A STRATEGIC PLAN TO ENCOURAGE THE PURSUIT OF AN
ACCREDITATION MODEL AMONG INDEPENDENT BAPTIST
PASTORAL TRAINING INSTITUTIONS IN
SPANISH-SPEAKING LATIN AMERICA

by

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ABSTRACT

Although independent Baptist pastoral training institutions have served the

Spanish-speaking church in Latin America for decades, most have become stagnated in academic

development and institutional advancement. The purpose of this study was to develop a strategic

plan that will encourage these institutions to pursue an accreditation model. This study identified

five impediments to this pursuit. The five identified impediments are:

1.   Insufficient academic preparation of professors

2.   Excessive government restrictions

3.   Poor economic situation in country

4.   Lack of interest/Lack of knowledge of benefits

5.   Low academic level of students

This quantitative data was obtained through a Delphi survey of twenty-two individuals

from three distinct subgroups. The three subgroups were: (1) Independent Baptist missionaries

actively involved in pastoral training in Spanish-speaking Latin America, (2) Independent

Baptist Hispanic pastors or professors who were trained in Latin America and who retain

involvement in this ministry, and (3) Independent Baptist theological educators who have

experience with the accreditation process. Through the Delphi survey the participants suggested

the above-mentioned impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model. The Delphi expert

panel also provided qualitative data by sharing additional insight into the nature of the

impediments through comments made within the survey and personal conversations with the

author.

Once the five impediments had been identified a Delphi support team worked with the

author to develop a strategic plan to address each impediment. Specific goals were set, and

action steps were identified. Most importantly, the strategic plan encourages independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America to promptly initiate and to passionately pursue the core concepts of the accreditation model, specifically, the standardization of curriculum, external peer review and internal quality assessment.

Additionally, the author conducted an extensive study of relevant biblical themes and related literature on subjects pertinent to pastoral training and accreditation in an Hispanic context. Particularly foundational to the author's thinking were Paul Hiebert's development of the *fourth-self* in *Anthropological Insights For Missionaries*, Andrew Walls's focus upon the *serial* nature of Christianity in *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History,* and Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland's explanation of the differences in the way different cultures do theology in *Globalizing Theology*.

The project concludes with recommendations to independent Baptist churches, ministries, and pastoral training institutions in both the United States and Spanish-speaking Latin America. The primary aim of the study was to promote, through accreditation, institutional advancement in the Hispanic world and the growth of Hispanic theological leaders for local churches and ministries.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABHE   Association for Biblical Higher Education

ABWE   Association of Baptists for World Evangelism

AETAL   Asociación Evangélica de Educación Teológica en América Latina

ATS   Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada

BMM   Baptist Mid-Missions

CHEA   Council for Higher Education Accreditation

DEAC   Distance Education Accreditation Council

EBI   Editorial Bautista Independiente

ICETE   International Council for Evangelical Theological Education

IDB   Inter-American Development Bank

LXX   Greek Septuagint

NHCLC   National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference

OECD   Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

PISA   Programme for International Student Assessment

PIU   Piedmont International University

SBI   Seminario Bautista Independiente, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

STBI   Seminario Teológico Bautista Independiente, Mexico City, Mexico

SWOT   Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, obstacles, and threats

TRACS   Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools

UNAZA   Universidad Nazarena

WCC   World Council of Churches

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION OF THE TOPIC

Since the middle of the twentieth century, the Gospel of Christ has spread exponentially throughout Latin America. As late as the 1970s, the evangelical population in the region was below twenty million; today that number has ballooned to more than sixty million with evident growth in every Latin American country.[1] Likewise, thousands of evangelical churches have been planted.[2]

As the Church grows in numbers, so does its need for trained leadership. However, theological superficiality and the lack of well-trained leadership are frequently identified as the greatest problems in Latin American evangelicalism. In *Operation World*, James Mandryk states, "the majority of Latin and Caribbean evangelical congregations are led by pastors with little or no formal theological training" (Mandryk 2010, 52). Jeffrey P. Greenman and Gene L. Green describe the situation succinctly:

> [I]n much of what is now commonly called the Global South or Majority World, rapid church expansion means that the greatest need in world mission today is leadership development ... Churches ... are facing the hazards of shallow biblical understanding and distorted theological teaching (such as the "health and wealth" gospel). Astute leaders of Majority World churches and elsewhere are aware of the risks of being "blown to and fro by every wind of doctrine." (Greenman and Green 2014, 44)

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[1]The following percentages of evangelicals are identified for Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America: Argentina 9.1 percent; Bolivia 16.2 percent; Chile 18.4 percent; Columbia 7.5 percent; Costa Rica 14.8 percent; Ecuador 8.5 percent; El Salvador 31.6 percent; Guatemala 24.4 percent; Honduras 23.0 percent; Mexico 8.3 percent; Nicaragua 29.8 percent; Panama 19.3 percent; Paraguay 6.1 percent; Peru 11.6 percent; Uruguay 6.2 percent; and Venezuela 10.8 percent. (Operation World 2018, accessed December 2016).

[2]For example, the Baptist World Alliance lists over 7,000 Baptist Churches in Spanish-speaking Latin America, but certainly this number is much higher as only a few of the many Baptist associations are included in the list (Baptist World Alliance 2015, accessed December 2016).

While the lack of theological leadership is endemic among Charismatics[3], the predominant evangelical group in Latin America, it is symptomatic across denominational lines, including in independent Baptist circles. Baptists, especially independent Baptists, are historically anti-intellectual. Timothy George, in his chapter "The Baptist Tradition" in *Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition* writes, "Excluded by law from the English universities, Baptists were forced to develop informal structures for pastoral training" (George 1996, 29). While Baptists in the early days of colonial America pursued a more robust and formalized theological educational structure (Walker 1998, 40-48; Newman 1998, 413-20), the Baptist characteristics of individualism and dissent "did appeal, especially on the frontier, to those who were far removed from the benefits of education and civility" (George 1996, 29). This promoted a spirit of action over academic pursuits and a suspicion of theological education (George 1996, 29; cf. Oliver 2007, 277-83; Mills 1998, 303-22). The fundamentalist movement, in which Baptists played a major role, began as a response to theological liberalism, natural biological evolution, and cultural relativity of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Skeptical by nature, fundamentalists reacted to these controversies by separating from contemporary culture and retreating from academia (Marsden 1980, 119-23). Independent

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[3]The doctrinal superficiality of the Charismatic movement is best illustrated by the predominance of the theologically vacuous Health and Wealth Gospel which is the predominant system of belief in Latin American charismatic churches. A 2006 study conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life stated that almost three-quarters of all Latino Christians agreed that "God grants wealth and health to those that have faith" (Hinojosa 2014, accessed November 2016). "Ninety percent of Guatemalan and 89 percent of Bolivian evangelicals hold these teachings" (Lee 2014, accessed November 2014)). Ivan Enrique Mesa from the Gospel Coalition writes, "Puerto Rico is a completely Christianized country .... However, the bad theology of the super-faith and prosperity movement has covered the island so that now it is the standard theology amongst the majority of the evangelical community" (Mesa 2014, accessed December 2014). Perhaps even more telling is a statement within the *Crusade Report*: "In Latin America, Prosperity Theology is not just a system of belief, but the culture in which we live" (Namnún 2014, accessed December 2014).

Baptist colleges were founded to protect Christian young people from the dangers of secularism and to biblically inoculate men preparing for ministry. However, this attempt to safeguard the Church's soul has enfeebled their mind. Noll's statement about evangelical scholarship is especially poignant for independent Baptists. He writes,

> Fundamentalism, dispensational premillennialism, the Higher Life movement, and Pentecostalism were all evangelical strategies of survival in response to the religious crises of the late nineteenth century. In different ways, each preserved something essential of the Christian faith. But together they were a disaster for the life of the mind. (Noll 1995, 24)

Additionally, a growing emphasis upon the practical aspects of ministry further diluted their exegetical and theological instruction (Farley 2001, 11-12; Wells 1993, 97-115, Kelley 1924). These multiple factors gave rise to a plethora of informal independent Baptist Bible institutes and unaccredited colleges and seminaries. The result was a generation of independent Baptists who were passionate to proclaim the gospel, but apathetic about formal theological education.

Independent Baptist missionaries carried this mindset to the mission field. Along with the proclamation of the gospel and the establishment of Baptist churches, hundreds of independent Baptist pastoral training institutions have been founded throughout the region.[4] While accreditation, "a voluntary activity in which institutions agree on standards of educational quality and then hold themselves mutually accountable to those standards" (Association of Theological Schools 2015b, 1), is now an accepted practice among most independent Baptist Bible colleges and seminaries the United States, it is not yet seen as a necessary standard for

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[4]As independent Baptist mission agencies are not part of a denominational structure, there is no reporting on the number or nature of such pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America. The author's calculation of *hundreds* of institutes and seminaries is based upon his own personal experience and anecdotal information.

independent Baptist training institutions in Latin America. Most troubling is the resultant

stagnation in academic development. Many of these independent Baptist training institutions

have been in existence now for decades with few having matured beyond the Bible institute

level.

Historically, independent Baptist congregations arose from a variety of Baptist traditions.

> Some congregations originally were related to other Baptist denominations, North and South, but "came out" in response to denominational liberalism, worldliness, compromise, and bureaucratic "hierarchy." Others originated as independent churches. In fact, one of the primary aims of the movement is "church-planting," the founding of new indigenous congregations throughout America in the independent Baptist tradition. Although most Baptist churches historically have reflected a high degree of congregational autonomy, even independence, the independent Baptist movement is a fairly recent phenomenon. It demonstrates a particular anti-denominational, fundamentalist interpretation of Baptist ecclesiology. Eschewing denominational structures as unbiblical, corrupt, and tainted by modernism, many of these churches maintain varying degrees of "fellowship" through such loosely organized groups as the Baptist Bible Union, the World Baptist Fellowship, the Baptist Bible Fellowship, the Southwide Baptist Fellowship, and the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches. (Leonard 1987, 506)

Like the churches that they serve, independent Baptist pastoral training institutions are

purposefully independent. They are not part of a denomination and they submit to no external

governing body for academic compliance. There are no associations of independent Baptist

scholars and little dialogue between institutions. They provide instruction in pastoral training as

each individual institution sees fit. Even independent Baptist mission agencies are reticent to

provide stringent academic oversight to pastoral training institutions under their purview.

Therefore, any movement toward an accreditation model will not be imposed externally but will

be internal to the institution.

There are at least three dangerous consequences of this indifference toward accreditation.

First, there are no agreed upon institutional standards. Most independent Baptist pastoral

training institutions operate according to internally determined academic norms that vary in

accordance with the diverse experiences of their leadership and the distinct academic environment of the institution. Likewise, the academic requirements and the nomenclature of the degrees offered in these institutions are almost as wide-ranging as their number. Second, cooperation between these institutions is minimal. External accountability, voluntary or otherwise, is rare, with little peer review and participation between institutions. The result is isolationism and the anticipated deficiencies inherent in organizational inbreeding. Third, and most importantly, the student (and by implication the national church which the student will eventually pastor) is hindered. High academic standards are uncommon. Exposure to exegetical and theological resources is limited. Students are often ill-prepared to serve as theological and ministerial leaders.

While accreditation is a worthwhile goal, the challenges to its implementation are significant, but not insurmountable. Perhaps even more important than accreditation itself is the environment of quality academics and institutional advancement that an accreditation model would promote. The purpose of this project is to (1) identify the major obstacles to the pursuit of an accreditation model among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America; (2) develop a strategic plan that will inspire independent Baptist pastoral training institutions to better understand the accreditation model, to accept this model as worthy of pursuit, and to develop goals and action steps that will help these institutions to overcome the identified obstacles.

Relationship of the Topic to the Ministry
of the Author

For almost twenty years my wife and I have served as independent Baptist missionaries in Latin America. I was trained in an unaccredited independent Baptist college in the United

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States and served as an associate pastor of an independent Baptist church in West Virginia.
After pursuing graduate studies at an accredited independent Baptist seminary, we served for ten
years in Mexico City where I was the lead church planter of the Iglesia Bautista de Fe and the
founder, director, and a professor at the Seminario Teológico Bautista Independiente (STBI).
Through these two missionary ministries I learned much about ministering in the Hispanic
culture and about the need in Latin America for theologically profound pastoral training models.
While STBI was not an accredited institution, we purposefully established an academic program
that mirrored, to the best of our ability, and consciously pursued accreditation standards set by
ABHE and TRACS.

Significant heart problems required us to relocate to the United States in 2005 when I was
reassigned to Editorial Bautista Independiente (EBI). EBI is the Spanish language publishing
ministry of Baptist Mid-Missions, an independent Baptist mission board. With over fifty years
of service, EBI creates, publishes, and distributes evangelical Baptist literature to thousands of
ministries in thirty-one countries around the world. EBI is also actively involved in leadership
training ministries throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

My first assignment at EBI was to develop a comprehensive theological curriculum for
independent Baptist Bible institutes, colleges, and seminaries. As most independent Baptist
pastoral training institutions in Latin America do not enjoy a full-time faculty, professors often
wear multiple ministry hats. This minimizes their ability to do the academic research necessary
for quality course development. The EBI Theological Curriculum Project is designed to aid such
professors in their preparation by providing them with pre-determined texts and pre-designed
courses that will expedite their study and provide quality materials to their students. Four years
into this assignment I was asked to serve as EBI's General Director. This role provides

significant opportunity to speak in churches, pastors' conferences, and Bible colleges throughout the region. In addition to publishing materials, EBI partners with Piedmont International University (PIU) in Winston Salem, North Carolina, to offer an accredited Spanish language Online Master of Arts in Biblical Studies. While PIU handles all matters related to accreditation, my involvement with them has taught me much about the benefits and requirements of academic accreditation. These varied ministries have allowed me the privilege of ministering in independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, Uruguay, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba.

Scope and Limitations

As there are many evangelical Spanish language pastoral training ministries in Latin America, this project will only focus attention upon those in the independent Baptist tradition. Independent Baptist signifies churches and ministries that are not constitutionally bound to denominational organizations. They are voluntarily joined in a "fellowship with a minimum of organization," but not in a formalized or authoritative convention (Torbet 1963, 434).

Although Spain is also Spanish-speaking, we will not consider their pastoral training institutions within the scope of this project. The geographic and cultural differences between Spain and the Latin American region are significant enough to demand separate studies.

By pastoral training institutions, I refer to formal and non-formal educational models. It is true that much pastoral training in Latin America takes place on the informal level; that is, individual studies between a single pastor and a budding leader within the church or between a single scholar and an academic apprentice. As accreditation standards cannot be applied to informal relationships, this project will not include them in the discussion. Likewise, a comparison between formal and informal models is beyond the breadth of this study. As the

number of these institutions is relatively large, the project will not interact with each one. A

sample will be identified that will adequately represent the independent Baptist movement in the

region.

