitality and network of relationships. Mary Rodriguez recounted how a group from the women's society of La Trinidad Methodist Church in San Antonio went visiting in her neighborhood and invited the mother of a family to attend the church. She notes that the family became members through this visitation by the women.<sup>53</sup> While the women's organizations tended to focus upon support for their denomination's missions, they also exerted much energy in visiting families in the neighborhoods. Often, they hosted and led Bible studies and prayer groups in their homes and invited neighbors to attend.

### ***Girls' Schools***

Methodist mission agencies sought to improve the condition of Mexican and Mexican-American families by establishing schools for girls. In 1921, The Home Department of the General Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, established Valley Institute in Pharr, Texas, in South Texas. The school opened with twenty-four pupils, twelve of whom were boarders. By the end of the first year the school had eighty students, fifteen of whom were boarders. The superintendent of the school, Miss Swanson, stated the philosophy behind the creation of this girls' school:

If we can raise [Mexicans' and Mexican-Americans'] standards and ideals above that of the homes from which they come, and send them out to raise the standards and ideals of others with whom they come in contact, we have indeed accomplished a great and much needed work among the Mexican classes.<sup>54</sup>

With support from the Women's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Rev. Thomas Harwood and his wife Emily Jane Harwood also opened a "Girls' Industrial school" in Albuquerque in New

---

<sup>52</sup> Minerva Carcaño, *I Believe in Jesus* (New York: Women's Division, The General Board of Global Ministries, 2008), 1-2.

<sup>53</sup> Rodriguez, interview, 9.

<sup>54</sup> Katherine Travis Ashburn, "History of the Methodist Educational Work among the Mexicans in Texas," M.A. thesis, Texas Christian University (Fort Worth, TX) 1934, 61, quoting from article about Valley Institute, Pharr, Texas, *Brownsville Herald*, (March 3, 1930), 2.

Mexico in 1892.<sup>55</sup> Miss Frances Montague of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the General Mission Board, established another girls school, Effie Eddington School, for Mexican girls, located in the basement of El Mesías Methodist church in El Paso, Texas.<sup>56</sup> The school opened in the early years of the twentieth century and closed in 1932.<sup>57</sup> Frances Montague praised the success of the school:

Five of our grads have given one to three years as teachers in some of our mission schools, two are pastors' wives in the Mexican Conference, and one is president of the Conference Missionary Society of the Western Mexican Conference. Three other girls who did not finish our course have married pastors . . .<sup>58</sup>

The overall aim of these three Methodist girls' schools was the creation of a class of young women educated not only in classical learning, but also in middle-class Anglo-American Protestant values and piety. It was expected that these women would serve as pastors' wives, teachers, leaders in their Protestant churches, and leaders in their communities and spread the Anglo-American Protestant way of life in their communities, as well as in their homes. James McMillin states, "Many missionaries believed that when a Mexican woman was converted, rather than Christianizing an individual, the entire family was Christianized."<sup>59</sup>

### ***Sunday Schools***

The Sunday School movement in mainstream Protestant denominations provided Mexican and Mexican-American Protestants with an effective model for gaining new members and establishing new congregations.<sup>60</sup> During the first few generations of Spanish-speaking Protestants, the Sunday School was the most vital area of congregational life. Ben Costales states that his father, Dionisio Costales, formed many Sunday schools during his ministry in New Mexico in the early part of the twentieth century as a means of beginning new congregations.<sup>61</sup> Given that Spanish-speaking men was

---

<sup>55</sup>Harriet Kellogg, *Life of Mrs. Emily J. Harwood* (Albuquerque, NM: El Abogado Press), 101. See also Alfredo Nájuez, *A History of the Rio Grande Conference of the United Methodist Church*, 22.

<sup>56</sup>Mary Watson, "Early History of Lydia Patterson Institute," *Nueva Senda* 39.3 (1964): 10. See also Ashburn, 52. The school was established for boys and girls in 1901, but in 1906 the boys were excluded and the school was available only for girls and young ladies (53).

<sup>57</sup>Ashburn, 28.

<sup>58</sup>Ashburn, 55-56, quoting "Montague to Ashburn" (August, 1933).

<sup>59</sup>James McMillin, "Anglo Methodist Missionaries and Mexicans in the Southwest and Mexico," M.A. Thesis, Southern Methodist University, 36.

<sup>60</sup>For a study on the connection between the nineteenth-century Sunday School and its relationship to North American society and evangelical Protestantism, see Anne M. Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790-1880* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1988). She observes that the North American Sunday School evolved from a school aimed at helping the poor to a vehicle for "self-help and collective social advancement" for the working-class (166).

<sup>61</sup>Ben Costales, interview with Ben Costales, conducted by Paul Barton in Albuquerque, New Mexico, (June 16, 1997).

the most difficult group to evangelize, the focus of the new Sunday schools was frequently on children, youth, and young adults. While pastors gave much attention to the Sunday school ministry, it was often pastors' wives and the church's women who staffed and led Sunday schools.

