



HTI Celebrates Successful Defenses with Four Schools

**INSIDE
THIS
ISSUE:**

HTI celebrates defenses 1-2

HTIC Steering Committee meets 2-3

New in print and on-line 3

Logros 4

HTI upcoming event 4

New family members 5

For your prayers 5

Four schools will soon count HTI fellows among their alumnae, with these recent graduates already teaching, working in academia, or well on their way to joining the gradually increasing number of Latina/o faculty across the country, bringing the total number of HTI graduates to **54**. These talented junior scholars are:

- **Dr. Cristina García-Alfonso** (2007-2008 Dissertation Year fellow) from Brite Divinity School. She will be teaching a Hebrew Bible summer course at Perkins School of Theology.

- **Dr. Rubén Muñoz-Larrondo** (2005-2006 Dissertation Year fellow) from Vanderbilt University. He is already teaching at Andrews University, where he is Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies.

- **Dr. Angel Santiago** (2006-2007 Dissertation Year fellow) from Boston University. He will join the faculty at Memphis Theological Seminary in the fall of 2008 as Assistant Professor of World Christianity and Mission Studies.

- **Dr. Efraín Velázquez** (2006-2007 Dissertation Year fellow) from Andrews University. He was recently appointed as Academic Dean at Interamerican Adventist Theological Seminary.

HTI is like a home away from home

One common factor among these recent graduates is that they are foreign-born. **Cristina**, who left her native Cuba to complete her graduate work in this country, states, "As a foreigner with very little English speaking and writing abilities and absolutely no connections, I had to work twice as hard because I had to learn the language and then learn to interpret my ideas in academic writing. This requires an enormous amount of redrafting, and that is why the invaluable support provided by the HTI editor was pivotal in writing my dissertation." **Cristina** found in HTI the financial support she desperately needed, coupled with mentoring and networking components that helped her excel in her discipline, allowing her to complete her Old Testament studies in

five years.

Born and raised in Puerto Rico, **Angel's** upbringing was fraught with hardship, and this made HTI's support particularly valuable. "Having an objective mentor who was from my culture and also in my discipline was what kept me focused and helped me excel in academia." For me the mentoring relationship was life-transforming, and affirming."

"One thing that is always stated at HTI is that we are a family and this rings very true, especially when you cannot share the struggles of illness, frustration with feelings of isolation, and even the happy arrival of children," states **Efraín**, who completed his graduate studies in archaeological and ethnographical studies and was also born and raised in Puerto Rico, "I was very fortunate to find HTI during my comprehensive exam year, because HTI provided an excellent mentor and a space for me to express myself freely, finding true fellowship in colleagues whose cultural backgrounds are similar to mine."

(Continued on page 2)



Dr. Cristina García-Alfonso



Dr. Rubén Muñoz-Larrondo



Dr. Angel Santiago



Dr. Efraín Velázquez

(Continued from page 1)

Rubén, who was born in Chile, shares, “Being the father of three, my own religious community did not understand why I would leave the security of my career, burdening my wife with the responsibility of being the main provider, for the sake of a completing a doctorate in New Testament. There were many nights when I wanted to give up, questioning my capacity to complete this program, but HTI’s wonderful resources in the form of regional meetings, summer workshops, and other opportunities for engaging in conversations with others who shared my commitment as an organic scholar, helped me forge ahead. I am excited about my future now as a professor at Andrews and I thank HTI for the excellent financial and human resources made available to me. For me, HTI provided a safe environment for growth, support, and networking, it truly is a *familia*.”

Organic scholars remain connected to church and community

For these new graduates, keeping close ties to their churches and communities play an important part in defining who they are, although this is sometimes difficult given the rigors of graduate studies. Appreciating this fact, HTI expects students to continue their service to the community, a requirements unique among scholarship programs. **Angel** praises HTI’s creating of “a space where I was academically challenged, and spiritually nourished.” He is currently pastor of a United Methodist Church in Whitman, MA. As a member on the editorial board of the Institute of Welcoming Resources, **Cristina** is working on a Spanish curriculum for Hispanic churches, and previously worked as an interpreter for Latinas at a women’s shelter. **Efraín** recently participated in the “Sola Scriptura 2008” event in Puerto Rico, where 600 young Adventists gathered to transcribe the Bible. During coursework, **Rubén** took on a ministerial job that provided only a modest stipend, but rewarded him with the satisfaction brought by serving a appreciative grassroots community. For him and his colleagues, these experiences are as fulfilling as their academic accomplishments, knowing that the work outside the classroom requires their leadership as well.