Finally, as Latin America encompasses a wide geographic area, a personal visit to and

personal interaction with each institution will not be possible. Modern technology allows for

significant communication without the financial constraints and time demands of travel. This

will allow for significant interaction, communication, and dialogue.

Definitions

Evangelical--an individual who "believes and proclaims the gospel of Jesus Christ" and

who maintains a "missionary outreach of compassion and urgency" (Elwell 1984, 379). While

usage in the United States rarely carries denominational implications, in Latin America, the term

distinguishes Protestant churches from their Catholic counterparts. Christian churches in Latin

America are identified as either Catholic or Evangelical.

Independent Baptist--an evangelical movement of churches that are fundamental in

doctrine and conservative in practice. These churches claim the following beliefs in the form of

an acrostic as distinctives to their movement: Bible as the sole authority of faith and practice;

Autonomy of the local church; Priesthood of every believer; Two church offices--pastor and

deacon; Individual soul liberty; Separation of Church and State; Two ordinances--baptism by

immersion and the Lord's supper; Saved church membership. The movement rose to relative

prominence in response to the modernist controversies during the nineteenth- and

twentieth-centuries. As mainline Baptist denominations and conventions succumbed to the tides

of liberalism, these churches separated from these associations. The term "independent"

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characterizes aspects of church polity (Mead 1990, 36, 37). Each local church is self-governing and thus independent from outside authority or any external hierarchical structure.

Pastoral Training Institution--a generic designation for any academic program that focuses primary attention upon the training of vocational leaders for evangelical ministry, including pastors, missionaries, evangelists, and other ministry functions. These institutions encompass a broad range of academic methodologies from formal to informal and even non-formal educational approaches. There is no uniformity of nomenclature within Latin American evangelicalism, thus these institutions are called schools, seminaries, institutes, colleges, and even universities, often with little substantive difference in the academic level of instruction.

Bible Institute--a lay level program of Bible training. The level of instruction is sufficient to train individuals for lay ministry and to provide ongoing discipleship instruction from growing believers within local congregations. Academic structures are more informal, instructors may lack academic degrees, and detailed academic records are rarely kept. While certificates may be given for completion of the institute program, no academic degree is granted.

Accreditation Model--accreditation is typically defined as "the process of external quality review created and used by higher education to scrutinize colleges, universities, and programs for quality assurance and quality improvement" (Eaton 2009, 79). While the practice of accreditation originated within the United States, it has spread world-wide, even into Latin America. There are a variety of different accreditation types, means, and organizations. Reference to an accreditation model seeks to identify and to promote the core characteristics of accreditation, no matter where and how it is accomplished. These characteristics would include: (1) quality assessment for institutional improvement, (2) academic standards by which

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institutions can be effectively evaluated, (3) external review by experts in the fields of education and quality assessment.

Goals and Objectives

The project anticipated the following goals and the resultant secondary objectives. Goals refer to the primary aims of the project. They are what I hoped to accomplish through this project. The goals cover three aspects of the project: educational, investigative, and strategic. Objectives identify broader anticipated benefits that result from the accomplishment of these three goals.

1. To promote a better understanding of the necessity of and the specifics surrounding an accreditation model of pastoral training. This is the educational goal and will be accomplished through a review of the relevant biblical themes and related academic literature.

   A. The development of a biblical philosophy of pastoral training that demonstrates an exegetical and theological basis for an accreditation model of pastoral training.

   B. The placement of Latin American pastoral training within the context of Baptist history.

   C. The accumulation of relevant information on accrediting institutions, options, and standards for Latin American pastoral training institutions.

2. To help such institutions identify, understand, and address the doctrinal, philosophical, and practical impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Latin America. This is the investigative goal and will be accomplished through a Delphi survey of experienced participants of independent Baptist pastoral education in Spanish-speaking Latin America.

A. To gain a greater knowledge of, and relationship and dialogue with independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Latin America. This study should increase our awareness of their programs and strengthen their confidence in our ministry to them.

B. To encourage more frequent communication and participation between independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Latin America.

C. To cultivate a better understanding of the cultural, academic, and institutional challenges associated with pastoral training within the Latin American context.

3. To develop a strategic plan that will mitigate the identified impediments to accreditation and encourage these independent Baptist pastoral training institutions to understand, accept, and pursue more rigorous academic standards leading to eventual accreditation. This is the strategic goal and will be accomplished by the development of a strategic plan.

A. The articulation of a biblically defensible position that will satisfy the doctrinal and organization concerns to accreditation.

B. An organization-wide humility in independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Latin America that will lead to more frequent internal and external reviews of educational standards and practice.

C. The identification, development, and implementation of concise and attainable steps that will lead institutions to consider an accreditation model.

D. Greater willingness on the part of Latin American independent Baptist pastoral training institutions to actively pursue accreditation.

E. A greater recognition and acceptance of EBI's ministry to the Latin American Church.

Summary

  This chapter has introduced the need for a strategic plan to encourage the pursuit of an accreditation model in independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America. The explanation of the author's relationship to the subject, the scope and limitations of the project, definitions, and goals and objectives have set the stage. We now move to a review of the relevant biblical and academic literature.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Accreditation remains a polemical issue among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions. While many stateside independent Baptist institutions have come to realize the benefits of accreditation, and now participate in the process, others remain skeptical. Some claim that accreditation could restrict institution's religious liberties (Lee 2015, 18) or prevent them from hiring teachers who are spiritually qualified to train young people for the ministry (Beal 2017, accessed May 2017). Others declare that "the issue at stake is nothing less than the spiritual quality of a student's education. They say that the process takes a school's diversity from them and makes them the same as all others and that Christians are not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly" (Fairhaven Baptist College 2017, accessed May 2017). The website of West Coast Baptist College in Lancaster, California, after a lengthy discussion on both their concerns and the potential benefits of accreditation states, "If accreditation requires a sacrifice of just one of our biblical beliefs or principles, we will choose to obey God rather than men" (West Coast Baptist College 2017, accessed May 2017).

These concerns regarding accreditation have migrated to Latin America via American missionaries who were trained at stateside independent Baptist schools. When these concerns are tightly held, they diminish an institution's interest in the accreditation process and their willingness to consider its pursuit. Some of these concerns are spiritual in nature and must be addressed biblically. Likewise, attitudes and actions that are inconsistent with a biblical model can serve as obstacles to the accreditation process.

This chapter will examine the literature relevant to the accreditation of pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America. First, we will review applicable passages of

Scripture and biblical themes related to the pursuit of an accreditation model. In so doing,

potential obstacles to and concerns about accreditation will be addressed. Second, a review will

be offered of the relevant literature about pastoral training and accreditation in the Latin context.

It is the author's hope that this section may heighten interest in accreditation as a valuable tool

for standardization and quality assurance while mitigating some of the concerns that independent

Baptists have about accreditation.

Biblical Themes Related to Accreditation

As accreditation is a modern phenomenon related to the increasingly sophisticated

expectations surrounding public and private education, it is not mentioned in the biblical text.

However, the foundational topic of training for ministry is frequently discussed. This chapter

will begin by laying out, in cursory form, the biblical pattern of training for those involved in

ministry leadership. Then specific textual issues related to pastoral training and accreditation

will be addressed. These will include: the authority of the local church in the pastoral training

process, the place of academic rigor in the preservation of sound doctrine, the need for

interdependence to ensure the breadth of necessary instruction, and finally, the need for humility.

A Consistent Biblical Pattern
of Ministry Training

Examples of training for ministry begin early in Israel's history and extend into the

Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles. These examples, while occurring over a wide

chronological period and amidst significant cultural differences, demonstrate a deliberate and

determined pattern of preparation for ministry.

Moses and Joshua

As successor to Moses, Joshua aptly served and learned under Moses' leadership. Four times he is identified as Moses' "assistant" (Exod. 24:13; 33:11; Num. 11:28; Josh. 1:1; unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are to the ESV). Joshua is introduced to the reader in Exodus 17 where he is given charge of a battalion to fight against Amalek. While Moses, with arms outstretched to the Lord, pleads for his people, Joshua leads Israel to victory over the Amalekites. The text accentuates the direct relationship between Moses' intercession and Israel's victory. "Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed" (Exod. 17:11). After the battle, Moses is instructed to "write" God's promise to wage continual war against the Amalekites until he utterly blots out their memory and to "recite" this information to Joshua (Exod. 17:14). "The basic root of this verb is to put, place something somewhere" (Harris, Archer, and Waltke 1980, 872). In this case Moses was to ensure that these words were "drummed into" Joshua's ears (Durham 1987, 237). The intent is surely instructional. God wanted Moses to prepare Joshua for the eventualities of future leadership.

As part of his training, Joshua accompanied Moses into God's presence (Exod. 24:13), he faithfully served in the tabernacle (Exod. 33:11)[1], he was one of the twelve who spied out the Promised Land (Num. 13:16; 14:38), he was chosen by God as Moses' successor (Num. 27:18), and Moses laid his hands upon him in a public ceremony to transfer leadership to him (Num. 27:15-23).

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[1]While a reading of this text does not necessarily point to "cultic activity" or an "intermediary function before Yahweh" (Durham 1987, 443), Joshua's prolonged attendance and faithful service in the tabernacle would have increased his knowledge of and love for God (cf. Ps. 5:7; 38:9; 138:2). These are key components of ministry leadership.

School of the Prophets

Prophetic guilds were operating in Israel throughout much of Israel's pre-monarchy and monarchy years (1 Sam. 10:5, 10; 19:20; 2 Kings 2:3, 4, 7, 15; 4:38; 6:1; Jer. 26:7-11; Amos 7:14).[2] These guilds appear to have operated as monastic teaching and ministry communities with dormitories (2 Kings 6:1), shared meals (2 Kings 4:38-44), and an administrative structure (Tenney 1975, s.v. "sons of the prophets"). In Elijah's day, his guild had *branch campuses* in at least three distinct locations: Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho. The head prophet was called *master.* Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, among others, each served in this capacity. Leon Wood writes of these schools,

> There is no way to know whether or not the schools Samuel started continued and became eventually the schools that Elijah and Elisha taught. Approximately two centuries had elapsed. This is a considerable time for such schools to have continued, and there is no reference to them in between or before or after. It is interesting, however, that at least approximately the same geographical area was concerned. (Wood 1979, 165)

Scripture give us little indication as to the curriculum or mode of training. It is probable that instruction was given during the course of everyday life and ministry. Again, Leon Wood, speaking of Samuel's teaching, is helpful here, "Samuel did much of his instructing as he walked from one city to another. This would have saved time and the young trainees could have profited from seeing Samuel directly in action" (Wood 1979, 164).

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[2]In 1 Sam. 10:5, 10 and 19:20 they are called חֶבֶל *ḥebel,* which is translated as "group," or "company" (Harris, Archer, and Waltke 1980, 593). The semantic meaning probably implies a close-knit group bound together by a common purpose or cause. In 2 Kings 2:3, 5, 7, 15; 4:38; and 6:1, they are called "the sons of the prophets." Leon Wood notes, "Though the term *school of the prophets* is not found in the sacred record, another term, *company of the prophets*, is mentioned in two significant texts involving Samuel (1 Sam. 10:5-10; 19:20), and these texts connote a group which could well have constituted a type of school .... This parallels similar students under the headship of Elijah and Elisha in a later day (2 Kings 2:3-7, 15-18; 4:38; 6:1, 2)" (Wood 1979, 164).

Christ and the Twelve Disciples

The three years of intensive training given by Christ to the twelve disciples demonstrates the strategic importance of ministry training. Discipleship was a common practice in the first-century Greco-Roman world. The Greek word for disciple, μαθητής, "was used in three ways: in a general sense of a 'learner;' with a technical sense of 'adherent' to a great teacher, teaching, or master; with a more restricted sense of an 'institutional pupil of the Sophists'" (Green and McKnight 1992, s.v. "disciples").

While much of Christ's ministry was broad and public (Matt. 5:1; 15:32-39; Mark 6:30-44), it can be argued that the private training of the Twelve constituted the most important element of his teaching ministry. Christ, as a purposeful methodology, invested significant time in the training of the Twelve and even more time in the personal instruction of his inner circle of disciples--Peter, James, and John.

Matthew records that the disciples left their nets and they followed Jesus. This implied a forsaking of family, of future dreams, and of potential fortune (Luke 9:23-27). With Christ, the disciples journeyed back and forth between Galilee and Jerusalem. Like Christ, they often had nowhere to lay their heads (Matt. 8:20). They were fatigued (Matt. 26:40), hungry (Matt. 12:1), and scared (Matt. 26:56).

Christ promised that he would make them to become "fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). He became their primary instructor and they his adherents. As Orlando Rivera states, "Jesus had no formal school, no seminaries, no outlined courses of study, no periodic membership classes in which he enrolled his followers. None of these highly-organized procedures .... Amazing as it may seem, all Jesus did to teach these men his way was to draw them close to himself. He was his own school" (Rivera 2007, 1). Their curriculum involved three and a half years of intensive

preparation that included the hearing of Jesus' teachings, visual testimony to his ministry, miracles, majesty, crucifixion and glorious resurrection, as well as the empowering of the Spirit at Pentecost.[3] Through these means the disciples were effectively equipped to carry on Christ's mission. A. B. Bruce, in *The Training of the Twelve*, describes Christ's ministry of training the disciples this way:

> These twelve, however, as we know, were to be something more than travelling companions or menial servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were to be, in the meantime, students of Christian doctrine, and occasional followers in the work of the kingdom, and eventually Christ's chosen training agents for propagating the faith after He Himself had left the earth. From the time of their being chosen, indeed, the twelve entered on a regular apprenticeship for the great office of apostleship, in the course of which they were to learn, in the privacy of an intimate daily fellowship with their Master, what they should be, do, believe, and teach, as His witnesses and ambassadors to the world. Henceforth the training of these men was to be a constant and prominent part of Christ's personal work. He was to make it His business to tell them in darkness what they should afterwards speak in the daylight, and to whisper in their ear what in the after years they should preach upon the housetops. (Bruce 1971, 30)

After Christ's ascension, the disciples followed this model of training as they went everywhere making "disciples of all nations ... teaching to observe all" that Christ had commanded them (Matt. 28:19, 20).