The high Sunday school membership figures among the Spanish-speaking Methodist churches in northern Mexico, Texas, and New Mexico indicate the vitality of this ministry. From 1885 until 1950, Sunday school membership among Spanish-speaking Methodists in northern Mexico, New Mexico, and Texas ranged from 80 to 125 percent of the total conference membership. In some years, Sunday school membership equaled or surpassed conference membership.<sup>62</sup>

The Sunday school movement among Mexican and Mexican-American Protestants in Texas climaxed with the establishment of Sunday school conventions among Spanish-speaking Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians in Texas from the 1920s to the 1940s. During these years, Spanish-speaking Methodists held Sunday school conventions throughout Texas. Participants at these conventions reinforced their social relations and learned methods for developing effective Sunday school programs.

Sunday school was not simply a time for learning the content of the Christian tradition. It also offered opportunities for sharing testimonies. The Rev. José Galindo, the son of Methodist parents and the leader of a barrio gang during his youth, had a conversion experience in his teen years while listening to his Sunday school teacher's stirring testimony.<sup>63</sup> Sunday school teachers did not simply teach the content of the Bible; they also shared with the young people the wisdom they had received both from their Christian

---

<sup>62</sup> "Mexican Border Mission Conference, 1885," in *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the Year 1885* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1886), 57; "Mexican Border Mission Conference, 1890," in *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the Year 1890* (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1891), 51; "Mexican Border Mission Conference, 1901," in *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the Year 1900* (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, [1901]), 225; "Mexican Border Mission Conference, 1910," in *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the Year 1910* (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1911), 6; "Texas Mexican Mission, 1920," in *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the Year 1920* (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1921), 283; Curtis B. Haley, ed., "Texas Mexican Conference, 1930," in *General Minutes and Yearbook for 1930-31, being the Minutes of the Annual Conferences of The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the Year 1930, and the Southern Methodist Yearbook for 1931* (Nashville: Publishing House, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1931), 255; "Southwest Mexican Conference, 1940," in *General Minutes and Yearbook for 1940-41, being the Condensed Minutes of the Annual Conferences in the Southeastern and South Central Jurisdictions of the Methodist Church for the Year 1940, and The Methodist Yearbook for 1941*, edited and tabulated by Curtis B. Haley (New York: The Methodist Publishing House, 1941), 223; "Rio Grande Conference," in *General Minutes of the Annual Conferences of The Methodist Church in the United States, Territories, and Cuba, 1950* (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1950), 421.

<sup>63</sup> José Galindo, "Interview with José Galindo," conducted by Paul Barton in Faysville, TX, (January 12, 1996), 4-5.

tradition and their Mexicano culture. Often, this form of Christian nurture occurred through women Sunday school teachers.

### ***The Contribution of Wives of Hispanic Pastors***

Pastors' wives contributed significantly to the congregations' ministry, but they were restricted to traditional gender roles. Indeed, since the ordained ministry was unavailable to them until the second half of the twentieth century, women exercised their ministerial vocations as unofficial co-pastors alongside their husbands. Years ago, the widow of a minister in the Rio Grande Conference made a public plea that the conference provide her a pension because she had worked her entire adult life alongside her husband. She argued that she deserved the same pension as her husband because she had given her working life to co-ministry with her husband.

Clotilde Nández chronicles the contributions that pastors' wives made in their husbands' ministry. Among the women she mentions Isabel Hill de Verduzco. Her husband, the Rev. Pablo G. Verduzco, was appointed to the Methodist church in Port Arthur, Texas in 1934. When he died three years later, Mrs. Verduzco continued serving the Spanish-speaking community in many ways. She served as a translator for the courts and was sought after for translation of documents by the town's professionals. She taught citizenship classes for the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization "and served as witness for people seeking citizenship papers."<sup>64</sup> While Clotilde Nández' account of Mrs. Verduzco highlights her ministry of service, she gained such notoriety that "she became known affectionately as *la madrina de los Mexicanos* ('the godmother of the Mexicans')."<sup>65</sup> While we cannot say with certainty that she engaged in evangelism in typical ways, the fact that she was sought after by many for help and that she had such a strong vocation for service can lead one to perceive her ministry of service as an evangelistic witness.

### **Conclusion**

As mentioned earlier, in the early period of Spanish-speaking Protestant churches, Mexican and Mexican-American Protestant women played significant roles in the church. Within their traditional gender roles, women had more opportunities for service and leadership. It was women who led Sunday school, organized kindergartens and Vacation Bible Schools, who worked with the children and mothers, and who provided social services to their communities. Their work with children, mothers, and the needy in their communities fit with their traditional gender roles. They used these avenues for service to witness to the Gospel. Thus, when thinking about evangelism in the Hispanic Methodist tradition, we cannot limit our gaze

---

<sup>64</sup> Nández, "Hispanic Clergy Wives: Their Contribution to United Methodism in the Southwest, Later Nineteenth Century to the Present," 168. See also "Actas Oficiales De La Conferencia Anual Rio Grande De La Iglesia Metodista Unida" (Georgetown, TX, [June 8-11, 1973]), 161.

<sup>65</sup> Nández, 169.

to the pulpit or simply the proclaimed word. We must also remember the evangelism that was conducted at the grassroots level, in Sunday School rooms, in counseling among women, in service to the needy, and in opening one's homes to neighbors. Except for a small group that transcended gender roles, Mexican and Mexican-American Methodist women took advantage of traditional gender roles to communicate the Gospel to members of their own families, neighbors, children and youth. In this sense, the Mexican and Mexican-American value of hospitality and the significance of relationships contributed to Hispanic women's evangelistic ministries. This evangelism practiced as the day-to-day faith witness of the women of the church.