HTI Celebrates Historical Feat

With four successful defenses within a period of three weeks, these recent graduates set an HTI record. Through the collective work of our students, partner institutions, church communities and the growing number of HTI supporters, we are making history. Let’s rejoice and celebrate!

CONSORTIUM FUELS ENDURANCE, GROWTH, AND SUCCESS

HTIC Steering Committee meets in Princeton

In April, HTI Director, **Joanne Rodriguez**, and Princeton Theological Seminary Chief Operating Officer and Treasurer, **John Gilmore**, welcomed six members from the seventeen HTIC member institutions to begin their groundbreaking collaborative efforts to increase Latino faculty members across the country.

Dr. Edwin Hernández (HTI Advisory Committee member and Foundations Research Director at RDV Corporation) began the meeting with a presentation on HTI’s history, and showed how HTI’s comprehensive plan which includes scholarship, mentoring

and networking has over the past 11 years increased faculty from **67** to over **123**, an increase of **83%**. Participants agreed that the combination of financial support with mentoring and networking is HTI’s hallmark contribution to academia and the church.

Mentoring is the vital ingredient for completion of doctorate

After a second presentation giving intricate details on the HTI mentoring program by **Rev. Dr. Jean-Pierre Ruiz** (Professor of Theology at St. John’s University, and HTI Mentor’s Training leader), **Dr. Maureen Maloney** (Dean of Students & Vice President for Students Affairs at Graduate Theological Union), expressed her admiration for the signa-

ture component, finding it to be “groundbreaking work because a mentor helps an institution measure a student’s progress, and acts as a third party mechanism for conveying what a student does not understand.”

Given the fact that most faculty are not prepared for becoming mentors, the value of mentoring must continue to be stressed as a strategic tool. **Dr. David Maldonado** (Director of the Center for the Study of Latino Christianity and Religions at Perkins School of Theology and former HTI Selection Committee member) added, “Ensuring that students continue to have an objective partner who is not tied to the institution is also vitally important.” Additionally,

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

Dr. John McCarthy (Associate Professor & Section Coordinator of Constructive Theology at Loyola University Chicago), praised HTI's low rate of approximately 7% as "almost negligible," compared to the elevated number of drop-outs in the general population among doctoral students, which can fluctuate between 32 and 40%.

Partnership seeks to increase Latino faculty

Dr. Matthew Zyniewicz (Assistant Chair and Director of

the Master's in Theology Program at the University of Notre Dame) shared, "The young and ever-growing Latino population across the nation is the key reason why we want to invest in and enhance the work of HTI." **Dr. Nancy Bedford** (Professor of Applied Theology at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, added, "Through this partnership we look forward to sharing ideas and resources to enhance HTI's already proven record and increase the faculty across the nation." Reaffirming her colleagues' conviction, **Dr. Susan Nelson** (Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean, and Profes-

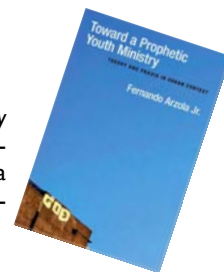
or of Theology and Culture at Claremont School of Theology) said, "As we continue to identify ways to make better use of each institution's human and financial resources to better prepare Latino PhD students in academia, our academic communities stand to benefit greatly, and these benefits will reach beyond the classroom."



From left to right, Joanne Rodriguez (HTI), John McCarthy (Loyola University Chicago), David Maldonado (Perkins School of Theology), Matthew Zyniewicz (University of Notre Dame), Susan Nelson (Claremont School of Theology), Nancy Bedford (Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary), Maria Kennedy (HTI), Maureen Maloney (Graduate Theological Union), Angela Schoepf (HTI), and Edwin Hernandez (RDV Corporation).

NEW IN PRINT AND ON-LINE

Intervarsity Press recently announced the publication of *Toward a Prophetic Youth Ministry: Theory and Praxis in Urban Context*, penned by **Dr. Fernando Arzola, Jr.**, Assistant Professor and Director of Christian Education and Youth Ministry at Nyack College. In his book, Dr. Arzola seeks "to offer a theoretical and methodological framework for youth ministry in the urban context."