The Apostle Paul

Throughout his writings, Paul describes his early life and schooling. That he was a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, is clear (Acts 21:37). He was "circumcised on the eighth day ... of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews" (Phil. 3:4). He was brought up in Jerusalem in

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[3]As Christ promised, the Spirit would continue Christ's ministry of preparation for ministry. He would "teach them" all things and bring to their remembrance all that Christ had said to them (John 14:26). The Apostle Paul further clarified the Spirit's teaching role in 1 Corinthians 2. He writes, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him--these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit .... Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God" (1 Cor. 2:9-10, 12).

accordance with strict Jewish law. At the age of six or seven he would have begun elementary school where he would have been taught the Hebrew Bible, especially the Pentateuch, eventually focusing attention upon the interpretation and the explanation of potential contradictions (Stegner 1993, 505). Paul received his formal training "at the feet of Gamaliel" (Acts 22:3).

> The Gamaliel in question here was Gamaliel I, who is referred to in several places in the rabbinic literature, through surprisingly sparsely for a man of his stature. He was the son or grandson of the famous Hillel and seemed to have been at the prince of his influence about A.D. 25-50. Rabbinic tradition gives him the title *Nasi*, or the president of the high court, and has his son Simeon follow him in that role .... Perhaps nowhere is the esteem in which he was held better expressed than in the following statement in the *Mishna*: "When Rabban Gamaliel the Elder died, the glory of the Lord ceased and purity and abstinence died." (Polhill 1992, 171)

Here Paul would have "become familiar with the Septuagint .... Later in Tarsus, he doubtless deepened his knowledge of the Greek translation along with its recensions" (Riesner 1998, 268). By his own testimony, Paul "was advancing in Judaism beyond many his own age" (Gal. 1:14). "Advancing" is translated from the imperfect tense of προκόπτω, describing a continual, methodical advancement that would have surpassed that of most of his peers (Balz and Schneider 1993, 3:158). The implication is that Paul was an eager, diligent, and productive student who received an excellent religious education in one of the superior schools in Jerusalem.

Surpassing his pre-conversion training was that which he received after his salvation. In Galatians 1, Paul explains that his post-conversion training in the gospel was not dependent upon the apostles or the religious leaders of the day. He writes, "I did not immediately consult with anyone, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me" (Gal. 1:16, 17). In fact, it was not until three years later that Paul visited Peter and the other apostles in Jerusalem (Gal. 1:18). So how was Paul trained in the gospel? He writes in Galatians 1, "For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:12).

That Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ here is an objective genitive is rendered most probably by the wording of vv. 15f.: "God was pleased to *reveal his son* (ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱόν αὐτοῦ) in me." That is to say, God the Father was the revealer, it was Jesus Christ who was revealed, and in that revelation Paul received his gospel, together with the command to make it known in the Gentile world. The gospel and the risen Christ were inseparable; both were revealed to Paul in the same moment. To preach the gospel (v. 11) was to preach Christ (v. 16). (Bruce 1982, 89)

In 1 Cor. 15:8, Paul relates that he, like the other disciples, had also seen the risen Christ.

Likewise, it is possible that Paul may have received additional instruction during his extended

stay in Arabia. James Montgomery Boice writes,

Paul does not say what he did in Arabia .... His Damascus experience would have shown Paul that he had been wrong about Jesus. However, the replacement of his Jewish world and life view by a Christian theology would have been the work of more than a long weekend. Some have imagined a contradiction between what Paul wrote here and what Luke writes in Acts 9, where Arabia is not even mentioned. But this is unjustified. Luke leaves room for an Arabian sojourn between v. 22 and v. 23 and he can be excused for omitting it if nothing of historical importance occurred during those months or years. Seen from the other side, Luke's omission suggests that Paul went into Arabia to think and study rather than to preach, for Luke would probably have mentioned the journey if Paul had established churches there. The same conclusion follows the wording of Galatians, because Paul says that the trip was connected with the fact that for a considerable period he conferred with no one (vv. 16, 17). (Boice 1976, 434, 435)

The point of these passages is that God was Paul's gospel teacher providing him with personal

instruction through the revelation of Christ on the road to Damascus and beyond.

Scripture also indicates that Paul received instruction in the practicalities of ministry from

his mentor, Barnabas. In Acts 9:27, Barnabas took Saul under his wing, introducing him to the

disciples and providing him with opportunities to preach. When Barnabas was called to Antioch,

he returned to Tarsus for Saul and brought him back to the city where "for a whole year they met

with the church and taught a great many people" (Acts 11:26). Even in their divine call for

missionary service, Barnabas is identified before Saul suggesting a mentoring relationship (Acts

13:2).

Certainly, this personal investment by Barnabas in Paul's early years of ministry influenced Paul greatly. Paul, in turn, would mentor dozens of young leaders throughout the course of his ministry. This is well documented throughout the book of Acts and the Pauline Epistles. Bard Pillette, in his article "Paul and His Fellow Workers," identifies forty-one coworkers with fifteen of them laboring with Paul for a significant time and only ten with whom he maintained contact until his death (Pillette 1996, 121).

Paul's emphasis upon pastoral training is especially evident in the Pastoral Epistles.[4] In these three letters, the Apostle Paul writes to Timothy, whom he has sent to minister in Ephesus, and to Titus, whom he has sent to Crete. These men are two of Paul´s most faithful protégés. Paul had already invested significant time in each, and now as partners with him in ministry, they both find themselves mired in challenging ministry contexts. Timothy is frustrated, discouraged, and scared (2 Tim. 1:7, 8) by the intense doctrinal disputes and eventual desertion of some within the Ephesian congregation (1 Tim. 1:3-7; 6:3-10; 2 Tim. 1:16; 2:22-26; 4:14-17). Titus was sent to Crete to "put what remained in order" (Titus 1:5). The implication is that the Cretian church was young, perhaps newly planted. Some had professed to know God but were denying him by their works. Hence, Titus was to provide the churches with "catechetical teaching on godly living" and to "appoint elders in every city" (Mounce 2000, 387).

Paul's letters to these men accentuate lessons that they had already learned while providing supplementary instruction on how to minister effectively in their current ministry

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[4]In spite of a voluminous disagreement by modern critical scholarship, I agree with George W. Knight, that "the almost unanimous testimony of the church until the nineteenth century" and "the clear self-testimony of the letters to Paul as their author, their frequent personal references to Paul, their basic Pauline teaching, and their basic Pauline vocabulary and style ... all point toward rather than away from" Pauline authorship (Knight 2013, 6, 52; cf. Carson, Moo and Morris 1992, 359-71; William Hendrickson 1980, 10-42). For a detailed explanation of other views see: Mounce 2000, cxviii-cxxix; Guthrie 2015, 607-49; Towner 2006, 15-26.

context. In effect, these letters constituted additional *on-the-job training* that emphasizes the

need for continual learning, evaluation, and mentoring. Likewise, these pastoral epistles point to

a cyclical pattern of leadership training that would extend beyond the lifetime of Paul, Timothy,

and Titus.

2 Timothy 2:2

In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul emphasizes the importance of the ongoing training of others for

gospel ministry. Paul's impending martyrdom, along with Timothy's soon departure to visit Paul

in prison, would create a potential vacuum of leadership in the Ephesian church that demanded a

strategy for the ministry preparation of others. Knight provides this explanation of the historical

context:

> It is clear, however, that 2 Timothy is the last written of the three letters, because of
> Paul's situation and expectation as he writes it: He is in prison in Rome (1:16, 17; 2:9;
> 4:16, 17) and has come successfully through his first defense, though no one supported
> him in it (4:16, 17). But he expects to die soon (vv. 6, 18), probably thinking that his
> second defense will lead to execution. As he writes, all his fellow workers have gone
> elsewhere (e.g., Titus to Dalmatia, v. 10) except Luke (v. 11) ... Paul asks Timothy to
> come to him soon (2 Tim. 4:9), before winter (v. 21), and to bring Mark (v. 11), his
> cloak, and some specific books (v. 13). (Knight 2013, 10)

In anticipation of Timothy's departure from Ephesus, and understanding the need for faithful

laborers to serve the church, Paul commands Timothy to entrust what he has heard to faithful

men who would then pass that same truth on to others.

Second Tim. 2:2 falls within the section 2 Tim. 1:6-2:13 in which Paul most directly

encourages Timothy to "endure." Three subsections can be identified within this portion of the

epistle[5]: (1) In 2 Tim. 1:6-14, Timothy is encouraged to "fan the flame" (2 Tim. 1:6), to "not be

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[5]Dividing 2 Timothy into distinct and meaningful sections can be difficult. "Much of 2
Timothy is stream of consciousness, and it is difficult and not always helpful to divide the letter

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ashamed of the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:8), to "share in the sufferings for the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:8), and

to "follow the pattern of sound words" that he heard from Paul (2 Tim. 1:13). (2) In 2 Tim.

1:15-18, Paul provides both negative (Phygelus and Hermogenes) and positive (Onesiphorus)

examples of such endurance. These contrasting examples exhort Timothy to faithfulness. (3) In

2 Tim. 2:1-13, Paul uses five imperatives, directed to Timothy, to communicate the urgency of

his appeal. Towner explains that these imperatives

> are not unrelated to one another, but the preceding context is necessary to appreciate their
> interrelation. By repeating and weaving together the letter's opening themes, Paul creates
> a new, all-encompassing theme that takes the teaching to Timothy to a higher level. This
> section anticipates a question: How can one fulfill faithfully the mission being passed to
> Timothy? (Towner 2006, 487)

Chapter two begins with a key command that Timothy "be strengthened by the grace that

is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:1). This is the only passive imperative in the book, thus

emphasizing that Timothy, on his own, is unable to obey these commands. Paul's use of ἀκούω

refers to the message of the gospel, the foundational truths of Christianity that Timothy had

frequently heard from Paul during his ministry (Phil. 4:9; Col. 1:6, 23) (Knight 2013, 389). The

presence of *many witnesses* adds to the gospel's credibility. It was not Paul's message alone;

rather, it was the message that was heard and accepted by the Church as a whole.

Paul then charges Timothy *to entrust* to others what he has been taught by Paul. Paul's

use of the demonstrative ταῦτα leaves no room for ambiguity regarding its content. "Paul is

thinking of the gospel in its totality, not just a summary of it" (Mounce 2000, 504; cf. 1 Tim. 4:6,

11, 15). The verb "entrust" is a second aorist middle imperative from παρατίθημι. The idea is to

commit to others, to deliver the gospel to them for safekeeping. The word means more than

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into smaller divisions" (Mounce 2000, 500). I do so here in an attempt to demonstrate Paul's
flow of thought.

mere proclamation. It communicates a deliberate transfer for custodial purposes. Timothy is to

teach in such a way so as to ensure that the message is clearly and cleanly received.

Just as Christ negatively cautioned his disciples to not "throw their pearls before pigs"

(Matt. 7:6), so Paul positively identifies those to whom the message should be entrusted. They

should be "faithful men[6]," that is, men who are "dependable and credible" (Balz and Schneider

1993, 3:97). Likewise, these recipients should be able to effectively communicate the gospel to

others.

> This ability is an important key to the success of the process envisioned. The activity in
> view is the authoritative teaching of the faith (see on 1 Tim. 2:12), for which the gifting
> of the Holy Spirit is a practical necessity (cf. Rom. 12:7). Following from this the
> predicate adjective describing the "qualification" or "competency" expected of acceptable
> candidates implies a divinely bestowed aptitude that makes them sufficient for the task.
> (Towner 2006, 491)

Finally, the qualification that these faithful men would teach others also suggests a clear

paradigm for future ministry. These others to be taught are distinct from the previous faithful

men. They are another generation who would follow in the footsteps of those who preceded

them. Certainly, Plummer's emphasis is right, even if his chronology is not, when he suggests

that this is the "earliest traces of a theological school" (Knight 2013, 392).

These many examples throughout all of Scripture accentuate the importance of leadership

training to the outworking of God's program. They provide a paradigm to aid the development

and evaluation of pastoral training programs. Minimally, these examples encourage us to take

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[6]While Scripture does encourage female participation in aspects of local church ministry along with the necessary training to minister effectively, internal evidence suggests that here Paul was referencing male elders. The emphasis in the text was upon the need for pastoral leadership. "These presbyter/overseers were required to be men in view of their duty to rule over their own households (1 Tim. 3:4,5). Therefore, ἀνθρώπος is used here ... of 'man, adult male ... in contrast to women'" (Mounce 2000, 391.

ministry training seriously. They also provide broad guidelines for curriculum content, instructional methodology and educational objectives.

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The Authority of the Church in the Preservation
and Proclamation of Truth

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Truth is an attribute of God and a fundamental characteristic of the Christian faith. In Scripture, God is identified as true, righteous, and just (Exod. 34:6; Deut. 32:4; Ps. 31:5; Isa. 65:16). He alone is God, there is none like him (Deut. 6:4; 2 Kings 19:15; Isa. 37:16). All other objects of worship are condemned as false gods and a violation of the first and second commandments (Exod. 20:1, 3). Jesus Christ describes himself as "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6) and Scripture, God's Word, is called the "truth" (John 17:17).

Spiritual Deception

Since his fall, Satan has waged war against God and truth. In his pride and self-exaltation, Lucifer sought to redefine the truth declaring, "I will make myself like the Most High" (Isa. 14:12-14). Ezekiel writes concerning Lucifer that "you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor" (Ezek. 28:17). With this false teaching and resultant rebellion in Heaven, Satan led astray the angels that sinned (Rev. 12:7-9; Matt. 25:41; Luke 11:15). They were cast out of heaven to earth (Rev. 12:9) from which he rages in his quest to undermine God's rule (Eph. 6:11, 12). Satan is called a "liar, and the father of lies." He "does not stand in the truth," because as John says, "there is no truth in him" (John 8:44). His primary strategy is one of deception. He presents himself as "an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14, 15), employing both spiritual forces (1 Cor. 10:5; Eph. 6:10-12) and human instruments to disseminate false teaching (Matt. 16:23; 1 Cor. 11:13-15; 2 Pet. 2:1).

The spiritual battle for truth in local churches is real. Although founded by Paul and his coworkers, strange doctrines had infiltrated many Christian assemblies in Asia Minor. Gnosticism, legalism, and other equally dangerous heresies had permeated the churches (Acts 15:1; Gal. 2:4; 1 John 2:19). Some error is even attributed to apostatized church leaders within the local congregations (1 Tim. 1:20; Titus 1:5, 10, 11). Hymanaeus and Alexander were disciplined out of the church for "denying the faith" (1 Tim. 1:20). To describe the threat Paul appears to have coined a new term, ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω--1 Tim. 1:3 and 6:3, for strange teaching. "Thus to teach ἑτερο- is to teach heterodoxy or, as translations put is, 'false doctrine'" (Knight 2013, 72). This false doctrine was contrary to the "sound words of our Lord Jesus and the teaching that accords with godliness" (1 Tim. 6:3). Paul expresses great concern that the presence of this false teaching had increasingly endangered young congregations such that "some churches were ravaged and near collapse" (Ellis 1993, 661).

Sound Doctrine

Paul's concern throughout the pastoral epistles relates to both false teaching and ungodly behavior.

> The connection between faith and practice in the PE is established in two ways: (1) It is explicitly taught (Titus 2:11-14; 3:3-7; 2 Tim. 2:19; 3:15-17). (2) The trust of the gospel is set against the falseness of the opponent's teaching (1 Tim. 1:3, 5, 16; 6:3-5; Titus 3:8b-9), specifically their conduct (1 Tim. 1:4, 10-11; 3:2, 9, 15; Titus 2:11-14, 23-25; 3:5). God has saved believers so that they will be zealous in turning from evil to good (2 Tim. 2:12-14; Titus 3:8b, 14). Consequently, the truth of a person's affirmation can be tested by that person's behavior, which either supports (1 Tim. 4:12, 15; Titus 2:7-8) or contradicts (Titus 1:16) the person's claims. (Mounce 2000, lxxix)

To counter these errors, Paul repeatedly emphasizes the need for leaders who know and can effectively teach "sound doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:1, 2). The word "sound" is translated from the Greek word ὑγιαίνω that refers to physical health, but

the Pastorals use it "in the metaphorical sense in reference to Christian doctrine, Christian teaching is thus characterized as correct or reasonable in contrast to false teachings which deviate from received doctrine" (Balz and Schneider 1993, 3:380).

In Titus 1:10, Paul equates the "trustworthy word" with "sound doctrine." These are the words taught by Paul and consistent with the message of Christ (1 Tim. 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13). The implication is that sound doctrine and truth are synonymous, and that sound doctrine is the divinely prescribed antidote for the false teaching, resultant ungodliness, and the general lack of good works that had infiltrated the Christian congregations.

The Church is a Pillar and Ground of Truth

Primary responsibility for preserving and propagating sound doctrine has been given to the Church.[7] Immediately prior to our Lord's ascension he commanded his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19, 20). Acts builds upon this theme both by repeating the Church's mission and by recording the actions of the disciples as they proclaimed the gospel and established local churches "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). "Preach the Word" was the command that Paul gave to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:2) and Jude calls for an ardent defense of the faith "that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3).

In 1 Timothy Paul distinguishes the Church as a "pillar and buttress of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). This passage forms the very heart of the letter to Timothy. While 1 Tim. 3:14-16 is often

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[7]I use *Church* here to designate both the local and the universal body of believers. "In the New Testament the word 'church' may be applied to a group of believers at any level, ranging from a very small group meeting in a private home all the way to the group of all true believers in the universal church" (Grudem 1994, 857).

viewed as a conclusion to chapters 2 and 3, it may be better to view this section "as merely a pause for Paul to put his instructions into perspective" (Mounce 2000, 218).

Mounce identifies this description of the Church as perhaps "the most significant phrase in all the Pastoral Epistles" (Mounce 2000, 222). The imagery is structural. Στῦλος means a pillar or a column. It is used in the LXX to identify the supporting pillars in Solomon's temple. Perhaps there is an allusion to the two pillars of the Temple mentioned in 1 Kings 7:15. The southern pillar was called Jachin, meaning "he shall establish" and the northern pillar was named Boaz which can be translated "in it is strength" (Knight 2013, 181). The meaning of ἑδραίωμα is less clear. This is its only usage in the New Testament (Knight 2013, 181). In context, it must denote a structural element meaning something like "foundation" or "mainstay" (Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich 1979, 218). Combined, both terms recognize the Church as a key participant in the preservation and proclamation of sound doctrine. The Church must be an active soldier in the battle for truth, proclaiming it clearly and passing it on securely.

Several points of clarification are important for an accurate application of these passages to the issues of pastoral training and accreditation. First, the Church is subservient to Scripture and not Scripture to the Church. The imagery portrays the Church as upholding the Scripture and not the Scripture as upholding the Church. This is consistent with the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura* and the Baptist distinctive of Biblical Authority. The Bible is truth; thus, it is our final authority in all matters of belief and practice. Scripture must be preserved and proclaimed. Considering this truth, independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Latin America should endeavor to ensure that their administrative structure, academic programs, institutional resources, and graduation standards are sufficient to secure student proficiency in the interpretation, application, and proclamation of Scripture. An accreditation model could

serve these institutions, encouraging this proficiency through the emphases of institutional advancement and academic standardization.

Second, the responsibility to preserve and proclaim the truth has been given to local churches. As Mounce writes, "this is a far cry from Ignatius in the second century for whom the clerical hierarchy was the protector of the church and the gospel" (Mounce 2000, 222, 223). In this passage, Paul does not recognize an institution or an authoritative structure with authority above the local church as related to gospel ministry. He certainly does not call for denominationalism or an ecclesiastical hierarchy. Baptists identify this distinctive as the autonomy of the local church.

> The local church is an independent body accountable to the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the church. All human authority for governing the local church resides within the local church itself. Thus, the church is autonomous, or self-governing. No religious hierarchy outside the local church may dictate a church's beliefs or practices. (General Association of Regular Baptist Churches 2019, accessed December 2016)

This subject is important when applied to the discussion of pastoral training and accreditation. Can a church voluntarily place itself under the education department of the government or submit itself to the educational requirements of an outside organization without losing its authority to preserve truth? Would a church's beliefs or practices be violated by voluntary participation with an accrediting agency? These practical questions will be addressed in the section on accreditation.

Third, individual local churches should not seek to preserve and proclaim the truth in isolation from other believers. In the relative clause, "which is the church of the living God" (1 Tim. 3:15), the word *church* is singular. This seems to imply a broader application than one local church, perhaps as broad as the universal character of the Church (Towner 2006, 274). In other words, not the church in Ephesus or any one local church carries the sole responsibility for

doctrinal understanding and preservation; rather this responsibility belongs to each congregation in cooperation with other local congregations (Acts 15:1-35). The Church as a whole is ultimately responsible for the proclamation of the gospel, including the task of preparing ministry leaders. As Baptists, we agree that autonomy does not mean isolation. "A Baptist church may fellowship with other churches around mutual interests and in an associational tie" (General Association of Regular Baptist Churches 2019, accessed December 2016). Kirkpatrick writes, "theological education is within a continuum which begins with personal discipleship and, for some, reaches beyond traditional doctoral theses and degrees" (Kirkpatrick 1998, 535). Such a robust assignment is hardly possible with the limited resources of a single local church. Theological education, with the necessary classrooms, academic resources, and well-trained professors, is best performed as a cooperative between like-minded local churches.

The Need for Academic Rigor

Many would question why theological education need be encumbered by the above-mentioned resources. Why can't one just open the Bible and teach? Why are classrooms, libraries, and academic degrees needed? Are these obstacles to adequate pastoral training or are they necessary educational elements? The answers to these questions revolve around the topic of academic rigor in the preservation and proclamation of the Scriptural truth.

I have already lamented the anti-intellectual attitude found among many independent Baptists. Certainly, this is not true of all. History remembers some notable Baptist theologians (John Gill, Augustus Hopkins Strong, Bernard Ramm, John Albert Broadus, Millard J. Erickson, to name a few) and thankfully the tide is beginning to turn as more independent Baptist churches and leaders in the States acknowledge the need for and benefit of advanced theological training.

Sadly, the spirit of anti-intellectualism still pervades much of Hispanic evangelicalism including those in Baptist circles. Reverend Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC) is quoted, "in the Catholic Church you are a member, [but] in the Evangelical Church, you can convert today and a year from now be a pastor" (Puga 2013, accessed March 2017). Even for those who do study at Bible institutes and seminaries, few are trained in the biblical languages. Few grasp the principles of biblical hermeneutics and know how to consistently apply them to exegesis and exposition. Few are skilled in the task of theology. While many may be able to recite theological truths (rote memory is a predominant pedagogical method in Latin America [Ratliff 2003, accessed May 2017]), how many can clearly explain and then support their theological positions with solid exegetical support?

> The educational process in most Majority World nations is that of rote memory, and theological education has not been immune. Students are taught to repeat verbatim what the teacher presents. Theological statements are to be accepted and adopted without question. In fact, in such places as Latin America, the traditional Roman Catholic Church teaches that one can lose his or her salvation if he or she questions the teachings of the Church! While such training produces students who have the incredible ability to memorize, rote memory does not lend itself to the development of critical thinking skills. (Thornton 2015, 199)

Likewise, PISA studies have consistently placed Latin American students in the bottom half of the sixty-nine countries assessed in each of the three core areas: math, science, and reading. A World Council of Churches study paper presented at Edinburgh 2010 writes regarding the proliferation of schools in the Global South, "Many of these new schools offer only light or 'fast food style education'; they have no libraries, no developed curriculum, and no consistent framework" (World Council of Churches 2010, 124).

A significant purpose of an accreditation model is the establishment and application of elevated standards of academic rigor. All too frequently, Latin American Bible institutes and

seminaries have developed and operated under institutionally derived standards of academic achievement that may or may not be consistent with accepted standards of ABHE, ATS, or AETAL. Minimal standards often are institutionalized with little pursuit of academic excellence, maturity, or growth. Likewise, in an attempt to minister to the diverse educational demographic in Latin America, Bible institutes and seminaries often accept students with a varied academic background. The result is a greatly diverse classroom filled with students with a broad range of academic abilities. It is not uncommon to have college graduates in the same classroom with students with only the equivalent of an eighth-grade education. The tendency is, in an attempt to construct academic requirements fitted to all, that the brightest and best are not stimulated to further study and growth. The sad result is generations of Latin pastors and spiritual leaders who lack the exegetical, theological, contemplative, and literary skill necessary to effectively serve as theological leaders. Many are unable to write for publication or even to interact knowledgeably with the greater community of faith.

The push toward indigeneity has long been an important thrust in foreign missions. Self-governing, self-propagating, and self-supporting were the major components in Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson's well-known three-self formula (Terry 2000, 483). In the 1980s Paul Hiebert introduced the fourth self, that of self-theologizing (Hiebert 1985, 199-224). He argued that national churches must be trained to *do* theology on their own. This would imply the rise of national theologians who could interact with the biblical text exegetically, theologically, and ministerially. The component of self-theologizing has become increasingly important as the Church in Latin America continues to expand. Walls writes, "the faith of the twenty-first century will require devout, vigorous scholarship rooted in the soil of Africa, Asia, and Latin America" (Walls 1997, 153).

Scripture has always called ministry leaders to a deeper reflection of truth. Several Old Testament passages will set the scene for a more pronounced emphasis in the Pastoral Epistles.

Read and Meditate

Prior to the invention of the printing press, literary methods were primitive. This is especially true during Israel's early history. Early documents were written on clay (Jer. 17:13; Ezek. 4:1), stone (Exod. 24:12; 31:18; 32:15, 16; 34:1; Deut. 5:22; 27:2, 3), skin and papyrus scrolls (2 John 12; Rev. 5:1), and parchment (2 Tim. 4:13). During the Old Testament times the biblical text was written primarily on skin and papyrus scrolls using pen and ink. The reproduction, care of, and interaction with such literature, coupled with the costs of labor, made individual copies rare. The personal interaction with literary documents was limited to a select few. This situation makes the frequent command to read and meditate upon the law all the more remarkable. In spite of severe literary limitations, Jewish leaders were called to spend considerable time in the reading and contemplation of the Law.

In Deut. 17:18-20, the king of Israel is commanded, at the beginning of his reign, to make himself a personal copy of the Law. Certainly, the purpose of the command was to foster intimate knowledge of God's Law. "According to Philo, the reason the king is instructed to make his own copy of the Torah scroll from the original is because the act of writing makes a more indelible impression than hearing it read alone .... There is no better way to learn its contents" (Christensen 2001, 386, 388). The copy "shall be with him and he shall read in it all the days of his life" (Deut. 17:19). God intended that the king be a diligent student of the Law so as to live and reign wisely.

Joshua, the successor of Moses and leader of Israel during the conquest, was instructed to meditate upon the Law "day and night" (Josh. 1:8). The Hebrew word "suggests a barely audible

murmur" (Woudstra 1981, 63). The merism *day and night* suggests a consistent personal recitation of the Law's contents for the purpose of memory and contemplation.

Likewise, the book of Psalms begins with a blessing upon him whose delight is found in God's Law (Ps. 1:2). Scriptural delight is evidenced by a consistent (notice the same *day and night* merism) meditation upon the Law which results in obedience and blessings.

Ezra

Ezra was a dynamic spiritual and civic leader in Israel following the exile. He led Israel in the rebuilding of the Temple, the reading of the Law, repentance of sin, and the reinstitution of important religious ceremony. As scribe, his primary responsibility was to copy, know, and teach the Old Testament Scripture. During the second temple period "the class of scribe as student and teacher of the written Torah came increasingly into prominence. Ezra is portrayed as the first and great example of this class" (Williamson 2015, 94). Three times the text declares that "the hand of the Lord was upon him" (Ezra 7:6, 9, 28). Scripture clearly attributes his success to a rigorous study, a personal application, and a public pronouncement of the Law declaring, "for Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statues and rules in Israel" (Ezra 7:10). He is described as being "skilled in the Law of Moses" (Ezra 7:6). Although "this does not denote a doctor of the law in the later sense--though tradition with some justice came to consider Ezra such .... He was 'Royal Secretary for the Law of the God of Heaven'" (Bright 1981, 386).

Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes forms part of the Old Testament wisdom literature. Coupled with Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes provides instruction on how to put into

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practice the moral, relational, and spiritual principles of the Law and Prophets. "In its nominal or

verbal form, the term 'wisdom' occurs fifty-two times in the book" (Murphy 1992, lxi). The

pursuit of wisdom under God is identified as the book's major theme. He writes, "I applied my

heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven. It is an unhappy

business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with" (Eccl. 1:13, 14). In other

words, this quest was challenging, it was discouraging, and yielded limited results. Solomon's

testimony, "my heart has had great experience of (דאה הכמה literally 'saw') wisdom and

knowledge" (Eccl. 1:16) reveals, "not a passive observation, but a critical consideration"

(Murphy 1992, 12). This emphasis on the consistent and dogged search for wisdom is repeated

throughout the book (Eccl. 1:13, 16, 18; 2:12, 13, 21; 7:23, 25; 8:16; 10:10) revealing that

wisdom is not easily obtained; it must be rigorously pursued.

Inspiration, Inerrancy, and Authority
of Scripture

   In 2 Tim. 3:16 Paul declares that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." While

there exists some discussion as to the best translation of the word *all*, Warfield clarifies that both

translation options promote the comprehensive nature of inspiration to every part of the

Scripture.