HTI Assistant Director, **Angela Schoepf**, recently discovered a website aimed at journalists who need sources for conducting research on religion. **Religionlink** offers an expansive guide to Hispanic religion, including scores of interview sources and links to organizations and surveys. The site already has information on many HTI community members, but we strongly encourage everyone to visit the website (http://www.religionlink.org/tip_061204.php) and request inclusion, or the updating of information, by sending an email to hispanic@religionlink.org

LOGROS



Rev. Dr. Jean-Pierre Ruiz, STD (HTI Mentor), Professor of Theology at St. John's University, was tapped as an in-studio expert by several local media outlets and appeared in pre-taped interviews, as well as commenting live for Fox-5's Good Day New York, Fox-5 NY News, and WCBS Channel 2 News during the Holy Father's visit to New York. Rev. Dr. Ruiz was also interviewed by Newsday, BBC radio and did several interviews for local Spanish language news outlets including Telemundo and Univision.



Rev. Dr. Arlene Sánchez-Walsh (2006 Book Prize winner and Associate Professor of Church History and Latino Church Studies at Haggard School of Theology), received a grant from the Louisville Institute for her work, *American Pentecostalism's Engagement with Race and Ethnicity: Historical Realities and Theological Perspectives*.



In January of this year, Louisville Presbyterian Seminary hosted The Louisville Institute's Annual Winter Seminar, where **Dr. Nancy Pineda-Madrid** (Latinas in Theology participant and Assistant Professor of Theology and Latino/a Ministry at Boston College) participated in the rich, interdisciplinary conversation about a diverse array of projects.



Texas A&M University was recently the site of a symposium on one of the most prominent crypto-Jewish families to migrate to northern New Spain in the 16th century, the Carvajal Family, with the participation of **Gregory Cuéllar, PhD** (2005-2006 Dissertation Year fellow and lecturer/curator for Hispanic Resources at the Cushing Memorial Library and Archives at Texas A&M University). From a contemporary perspective, this symposium was held to contribute to the understanding of the multivalent cultural heritage of the Hispanic people in the U.S. Southwest.



Javier Alanís, PhD (2002-2003 Dissertation Year fellow) was appointed Associate Academic Dean at the Lutheran Seminary Program of the Southwest (LSPS) in Austin, Texas, a theological extension program of Wartburg Seminary and the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. He has served in this capacity since the fall of 2006. In addition to his regular teaching responsibilities in the area of missiology, theology and Christian ethics, his academic dean responsibilities include oversight of student academic requirements, the annual review and revision of the curriculum, and most recently the accreditation review of LSPS by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS).

Upcoming Event

HTI will host its annual Summer Workshop on the campus of Princeton Theological Seminary, from August 1-5, 2008. This year's event will provide the 2008-2009 HTI fellows with a variety of workshops designed to address the needs of their particular levels of study, as well as their respective disciplines.



HTI's Newest Family Members

Rubén Rosario, PhD (2003-2004 Dissertation Year fellow and Assistant Professor of Theology at St. Louis University) and wife Betsy, recently welcomed the arrival of Raphael Antonio. Also celebrating Raphael's arrival is big sister Isabella, who is thoroughly enjoying her new role.



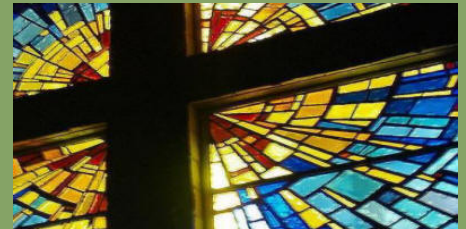
The HTI staff is thrilled to announce the joyous arrival of Aubrielle Esperanza Gómez, daughter of student aide **Rafael Gómez**, and wife, Jillienne. Mother and child are both well, with the proud father doing his best to prepare for final exams with little sleep!

2007-2008 Dissertation Year fellow, **Salvador Alcantara** (2007-2008 Dissertation Year fellow) and wife Bri, became parents for the first time, happily announcing the birth of son, Mateo Ignacio.



Please keep them in your prayers

It is with much sorrow that we share the passing of **Amber Pedraja**, wife of **Dr. Luis Pedraja** (1997-1998 Post Doctoral fellow, mentor, and Vice President at the Middle States Commission on Higher Education). Amber bravely fought a devastating and prolonged illness, and we ask that you keep Dr. Pedraja in your prayers as he grieves this tremendous loss.



As always, we ask all of our community members to keep us posted of any news items you would like to have considered for inclusion in our newsletter by emailing us at hti@ptsem.edu. Remember to include pertinent information, such as website or email addresses, as well as any photographs (preferably in .jpeg format). The deadline for receiving submission is the **25th** of each month. Keep in mind that each submission should be no more than two paragraphs long, and remember to help us maintain our newsletter mailing list up to date, by advising us of email address changes. ¡Gracias!