> There is room for some difference of opinion as to the exact construction of this
> declaration. Shall we render "Every Scripture" or "All Scripture"? ... Whether Paul,
> looking back at the Sacred Scriptures he had just mentioned, makes the assertion he is
> about to add, of them distributively, of all their parts, or collectively, of their entire mass,
> is of no moment: to say that every part of these Sacred Scriptures is God-breathed and to
> say that the whole of these Sacred Scripture is God-breathed, is, for the main matter, all
> one .... In both cases these Sacred Scriptures are declared to owe their value to their
> Divine origin; and in both cases this their Divine origin is energetically asserted of their
> entire fabric. (Warfield 1948, 134)

Likewise, Christ's words in Matthew 5 are often quoted to support the verbal and plenary nature of inspiration. "For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot will pass from the Law until all is accomplished" (Matt. 5:18). "Iota" is a transliteration of the Greek word ἰῶται and "is the counterpart to the Heb. *yod* ... the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet" (Balz and Schneider 1993, 2:216). "Dot," a translation of the Greek word κεραία, means "small hook or stroke. The expression is most often interpreted as the ornamental line or decorative crown on Hebrew block script" (Balz and Schneider 1993, 2:216). Both of these terms together clearly communicate the comprehensive nature of inspiration. As Rev. George F. Bishop wrote in *The Fundamentals*, "on the original parchment every sentence, word, line mark, point, pen stroke, jot, tittle was put there by God" (Bishop n.d., 191).

The strong emphasis upon the inspiration, inerrancy, and the authority of Scripture should encourage an active promotion and development of an educational method that ensures advanced ministerial preparation. Sadly, this often is not the case. Independent Baptists must wrestle with the implications of their theology for pastoral training. As an example, the independent Baptist belief in the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture should result in academically robust pastoral training models.

The doctrinal statement of Baptist Mid Missions, the independent Baptist mission board with which I serve, states, "We believe that the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are verbally inspired of God and inerrant in the original writing and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life" (Baptist Mid-Missions 2019, accessed December 2016). Our sending church is Canton Baptist Temple in Canton, Ohio. This church was started in 1937 as a fundamental, evangelistic, independent Baptist church. The first clause of their doctrinal statement reads,

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God; furthermore, we believe that the Holy Scriptures, as originally written, do not only contain and convey the Word of God, but is the very Word of God. The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed and, therefore, are the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament are the complete and divine revelation of God to Man. The Scriptures will be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning. (Canton Baptist Temple 2019, accessed December 2016)

These statements are similar to most doctrinal statements of independent Baptist ministries.[8]

Key to this observation is the emphasis upon *verbal and plenary inspiration*.

By "verbal and plenary inspiration" independent Baptists mean that "all of the words of Scripture are God's words" (Grudem 1994, 75). While allowing for the distinct personalities, vocabulary, and historical and cultural individuality of the authors, God superintended the process so that every word written by the human authors was exactly what he wanted.

The implications of this doctrine for pastoral training are profound. If every word of Scripture as written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek is important, if every grammatical nuance carries divine weight, if the choice of every genre is significant, if God purposely employed the historical and cultural context of each author in the writing of the Bible, then academic disciplines related to each of these aspects must be intensely studied and grasped. This historic-grammatical understanding of Scripture forms the basis of all biblical teaching, preaching, counseling, and leadership.

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[8]Lacking a denominational hierarchy, each independent Baptist church and ministry determines their own doctrinal emphases; however, due to similar historical roots, training institutions, and relationships, there is great similarity between their statements on the Holy Scriptures. The major distinction would be the location of inspiration and the extent of inerrancy. Today, most independent Baptists would limit inspiration and inerrancy to the original autographs, i.e., modern translations bear the mark of inspiration as they remain faithful to the original manuscripts. There is, however, a stubborn contingency of independent Baptists that extends inspiration and/or inerrancy to specific English translations, most notably, the King James Version.

In response to this doctrine, the typical Stateside pastoral training model incorporates the academic disciplines articulated under the classic theological encyclopedia. These include studies in the original languages, Bible, systematic and dogmatic theology, church history, and homiletics. Such courses are considered as foundational to effective ministry. One professor writes, "For future ministers also, academic disciplines are an essential foundation for professional training ... any professional theological program that does not build upon a competence in academic theology will inevitably be superficial" (Ellis 1972, 9). The variety and depth of this list of academic disciplines constitutes a broad program of studies. Leroy Ford lists over ninety-five specific educational outcome goals for theological education (Ford 1991, 97-127). Dr. Peter Savage, former Rector of the Jorge Allen Theological Seminary in Chochabamba, Bolivia, *condensed* the list to ten pages in his "Suggested Taxonomy of Theological Educational Objectives" (Savage n.d., 195-204). Both of these examples constitute an extremely broad range of essential subjects to be taught for pastoral training.

This strong belief among independent Baptists in the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture should also influence the way that pastors are trained in a missionary context. Sadly, this is not the case. Most independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America have stagnated at the Bible institute level of instruction. The following real-life examples provided by Participant 18 (missionary) on the Delphi Panel illustrate this state of affairs.

> 1. The director of another Bible institute is enrolled in our postgrad program. When I took the courses from his program, it was the equivalent to half of our undergraduate program. He thought his training was sufficient and could not understand why his training was not seen as sufficient when we compared it to our program.
> 2. A pastor was studying in our postgrad program, and he had a "licenciatura" in Bible. When comparing his undergrad program with ours, we realized that his training was the equivalent to 1.5 years with us for a lower degree. We had to inform him that we could only offer him a "diplomado" (which is a non-degree).

3. I recently traveled to another Latin American country and met with teachers of a Bible institute. The teachers had an equivalent of about a year in our college. It was difficult explaining to them that even with postgrad courses, they would not be working towards a master's degree. There were a couple there who were even given doctorate degrees, and their formal training was apparently deficient of what we would ask for an undergraduate degree. (Participant 18, missionary)

Considering our belief in inerrancy and plenary inspiration, independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America should be on the forefront of advanced theological studies. Our institutions should ensure that pastoral training programs offer the highest level of education possible as reflected within the theological encyclopedia. This would include significant training in the many academic disciplines necessary for solid biblical exegesis and profound, culturally-applicable theological understanding. Likewise, institutions should consistently seek to improve their programs of study, so as to deepen their graduates' understanding of Scripture and more adequately prepare them for the broad nature of gospel ministry.

Pastoral Epistles

We have already noted the emphasis in these letters upon sound doctrine as a corrective for false teaching and sinful behavior. Thus, it is not surprising to find a complementary emphasis upon academic rigor as a key component in its preservation.

In 1 Tim. 4:6, Timothy is commended to a life of reading, reflection, and study. While Paul had been speaking of the church in general, the shift to the personal pronoun *you* clearly directs his attention back to Timothy. In the midst of the false teaching and opposition, Paul is concerned that Timothy remain faithful in his life and teaching. "'Godliness' emerges as the central interest in the subsection, and reflection on it helps undergird its importance within the view of authentic Christian existence Paul seeks to develop" (Towner 2006, 302). Key to

maintaining this godliness (1 Tim. 4:6-10) and one's ongoing faithful service (1 Tim. 4:11-16), is "saturation in the apostolic teaching" (Towner 2006, 303-4). The present participle of ἐντρεφόμενος in verse six denotes the necessary and continual action of self-nourishment. Just as our bodies require a constant source of sustainable nutrition to enable bodily activity and function, so the minister of the gospel requires consistent nutrition from "the words of faith and of the good doctrine" for effective spiritual ministry. Further on, Timothy is called to "train himself" in these things, laboring and striving toward godliness (1 Tim. 4:7).

Paul continues his discussion in the ensuing paragraph where he fires off in rapid succession ten imperatives. What stands out in this passage is the intended intensity of Timothy's actions--"devote yourself to" (1 Tim. 4:13), "do not neglect" (1 Tim. 4:14), "Practice these things" (1 Tim. 4:15), "immerse yourself" (1 Tim. 4:15), "keep a close watch" (1 Tim. 4:16), and "persist" (1 Tim. 4:16). In summary, Timothy is to reflect upon the preceding instruction and to "be absorbed" by them. "To be immersed" is a translation of μελατάω "which Towner translates as "live and breathe these instructions and duties" (Towner 2006, 326). This total absorption "can signify either study or practice" (Green and McKnight 1992, 210). Either meaning is consistent with the context; perhaps both are implied as Paul earnestly advocates for continued preparation, personal godliness, and effective ministry. All are activities that demand increased attention and rigorous personal discipline.

In 2 Tim. 2:15 Paul once again calls Timothy to diligence. In contrast to those who had "turned away" from Paul (2 Tim. 1:15) and those who "quarrel about words" (2 Tim. 2:14), Timothy is commanded "to be zealous or eager, take pains, make every effort" (Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich 1979, 763) so that he might present himself to God as an unashamed, approved worker. "Timothy is to take pains to present himself before God as one who has been tested and

found to be genuine. This genuineness is shown by two characteristics: teaching and conduct" (Mounce 2000, 524). The rule by which Timothy will be measured is his accurate handling of the word of truth. ὀρθοτομοῦντα is only used here in the New Testament, but it is used in extra-biblical literature to mean "cut a path in a straight direction or to cut a road across country" (Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich 1979, 580). Paul thus emphasizes that ministers of the gospel must make every effort to assure that their interpretation of Scripture, that their understanding and application of the passage, and that their proclamation of it are straight and true.

Finally, in Titus, Paul attributes the false doctrine in Crete to, among other things, laziness. He quotes a Cretan prophet, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons" (Titus 1:12). Certainly, this description squares with the reputation of Cretan culture which "had a reputation for stealing, and that during the first century B.C. Crete became famous for housing robbers and pirates" (Mounce 2000, 398). It seems certain that Paul is not speaking of every Cretan, but if this were the environment, then the problem was serious and could affect those in leadership. We have already noted Paul's dual emphasis in the Pastoral Epistles upon teaching and behavior. Both are mingled throughout this section as well, but there is a decided emphasis in the text upon false teaching. Overseers are to hold fast the faithful word, exhorting in sound doctrine (Titus 1:10). They should not be "empty talkers," "deceivers," or "teach for shameful gain" (Titus 1:10, 11). Paul's admonition was for leaders who had embraced the gospel to stand out from the sinful aspects of Cretan culture. They should be honest in their life and in their ministry. They should work hard to study, to know and to teach sound doctrine.

While academic rigor can be an attribute of non-accredited pastoral training institutions, in many cases it is not. The requirements of the accreditation process can effectively serve to promote academic depth and institutional advancement.

Effective Leadership Training Requires
Interdependence

As the New Testament offers little evidence of multi-disciplinary instruction, academic degrees, or a formalized educational structure (Gonzalez 2015, 1), the question is rightfully asked, why would present-day pastoral training require a more academically complex model? Two responses can be offered.

First, the geographic, cultural, linguistic, and theological distance between the modern reader and the biblical text is much greater today than in New Testament times. Most first century believers were conversant in the Greek language. If they were raised in a Jewish context, these believers would have been intimately familiar with the Old Testament scriptures. Likewise, the historical, geographic, and cultural context of the events surrounding Christianity would have been personally known and experienced (Jackson 1997, 503). As Osborne writes, "there are 'shared assumptions' between the author and the original readers, information not found in the text, data that they knew but we do not" (Osborne 1991, 127).

The modern reader is far removed from the original recipients. This requires that today's interpreter "must try to understand what was said to them back *then and there"* (Fee and Stuart 1993, 19). Most present-day students do not read Greek and Hebrew; thus, they lack the ability to personally interact with the language of the original text. The vocabulary and semantical nuances that the first-century reader would have inherently understood are lost to them. Likewise, many are unfamiliar with the geography, history, and culture of the biblical world. The religious rituals of the Jewish faith, which form the backdrop of the New Testament, are also largely unknown. These multiple deficiencies require additional studies in academic areas unnecessary to the first-century student.

Second, cultural expectations are different. While first-century education employed the traditional rabbinic model of instruction where students would align themselves with and sit under a single respected leader, twenty-first century methods are more complicated. The growth of the university system, the explosion of scientific knowledge, and increasing globalization all contribute to a more sophisticated educational system. Today countries are cooperating together to strengthen educational initiatives and to unify academic standards. The Bologna Process in Europe is one such initiative. Forty-eight countries participate in the Bologna Process. "The Bologna Process is a voluntary higher education reform process, which commenced in 1998/1999, with the aim of making higher education systems compliant [to European academic standards] and enhancing their international visibility" (European University Association 2017, accessed June 2017). The Tuning Latin American Project is another. Nineteen Latin American Countries participate in the Project.

> The Tuning Latin American Project is a shared project which looks for and builds languages and mechanisms for a reciprocal understanding of systems of higher education, which will aid transnational and transregional processes of recognition. It has been conceived as a space of reflection for agents committed to higher education, which through a search for consensus, will contribute to advancing the articulate development of easily comparable and understandable qualifications in Latin America. (Beneitone et al. 2007, 13)

These both exemplify multi-national collaboration in higher education. The result is that more governments are requiring institutions of higher education to comply with commonly accepted academic standards.

The broad nature of pastoral training and the mounting cultural expectations of higher education in today's society require a faculty who are experts in the broad range of exegetical, theological, and ministerial disciplines. What one pastor or even group of pastors are proficient in Greek, church history, biblical and systematic theology, homiletics, etc.? What one church

can supply the necessary library and facilities? These factors accentuate the need for cooperation between churches and religious organizations in the training of men for ministry.

Sadly, cooperation is not the norm. As the World Council of Churches article in the *International Review of Mission* points out, "fragmentation" and "lack of cooperative relationships ... in some regions have reached an unprecedented level" (World Council of Churches 2010, 140). Cooperation between believers and churches to satisfy specific needs or to accomplish Great Commission tasks is not foreign to the New Testament. Scripture frequently records such interdependence as an integral part of God's plan.

The Church as Christ's Body

1 Cor. 12:12-27 uses the metaphor of the human body to help illustrate the interdependent nature of the Church.[9] Paul writes, "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12). Several important lessons emerge from this passage.

First, the unity of the Church is expressed through the emphasis upon *one body*. Twelve times within this text Paul employs the numerical qualifier *one*. There is "one body" (1 Cor. 12:12[3], 13, 20), "one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13[2]), "one member" (1 Cor. 12:14, 19, 26[2]), and "each one" (1 Cor. 12:18). Likewise, Paul mentions the word "body" eighteen times (1 Cor.

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[9]Paul's instruction in this epistle to the local church in Corinth illustrates the importance that he places upon individual congregations, but the teaching of this passage appears broader than any one local church. Paul's Spirit baptism into this "one body" in verse 13 clarifies his meaning. Being a missionary sent from the local church in Antioch, Paul was not a member of the local church in Corinth. Being a believer in Christ, Paul, with all other believers, is a member of Christ's one Church. Since local churches are representations in each geographical context of the Universal Church, the instructions throughout this passage to the larger Church are equally applicable to local churches.

12:12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27), each one being singular. God desires

that there be "no division in the body" (1 Cor. 12:25).

Second, the Church is diverse with many members. No believer is Christ's complete

body. Being *many members*, each constitutes a portion of the whole. The body "is made up of

many parts, all of them of importance, and yet the whole-body functions as a unit" (Mare 1976,

264). As the members of one's physical body are distinct--"foot" and "hand" (1 Cor. 12:15),

"ear" and "eye" (1 Cor. 12:16, 17) with differences in appearance and function, so the members

of the Church reflect diversity through the distribution to each of unique service gifts,

χαρισμάτων (1 Cor. 12:4-11). This diversity must not lead to pride as the "weaker" gifts, i.e.,

those which would appear less honorable, are in fact given "greater honor" (1 Cor. 12:21-25).

Third, these gifts and the resultant diversity are for the good of the body. In verse

twenty-four Paul declares that God has so "composed" the body. "The Greek word, *synekerasen*,

has the basic meaning of mixing different parts together with a specific purpose in mind, i.e., to

produce mutual support and interdependence ... God wants the members of a local church to

recognize how much they depend on one another, because that is an incentive to remove discord

and to deepen true concern" (Prior 1985, 215). Each member is thus interdependent. All body

parts are important to its function and provide a unique service for the whole. Paul further states,

"that the members may have the same care for one another (1 Cor. 12:25).

> The physical members are obliged, by the structure of the frame, to care for one another;
> the hand is as anxious to guard the eye or the stomach, to help the mouth or the foot, as to
> serve itself; the eye is watchman for every other organ; each feels its own usefulness and
> cherishes its fellows; all "have the same care," since they have the same interest--that of
> "the one body." (Nicoll 1990, 2:894)

"One another" is translated from the Greek ἀλλήλων meaning "each other." The word is

used "primarily in the description of the (obligatory) conduct of Christians in the community

toward each other, with emphasis on mutuality and culminating in the love commandment ἀγαπᾶν ἀλληλων (1 Thess. 3:12; 2 Thess. 1:3) (Balz and Schneider 1993, 1:63). This *one another* emphasis is repeated over one hundred times in the New Testament and thus informs the manner in which believers are to view their mutual service within the local congregation, namely; believers both *serve* the body and are *served* by it.

Finally, Paul writes in verse twelve, "So it is with Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12). "The way he ends verse 12 is highly significant. We would expect him to say: 'Just as the body is one and has many members..., so it is with the church.' In fact, he says, '*so it is with Christ* ... Paul is clearly referring here to the way Christ today manifests himself by the Spirit to the world through the church" (Prior 1985, 210). In other words, Christ ministers to the world and to individual believers through all of his people. We are Christ's hands and feet. We cooperate together with Christ for the accomplishment of his purposes.

This interdependence is true on the personal and local church level. While there are many ministries which a local church can accomplish on her own, there are other ministries that require cooperation between local church bodies. This ecclesiastical interdependence is evident on numerous other occasions within the biblical text.

Paul and His Coworkers

Although commonly referred to as simply "Acts," Luke's second historical book is formally titled "The Acts of the Apostles." The Greek word for Acts is πράξεις which "denoted a recognized genre, or subgenre in the ancient world, characterizing the great deeds of people or cities. In that Acts narrates the founding events of the church and ascribes most of them to the apostles, the title is not inappropriate" (Carson, Moo, and Morris 1992, 181).

While the early chapters (Acts 1-12) describe activities of the Eleven, especially Peter, the second half of the book (Acts 13-28) focuses primary attention upon the ministry of the apostle Paul who takes the Gospel from Jerusalem to the "ends of the earth." Paul is thus presented as "a paradigm of mission for all time" (Polhill 1992, 62).

However, Paul did not accomplish this ministry on his own. Over the course of his missionary career Paul almost never ministered alone, serving with at least forty-one individuals (Pillette 1996, 120, 121). Paul refers to these individuals as "brothers"--ἀδελφός (2 Tim. 4:21), "fellow workers"--συνεργός (Rom. 16:3), "minister"--διάκονος (Col. 4:7), "servant"--δοῦλος (Col. 4:12), "fellow servant"--σύνδουλος (Philem. 1:1), "fellow soldier"--συστρατιώτης (Phil. 2:25), and "fellow prisoners"--συναιχμάλωτος (Rom. 16:7).

Although Barnabas had ministered in Jerusalem and in Antioch (Acts 11:22; 13:1), he originally was from Cyprus (Acts 4:36). Silas was a respected leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:22). Timothy was from Lystra (Acts 16:1-3). Titus was a Gentile (Gal. 2:3) and a probable convert from Paul's first missionary journey. Eusebius identified Luke as being from Antioch. Mark was a cousin of Barnabas who returned to Jerusalem, his probable home, when he abandoned Paul and Barnabas during the first missionary journey (Acts 13:13). Aquila and Priscilla were Jewish tradesmen from Pontus who had settled in Rome and then Corinth (Acts 18:2, 3). This is where Paul met them. Erastus was also from Corinth (Rom. 16:23; 2 Tim. 4:20). Philemon was from Colossae (Philem. 1:2). Epaphroditus was from Philippi, which church also financially supported Paul's ministry (Phil. 2:25; 4:15-18). Aristarchus was from Thessalonica (Acts 27:2) as was Jason (Acts 17:5; Rom. 16:21). Trophimus was from Ephesus (Acts 21:29), and Tychicus from Asia (Acts 20:4).

Certainly, there were many other coworkers, but this list exemplifies Paul's interdependence as he ministered with individuals and churches for the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Council at Jerusalem

"The public apostolic council of Acts was the watershed event in the early Christian church" (Just 2010, 271). Not only does the event recorded in Acts 15 precisely fall in the middle of the book[10], but more importantly, the resolved doctrinal issues emboldened the Church to more vigorously focus its attention upon taking the gospel to the ends of the earth. Polhill states,

> It is central in the development of the total plot of the book. The first half of Acts focused on the Jewish community, particularly on the influential Jerusalem church. The Christian witness had begun there (chaps. 1-5). Through the Hellenists especially it had spread to Samaria and all of the land of the Jews (chaps. 6-9). Through the witness of Peter to Cornelius, the outreach of the Antioch church, and especially through the first major mission completed by Paul and Barnabas, the gospel had broken through to the Gentiles (chaps. 10-14). All the preliminary steps had been taken for a major effort to reach the Gentile world .... There remained only one hurdle, and that was the agreement of the whole church on the Gentile mission. There were still those among the Jewish Christians who had serious reservations about the way the outreach to Gentiles had been conducted. These reservations and the final solution to them worked out in a major conference in Jerusalem are the subject of 15:1-35. There the whole church agreed on the Gentile mission. The way was not open for the mission of Paul, and that will be the subject of the rest of Acts. (Polhill 1992, 320-21)

The Jerusalem Council centered on the nature of Gentile faith. During Paul's trip to Jerusalem one year earlier to deliver the famine offering, he took Titus, a Gentile, with him.[11]

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[10]Fitzmyer points out that the first fourteen chapters of Acts contain 12,385 words and the final fourteen chapter contain 12,502 words (Fitzmyer 1998, 538).

[11]The relationship between Gal. 2:1-10 and Acts 15:1-29 engenders significant debate and disagreement. The issue is far broader than the scope of this paper, but this author understands Galatians to have been written after Paul's second visit to Jerusalem when he delivered famine relief (Acts 11:27-30) and prior to the Jerusalem Council. "If the Jerusalem

Titus's uncircumcised state coupled with Paul and Barnabas's reports of Gentile conversion stirred up the Judaizers. While allowing for Gentile conversion, the Judaizers wrongly understood that, just as in the Old Testament, Gentile converts could only be accepted into the covenant community through proselyte initiation that included circumcision and Law-keeping (Acts 15:1). Paul, Barnabas, and Titus did not "yield in submission" to them "that the truth of the gospel might be preserved" (Gal. 2:5). While in Jerusalem, Paul took advantage of the opportunity to hold a private meeting with Peter, James, and John ("pillars" of the Jerusalem church) to assure that he was "not running or had not run in vain" (Gal. 2:2).

> What Paul sought was recognition from Jerusalem of the two missions: Paul to the uncircumcised Gentiles and Peter to the circumcised Jews (Gal. 2:8; here Paul acknowledges Peter as apostle and implies that he himself is an apostle like Peter). Paul received from the pillars in Jerusalem the right hand of fellowship concerning the two missions, reiterating once again that Paul and Barnabas would go to the Gentiles, and the Jerusalem church, led by Peter, would continue to go to the Jews. (Just 2010, 267)

Shortly after this private meeting, Peter was in Antioch when a certain group from Jerusalem, claiming to represent James, arrived. It appears as if this is the same group mentioned in Acts 15:1 who contentiously taught that Gentile believers must be circumcised in order to be saved. In response, Peter "drew back and separated himself," acting "hypocritically" (Gal. 2:12, 13). Even Barnabas was influenced by them, participating in their separation from Gentile believers. Two issues appear to be present. The Judaizers from Jerusalem were requiring law-keeping as a necessary prerequisite for salvation, while Peter and Barnabas' were confused about table fellowship with uncircumcised Gentile believers.

> This picture of Cephas enjoying unreserved table-fellowship (which included participation in the memorial breaking of bread) with the Gentile members of the

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church had already spoken on the issue, which is the position of those who conflate Galatians 2 and Acts 15," then, as Longnecker writes, it is "inconceivable" that Paul would "fail to mention the decision regarding his mission reached at the Jerusalem Council" (Longnecker 1981, 440).

Antiochene church is in complete accord with the picture given of him in Acts. ... This free and easy fellowship with the Gentiles, then, was practiced by Cephas at Antioch as a matter of course (συνήσθιεν imperfect) until some people (τίνας) came from James. (Bruce 1982, 129)

In response, Paul sharply rebukes Peter publicly. This incident becomes the impetus to the writing of the Epistle to the Galatians and the strong defense of justification by faith. He writes in Galatians 2, "We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified" (Gal. 2:15-16).

This incident also precipitated the Council in Jerusalem which was called by the church in Antioch to resolve the doctrinal and practical implications of the dispute.[12] Paul, Barnabas, and others were sent to inquire of the "apostles and elders" about the question.

Helpful to an understanding of the Council and its decision is the identification by Arthur A. Just of three main points of view at the Council. First is that of the Judaizers who advocated the need for law-keeping as part of salvation. "The implication for them is that, if Gentiles are not compelled to be circumcised and keep the law, their very salvation is at stake and their Jewish identity will be destroyed" (Just 2010, 277). This position was strongly refuted by the Council.

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[12]This seems to be a better reading than that found in the Western text. Longnecker writes, "The antecedent of the third person plural verb *etaxan* ('they appointed') is not specified here. The Western text assumes a hierarchical authority of the mother church in its reading ... but that reflects a later ecclesiastical situation. Probably the reference in vs. 3 to being sent 'by the church' (*hypo tes ekklesias)* gives the context for Luke's use of *etaxan,* so that we should understand 'they' as signifying the involvement of the entire congregation" (Longnecker 1981, 443).

Second is the position of Paul, Barnabas, and Peter. Peter's strong testimony here regarding the salvation of Gentiles clarifies that his error in Antioch was not soteriological. These men advocated salvation by grace alone through faith in Christ. Peter declares, "But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will" (Acts 15:11). This point of view was upheld by the Council. "The implication for this Gentile point of view is that Gentiles need not become like Jews in order to be Christians" (Just 2010, 277).

Third is the position of James and the Church at Jerusalem. They argued, along with Paul, Barnabas, and Peter, that salvation was by grace through faith, but they also argued for care to be had on issues surrounding idolatry and the Jewish laws of purification. "The adherents of this position have another doctrinal concern besides the preaching of the gospel plus the law. They are concerned with practices associated with idolatry, namely, partaking of food sacrificed to idols and committing adultery, particularly through cultic prostitution. These concerns apply to all Christians, Jewish and Gentile alike" (Just 2010, 277),

In conclusion, the Council supported Paul's mission to the Gentiles while issuing several provisions for doctrinal clarification and application. "The conference did approve Paul's basic message of a law-free gospel for the Gentiles. ... The decrees were a strategy for Jewish-Gentile fellowship" (Polhill 1992, 335). The Jerusalem Council was a turning point, freeing the gospel from the entanglements of the law while releasing the church to take the gospel to the ends of the world.

For the discussion of this project, the important point is that this pivotal decision on key doctrines and missionary methodology was made by a *council* of leaders from two sister churches. "Paul, Barnabas, and some of the others" were sent by the church in Antioch to meet with the apostles and elders in Jerusalem (Acts 15:2). The church in Antioch wisely understood

that a decision of this magnitude could not be settled in Antioch alone. "It needed the attention

of the whole church, since all Christians, Jew and Gentile, would be affected by its resolution"

(Polhill 1992, 323). This provides a valuable pattern for contemporary ministry illustrating the

need for and benefit of interdependence for the fulfillment of God's purposes.

The Need for Humility

"Accreditation is a process of external review, conducted by peer professionals with

expertise in particular areas relevant to the institution under review, and following standards and

procedures set by the member institutions of the accrediting organization" (Esterline 2013, 81).

This external evaluation, frequently called *peer review*, assures the institution and its

constituency that it is operating according to commonly agreed upon standards of instruction and

institutional effectiveness.

Accreditation is a slowly developing process in Latin America.

> Since the 1990s, the issue of quality assurance in higher education has become a focus of
> governments across Latin America and the Caribbean, and numerous accreditation
> organizations have emerged as a result. Large-scale expansion and diversification in the
> higher-education sector has prompted distinct changes in the administration of both state
> and privately run tertiary institutions. While this has greatly improved access to higher
> education for students from less affluent backgrounds, it has also created a pressing need
> for increased oversight of quality standards. (World Education News and Review 2016,
> accessed December 2016)

While most public institutions of higher education are aided by governmental or regional

accreditation bodies, many private schools and most religions institutions thus far have been

exempted from these requirements (Arjona 2014, 3). Although many professors of independent

Baptist pastoral training institutions were trained in Stateside accredited institutions and while

they often bring that experience to bear upon the development of academic programs and the

application of institutional standards, independent Baptist institutions rarely submit themselves

to external review. There is no external mechanism to ensure compliance of commonly agreed upon standards for the measurements of institution progress. The sad result is that many such institutions have floundered, demonstrating little academic advancement and offering, year by year, the same mediocre level of training.

What is needed is a good dose of individual and institutional humility. National leaders and missionary educators working together in a spirit of Christ-likeness should acknowledge their insufficiency and voluntarily submit themselves to the process of peer review and external evaluation. Bullón, in his chapter on accreditation writes, "self-accreditation or self-authentication are not sufficient. Others must evaluate our work; we are responsible, and we must give account to God and to the Church and human community. A cooperative effort in this sense, is therefore important" (Bullón 2014, 133). Such a humble attitude and a resultant willingness to submit oneself and one's institution to external review would propel pastoral training institutions to modestly assess their capabilities, to energetically seek outside help in the determination of academic benchmarks and institutional effectiveness, and to voluntarily submit their institution to external review by peer professionals within the realm of evangelical theological education.

Humility is more than an academic strategy. It is a characteristic of those who call upon the name of Christ. The psalmist writes, "For the Lord takes pleasure in his people, he adorns the humble with salvation" (Ps. 149:4). God's people, especially pastors, Christian leaders, and theological educators, should be characterized by humility. Several passages of Scripture expound upon this spiritual characteristic.

Servant Leadership

Leadership is often misconstrued as power. This is no less true in Latin America where authority figures consciously maintain a significant authoritative distance between themselves and those under their leadership.

> In high-power-distance cultures both leaders and followers assume that the leader has more authority, respect, and status symbols. The leader has the right to make unilateral decisions that will be obeyed without questions .... The research by Hofstede shows that in general, Asian, Eastern European, African, and several Latin American countries recorded relatively high-power-distance values. (Pleuddemann 2009, 95)

While pastors are no less prone to authoritarian leadership styles, it is vital that those who are entrusted with training the next generation of pastors/leaders especially provide a model that is consistent with biblical values. They should not dominate those under their charge, but they should be "examples to the flock" (1 Pet. 5:2, 3). The overarching teaching of Scripture points to a servant model of pastoral leadership.

In Matt. 20:21, the mother of James and John requests special seating in the kingdom for her two sons. Seats in near proximity to the King would denote prestige and authority (Carson 1984, 431). The displeasure shown by the other disciples (Matt. 20:24) probably reveals their frustration for not having asked the same of Christ earlier. Christ's instruction to them all was counter-cultural. While Gentile rulers exercise great authority over those under their leadership, "it shall not be so among you."

> Matthew's future ἔσται "will (not) be," really amounts to an imperative as in its next two occurrences in these verses. The words μέγας "great," and πρῶτος "first," obviously correspond to the initial request of the two brothers ("right hand" and "left hand" would be in first and second positions). The person who would be such in the community of the kingdom must not strive for positions of honor but become "your" (i.e., the community's) διάκονος "servant," and δοῦλος "slave." "First" and "slave" are nearly polar opposites. The greatness of the kingdom is thus of a paradoxical nature, as the disciples should by now have understood. The disciples are called to follow in the footsteps of their Lord and to follow his example of humility, service, and self-sacrifice. (Hagner 1995, 581, 582)

Greatness in God's kingdom is not a product of unique authority, but of uncommon humility. True leaders are servants (διάκονος) and slaves (δοῦλος) to those whom they lead (Matt. 20:26, 27). For even the Son of Man, Christ himself, "came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). Christ's incarnation, suffering, and death vividly illustrate the true character of spiritual leadership.

"Let This Mind Be in You"

Unity for the sake of the gospel is Paul's primary concern in his epistle to the Philippians. This provides "the overarching framework and motif within which the other themes and concerns are introduced and elucidated" (Black 1995, 16). In Phil. 2:1-4 Paul exhorts the Philippians to unify themselves amidst divisions that were occurring within the body (cf. Phil. 1:27; 4:2, 3).

The passage begins by reminding the Philippians of their common blessings in Christ. In verse two Paul begins with an imperative πληρώσατέ--"complete my joy" which he modifies with a ἵνα clause followed by a chiastic structure (A, B, B', A') to emphasize the necessary actions for unity to take place. These actions include "being of the same mind," "having the same love," "being in full accord," and being "of one mind." With these four actions, Paul asks "for a total inward attitude of mind or disposition of will, that strives after that one thing which is greater than any human truth ... a unity of spirit and sentiment in which powerful tensions are held together by an overmastering loyalty to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ" (Hawthorne 1983, 68). Verses three and four, using antithetical parallelism (A, B, A', B') and the strong adversative ἀλλα, address potential dangers to this unity and the encouragement toward attitudes of selflessness and humility. This includes to "count others more significant than yourselves," and "looking to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3, 4).

In verses five to eleven Paul employs an ancient Christological hymn that points to Christ

as the ultimate example of example of humility.

> We conclude that the Christ-hymn presents Jesus as the supreme example of the humble, self-sacrificing service that Paul has just been urging the Philippians to practice in their relations one toward another (vv. 1-4). Although the hymn is a Christological gem unparalleled in the New Testament and may have been originally composed for Christological or soteriological reasons, Paul's object in using it here is not primarily to give instruction in doctrine but to appeal to the conduct of Christ and to reinforce instruction in Christian living. (O'Brien 1991, 262)

The repetition of Christ's name at the beginning and the end of the paragraph rhetorically

reinforce Paul's emphasis. With a return to the imperative mood (φρονεῖτε) in verse five, Paul

declares that believers are to have Christ's mind. We are to humbly think, act, and feel just as he

did.

> Black points out the chiastic structure of the paragraph, summarizing each section:

A   Christ Jesus is God (vv. 5-6a)
       B   He descended to earth to become subservient to humanity (vv. 6b-7)
              C   He died a horrible death (v. 8)
       B'   He ascended to heaven and became superior to humanity (v. 9)
A'   Jesus Christ is acknowledged as God (vv. 10-11) (Black 1995, 37)

He explains, "Here the statements in B' and A' provide the logical outcomes of Christ's

self-emptying (which is described in A and B), while the midpoint of the chiasm (C) calls special

attention to the most striking elements of the paragraph: Christ's humiliating death by

crucifixion" (Black 1995, 37).

Two terms must be pointed out that carry significant theological implications. The first

expression is ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ "in the form of God," in verse six. That μορφῇ only appears here

and in verse seven complicates our understanding; however, Moulton and Milligan state that it

appears best to identify its meaning as "the form which truly and fully expresses the being which

underlies it" (Hawthorne 1983, 83). In other words, Christ possesses all of the attributes of deity.

Christ manifests the glory and the splendor of almighty God.

> The phrase ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ is best interpreted against the background of the glory of God, that shining light in which, according to Old Testament and intertestamental literature, God was pictured. The expression does not refer simply to external appearances but pictures the preexistent Christ as clothed in the garments of divine majesty and splendor. He was in the form of God, sharing God's glory. ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ thus corresponds with Jn 17:5 ("the glory I had with you before the world began") and reminds one of Heb 1:3 ("the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being"). (O'Brien 1991, 210-11)

The second key theological expression is "kenosis," from ἐκένωσεν in verse seven.

Κενόω in the Greek literally means "to empty, or to make empty." It also carries the

metaphorical meaning of "to destroy, to render void, of no effect" (Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich

1979, 428). The verb is used twice in the LXX (Jer. 14:2; 15:9) and five times in the New

Testament (Rom. 4:14--"faith is null;" 1 Cor. 1:17--"be emptied of its power;" 1 Cor.

9:15--"deprive me of my ground for boasting;" 2 Cor. 9:3--"not prove empty;" Phil 2:7--

"emptied himself"). As O'Brien points out, since the four other New Testament usages are

metaphorical, "the balance of probability lies in favor of a figurative connotation as well.

Accordingly, it has been suggested that this enigmatic expression is a poetic, hymn-like way of

saying that Christ poured out himself, putting himself totally at the disposal of people. This

meaning, it is argued, suites the entire passage (2:3-11) with its exhortation to humility" (O'Brien

1991, 217).

The analysis of this passage has been purposefully brief;[13] however, it confidently can be

stated that here Paul presents Christ as the ultimate example of humility. Clothed in the majesty

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[13]O'Brien calls this "the most difficult passage in Philippians" (O'Brien 1991, 188). Hawthorne states that "the number of exegetical problems and the sheer mass of books and articles it has called forth leaves one wondering where to begin, despairing about adding

and honor of deity, Christ voluntarily poured himself out (notice the emphatic position of εαυτόν)

taking upon himself the form and status of a servant, emptying himself even to death upon the

cross. God calls his people to do the same.

God Gives Grace to the Humble

The Epistle of James is considered one of the most practical books of the New Testament.

Often called "the Proverbs of the New Testament" (Burdick 1981, 164), James addresses

everyday issues such as trials (James 1:2, 3, 12), temptation (James 1:13, 14), anger (James 1:19,

20), partiality (James 2:1-13), communication (James 3:1-12), quarrels (James 4:1, 2), riches

(James 5:1-6), and physical illness (James 5:13-15). James's treatment of humility falls within

this sphere of practicality.

While James was not one of the Twelve (John 7:5), after the resurrection he became a

believer and eventually a lead elder of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18).

James was the half-brother of Christ (Matt. 13:55), a position of which he well could have taken

advantage. Yet James' self-identification as a "servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ"

(James 1:1) exemplifies the humility of Christ.[14]

James's discussion on humility falls within the broader context of worldly attitudes and

actions (James 4:1-10). In verses four to six James touches upon spiritual unfaithfulness. He

writes that "friendship with the world" is akin to spiritual adultery and places one in "enmity with

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anything new, and well-nigh stricken with mental paralysis, so significantly more could be said"
(Hawthorne 1983, 76).

[14]James uses the word (δοῦλος) which is used to describe Christ's humility in Philippians
2:7--Christ took upon himself "the form of a bond-servant."

God." Verse five, notoriously difficult to translate,[15] is best understood as a reference to the

Spirit that God places within his people to combat these sinful attitudes and actions.

> The Spirit God made to dwell in us opposes envy .... If it is the divine Spirit (taking God as the subject of κατὼκισεν, a hapax legomenon) which opposes envy, then we have an understanding of v. 5 that continues the flow of v. 4. Even though many interpretersprefer to take god as the subject of επὶποθεῖ, the thought could be expressed in terms of God at work in the believer through the Holy Spirit, which opposes the jealous or envious tendencies of our "earthly" human nature. As a result, the effect of "godly wisdom" should prevail. God opposes those who fight and war within the church, and he has placed his Spirit within his people to combat this tendency. Therefore, it is God's jealousy in v. 5, for he stands waiting for the belligerent to forsake their envy of others and direct their attention back to him. (Martin 1988, 149-51)

The result of this jealousy mentioned in verse five is that God "gives more grace" (James

4:6). Because of the Fall, mankind is totally depraved, choosing quarrels (James 4:1), murder

and covetousness (James 4:2), selfishness (James 4:3), spiritual adultery and idolatry (James

4:4), and envy (James 4:5) over truth and righteousness, yet God responds in grace (James 4:6)

through the gift of his Spirit (James 4:5). "The δέ ('but') suggests a contrast. If we understand

verse 5b as a description of human sinfulness, then the greater (μείζονα) grace (χάρις) of God

overcomes the envy of human nature" (Martin 1988, 151).

It is here in verse six that James inserts a quotation from Prov. 3:34, "God opposes the

proud, but gives grace to the humble." James's argument is that those who have received the gift

of the Spirit (i.e., those who have placed their faith and trust in Christ, Rom. 8:9, 10) should be

characterized by humility. God's grace as evidenced in the presence of the Spirit enables his

people to respond humbly.

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[15]While the purpose of this paper does not allow for a more detailed exegesis of this text, some of the exegetical questions to consider include: Does the "spirit" refer to the Holy Spirit or the human spirit? Is the activity of "lusting" a sinful action referencing the spiritual unfaithfulness of mankind (James 4:1-4), or is it a righteous action referencing God's gift of grace to resist devil (James 4:5-10)? What Scripture text is James quoting?

Epistemological Humility

By implication, the biblical call to humility should influence the way in which Baptists view truth. As a general rule, those involved in independent Baptist pastoral training in Spanish-speaking Latin America are godly and personally humble. They love the Lord and reflect Christ-like character in their life and ministry. Likewise, humility, as a virtue, is an important component in their pietistic instruction and it is desired that future Latin American Baptist pastors be humble servants of the Lord. However, one's personal piety is not always consistent with one's personal beliefs or their epistemology. Admittedly, most independent Baptists lack cognitive self-awareness. In other words, they do not think about their thinking.

Epistemology refers to the way in which truth is perceived. As Paul Feinberg describes in *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology,* epistemology is "an inquiry into the nature and source of knowledge, the bounds of knowledge, and the justification of claims to knowledge" (Feinberg 1984, 359).

Paul Hiebert unpacks the relevance of this subject to missions in his work, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*. Many people, including independent Baptist pastors and missionaries, take their epistemological assumptions for granted. "Most Christians, like scientists, do not examine their epistemological foundations. They assume that they understand clearly and without bias what Scripture has to say" (Hiebert 1994, 26). One's epistemology is mostly unconscious and its impact upon theology and ministry is rarely understood. Hiebert presents a taxonomy of six distinct epistemological positions.

Table 1. A taxonomy of epistemological positions

Position	Nature of Knowledge	Relationship between Systems of Knowledge	The Umpire's Response
Absolute Idealism	Reality exists in the mind. The external world is illusory (e.g., Vedantic and Advaita Hinduism).	Each system is an island to itself. Systems are incommensurable. Unity is possible only as everyone joins in the same system.	"My calling it makes it a strike. The game is in my mind."
Critical Idealism	Reality exists in the mind. The eternal world is unknowable. Order is imposed on sense experience by the mind.	Each system is an island to itself. Systems are incommensurable. A common ground is found in human rationality, which is assumed to be the same for all humans.	"My calling it makes it a strike. My mind imposed order on the world."
Naïve Idealism/Naïve Realism	The external world is real. The mind can know it exactly, exhaustively, and without bias. Science is a photograph of reality. Knowledge and reality are equated uncritically.	Because knowledge is exact and potentially exhaustive, there can be only one unified theory. Various theories must be reduced to one. This leads to reductionism in the physical, psychological, or sociocultural sphere.	"I call it the way it is. If it is a strike, I call it a strike. If it is a ball, I call it a ball."
Critical Realism	The external world is real. Our knowledge of it is partial but can be true. Science is a map or model. It is made up of successive paradigms that bring us to closer approximations of reality and absolute truth.	Each field of science presents a different blueprint of reality. These are complimentary to one another. Integration is achieved, not by reducing them all to one model, but by seeing their interrelationship. Each gives us partial insights into reality.	"I call it the way I see it, but there is a real pitch and an objective standard against which I must judge it. I can be shown to be right or wrong."

Table 1 (*continued*)

Position	Nature of Knowledge	Relationship between Systems of Knowledge	The Umpire's Response
Instrumentalism (Pragmatism)	The external world is real. We cannot know if our knowledge of it is true, but if it "does the job" we can use it. Science is a Rorschach response that makes no ontological claims to truth.	Because we make no truth claims for our theories or models, there can be no ontological contradictions between them. We can use apparently contradictory models in different situations so long as they work.	"I call it the way I see it, but there is no way to know if I am right or wrong."
Determinism	The external world is real. We and our knowledge are determined by material causes, hence knowledge can lay no claim to truth (or to meaning).	There is no problem with integration, for all systems of knowledge are determined by external, nonrational factors such as infant experiences, emotional drives, and thought conditioning.	"I call it the way I am programmed to."

Source: Data from Hiebert 1994, 23.

Many independent Baptists currently would fall under the Naïve Idealism/Naïve Realism position. This position assumes "their theology bears a one-to-one correspondence to the Bible. It rejects the notion that their interpretations of Scripture are colored by their history and culture, their personal experiences or even the language they speak" (Hiebert 1994, 26).

This position lacks epistemological humility for two reasons: (1) It is convinced that its convictions and practices are synonymous with truth--our beliefs are *the way that it is*. In other words, there is no distance between belief and truth and hence, there is little room for self-evaluation or self-criticism, and therefore, little benefit in dialogue with others. Naïve Idealist/Naïve Realists' knowledge is exact and exhaustive with only one unified theory--theirs. (2) It fails to distinguish between "degrees of certainty" (Bredfeldt 2006, 82). Typically, Naïve

Idealists/Naïve Realists hold all of their doctrinal positions and often their preferences with the same confidence. They fail to distinguish between truth and belief, between Scripture and the interpretation of Scripture and between biblical principles and their application.[16] Such a stance minimizes the need for deep theological reflection. Since independent Baptists unconsciously view their beliefs as *epistemologically secure*, there is little need, in their mind, for additional exegetical study, theological reflection, and interaction with others.

Conclusion

While the biblical themes which have been presented may not demand a pursuit of accreditation, they do set the stage for it. The authority of the local church signifies that decisions regarding the content, methods, and means of training of future leaders is within their jurisdiction. The biblical emphasis upon academic rigor calls the church to take seriously the academic preparation of ministry leaders. Interdependence encourages cooperation with others within the Church while humility acknowledges our need for others to aid us in this process.

Review of Relevant Literature

Relevant themes related to accreditation and the academic training of leaders for ministry in a missionary context have generated a significant body of literature. The following themes are pertinent and have influenced my thinking on the subject.

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[16]The viable alternative to Naive Idealism/Naive Realism is not the post-modern position of Instrumentalism (pragmatism), but rather, it is Critical Realism. While rejecting the idea that all "truth is subject to interpretation" (Bredfeldt 2006, 84), Critical Realism sees a distinction between the truth of Scripture and theology. "The Bible is the source and rule for Christian faith and life, and the final criterion against which to measure theological truth .... Theology in a Critical Realist mode is our human understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures .... There is room for growth in our theologies, but this means that we must constantly test our theologies against Scripture and be willing to change them when we gain new understandings" (Hiebert 1994, 29, 30).

Indigenous Church

The *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* identifies Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn as the first to coin the term "indigenous church." Terry, in his article on the indigenous church in the *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, writes,

> They both wrote about the necessity of planting "three-self" churches-- that would be self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating (Venn used the term self-extending). They exhorted missionaries to establish churches that could support themselves, govern themselves, and carry out a program of evangelism and missions .... They instructed their missionaries to train national pastors and hand the care of the churches over to them at the earliest opportunity. (Terry 2000, 483, 484)

Over the next century this topic was advanced by missiologists. John L. Nevius wrote *Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*. Roland Allen authored *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* and *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*. Melvin Hodges wrote *The Indigenous Church* and Alan Tippet composed the *Verdict Theology in Missionary Theory*. These books all promoted, as a component of the indigenous process, the absolute necessity of training national leaders and the purposeful transmission of churches and ministries into their hands.

David Hesselgrave's books *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication* and *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally* provide missionaries with clear guidance on methods to encourage the evangelization of new believers and the establishment and growth of indigenous churches. Tom Steffen's book *Passing the Baton: Church Planting that Empowers* promotes role change as a consistent strategy in cross-cultural missions. In his perspective, this should involve conscientious "phase-out" so as to encourage the rise of indigenous leadership. His follow-up work, *The Facilitator Era: Beyond Pioneer Church Multiplication,* written in a narrative format, unpacks ways in which Western mission ministries can effectively partner with autonomous churches.

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The explosive growth of Christianity in the Global South is changing the missionary paradigm. In Jenkins book, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, he writes,

> We are currently living through one the transforming moments in the history of religion worldwide. Over the last five centuries, the story of Christianity has been inextricably bound up with that of Europe and European-derived civilizations overseas, above all in North America. Until recently, the overwhelming majority of Christian have lived in white nations .... Over the last century, however, the center of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably southward to Africa, and Latin America. Today the largest Christian communities on the planet are to be found in those regions. (Jenkins 2007, 1)

Early missionary efforts focused upon the proclamation of the gospel, the evangelization of the lost, and the establishment of local churches. In many Latin American countries, these efforts have been ongoing for more than one hundred years. In Rom. 1:16 Paul declared that the gospel "is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." Thus, it should not surprise us to hear that God has blessed these missionary efforts. Millions have trusted Christ as their Savior and thousands of churches have been planted. Additionally, the national leaders are now pastoring local churches, national missionaries are being sent, and parachurch ministries are flourishing. The question becomes, what role should the American Church have going forward? Many are suggesting that a new paradigm for mission work is emerging within the Global South.

This new paradigm has been described in various ways. Paul Hiebert describes a necessary change in emphasis. He writes, "If behavioral change was the focus of the mission movement in the nineteenth century and changed beliefs its focus in the twentieth century, then transforming worldviews must be it central task in the twenty-first century" (Hiebert 2008, 11, 12). Samuel Escobar`s book, *The New Global Mission*, encourages the rise of a new paradigm that promotes "global partnerships" (Escobar 2003, 164). Likewise, *The Changing Face of World Missions* advocates the rise of "networks of collaboration" to more effectively employ

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personnel and "international partnerships" for a better use of missionary resources (Pocock, Van Rheenen, and McConnell 2005, 247-97). David J. Bosch's book titled *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* recognizes six distinct missionary epochs or paradigms throughout church history. According to Bosch, we are in the sixth paradigm, what he calls the "emerging ecumenical missionary paradigm. The principle idea being that the world is becoming smaller and that the Church is actively composed of peoples from every denomination, nation, and culture" (Bosch 2003, 368-510). In *The Facilitator Era* Tom Steffen identifies four eras in modern missions. He suggests that in the first three eras missionaries focused upon pioneering new territory, taking the Gospel to those who had never heard. He writes, "in former eras church planters pioneered among unreached peoples .... I am proposing that in this Fourth Era, they facilitate" (Steffen 2011, 32). Further in the book he clarifies that these facilitators, "serve existing national churches as a 'supporting ligament,' using Paul's phrase from Eph. 4:16. They provide encouragement and specific training and services in multiple ways to encourage a sustainable national church-planting movement, even a holistic one" (Steffen 2011, 39).

If this thinking is correct, then services related to pastoral training and the pursuit of a robust academic model should most certainly be a key component within this new paradigm. This is consistent with Steffen's analysis--training was a central feature in most of the case studies that he proffered (Steffen 2011, 155-327). While the American model of pastoral training is not without its faults and should not be copied indiscriminately, the extended history of American pastoral training as documented above and the relative success of American pastoral training models provide independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Latin America with a valuable pattern of institutional advancement. Theological educators with advanced degrees and Stateside accredited institutions of higher learning can serve as *fourth era*

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facilitators to expedite the Latin Church's journey toward higher academic and the pursuit of an accreditation model.

Contextualization

By the 1970s, missionary discussion had turned toward contextualization. A growing awareness of the interpretive and communicative differences between cultures fomented discussion on how to best transmit theology. The International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches launched the Theological Education Fund to promote a contextualized pastoral training model that would lead to a "real encounter between the student and the Gospel in terms of his own forms of thought and culture" (Theological Education Fund 1972, 13). In response, evangelical theologians Byang H. Kato, Bruce J. Nicholls, George W. Peters, and others chose to adopt the term, but to also redefine it. Nicholls wrote that contextualization is "the translation of the unchanging content of the Gospel of the kingdom into verbal form meaningful to the peoples in their separate cultures and within their particular existential situations" (Nicolls 1975, 647).

David Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen's book *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models* and Hesselgrave's *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication* provided missionaries with a strong evangelical definition of the term and comprehensive guide to biblical application. Others capitalized on this emphasis. Judith and Sherwood Lingenfelter applied the principles of contextualization to teaching in *Teaching Cross-Culturally* and Sherwood Lingenfelter and Marvin Mayers did likewise to ministering in *Ministering Cross-Culturally*. Sherwood Lingenfelter (*Leading Cross-Culturally*), Duane Elmer (*Cross-Cultural Servanthood*), and James E. Pleuddemann (*Leading Across Cultures*) also applied it to aspects of ministerial leadership.

Paul Hiebert brought an anthropologist's viewpoint to the missionary discussion. His books *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* and *Anthropological Reflections on Missionary Issues* have influenced my thinking perhaps more than any other. These books offer concrete examples from years of experience serving as a missionary in India and are coupled with clear and concise explanations that clarify the concept of critical contextualization within evangelical missions. Perhaps most important to the pastoral training discussion was his promotion of the fourth self, self-theologizing.

Self-Theologizing

Self-theologizing refers to the national church's right to read and to interpret Scripture on their own.

> After a church has been planted, it is important that the missionary encourage the rise of natural leaders within the young congregation and support and train them. As much as possible, the local group of believers must take responsibility for the church from the very beginning. It is essential that we train leaders who can wrestle with the theological issues that emerge within their cultural context. (Hiebert 1985, 215)

Self-theologizing has now been accepted by missiologists as a viable component in the indigenous paradigm. This truth in conjunction with the explosive growth of Christianity in the Global South as documented by Philip Jenkins (*The Next Christendom* and *The New Faces of Christianity*), Samuel Escobar (*The New Global Mission*), Andrew Walls (*The Missionary Movement in Christian History*), and Michael Pocock (*The Changing Face of Missions*) has encouraged Donald Bosch (*Transforming Mission*), Craig Ott (*Globalizing Theology*), Lois Fuller ("The Missionary's Role in Developing Indigenous Christian Theology"), and a growing contingent of national theologians to encourage the rise of a global theology.

> Globalizing theology is theological reflection rooted in God's self-revelation in Scripture and informed by the historical legacy of the Christian community through the ages, the current realities in the world, and the diverse perspectives of Christian communities

throughout the world, with a view to greater holiness in living and faithfulness in fulfilling God's mission in all the world through the church. (Ott and Netland 2006, 30)

This portends a potential shift in theology. Harold Netland writes in the introduction to *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in the Era of World Christianity,* "the fact that most Christians now are in the non-Western world clearly has implications for who does theology for the church" (Ott and Netland 2006, 15). As new theologians arise from different cultural contexts, Jenkins warns that these new participants in theological reflection will "read the Bible in a way that makes Christianity look like a wholly different religion from the faith of prosperous and advanced societies of Europe or North America" (Jenkins 2007, 257). Of course, this is not a new phenomenon. Andrew Walls repeatedly has documented the cyclical and cross-cultural diffusion of the Christian faith and the varying expressions of Christianity throughout the centuries (Walls 2007, 27-47).

This shift will have a variable effect. On the one hand, the possibility of new theological expressions is cause for concern. Will these cultures alter accepted Christian beliefs? As other cultures rise to prominence with the Christian landscape, how will their unique theological expressions affect global Christianity? On the other hand, the potential danger is accompanied by potential benefit. Padilla writes, "In all cultures there are elements which conspire against the understanding of God's Word .... On the other hand, every culture possesses positive elements, favorable to the understanding of the Gospel" (Padilla 1980, 69). Walls adds, "the representation of Christ by any one group can at best be only partial. At best, it reflects the conversion of one small segment of reality and it needs to be complemented and perhaps corrected by others" (Walls 2006, 74). In other words, Western Christians need to listen to Christians from other cultures and vice versa. "All theologies, including those in the West, need one another: they influence, challenge, enrich and invigorate each other" (Bosch 2003, 456). The hope is that this

dialogue will produce a *metatheology* that is ever more faithful to God's Word, thus encouraging greater understanding and obedience in all cultures.

Global theology, however, must not be allowed to degenerate into global theologies; rather, local theologians ought to work humbly with others within the global evangelical hermeneutical community to pursue what Paul Hiebert calls a "Transcultural Theology," that is, "a metatheology that compares theologies, explores the cultural biases of each, and seeks to find biblical universals" (Hiebert 1985, 217). Participation in hermeneutical community requires that national theologians be prepared with the hermeneutical, exegetical, and theological tools to serve in this capacity.

A Transcultural Theology Transcends Cultural Differences
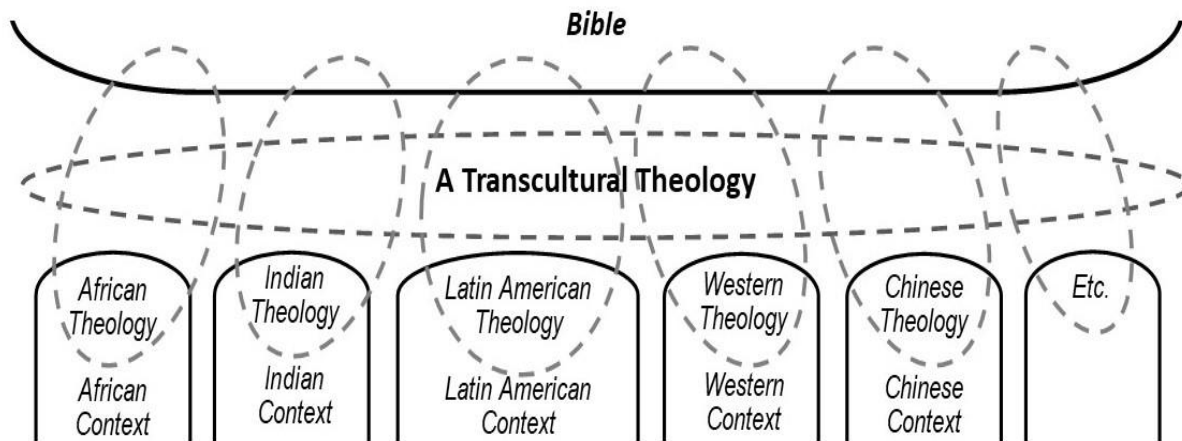
Figure 1. A transcultural theology transcends cultural differences (Hiebert 1994, 23).

Two factors preclude independent Baptists in Latin America from participating in this international theological dialogue and thus from influencing global theology. The first was addressed above. The Naïve Realist/Naïve Idealist epistemology of many independent Baptists

has resulted in a position of isolation. As a general rule, independent Baptists do not interact theologically or ministerially with other groups. Since there is no difference between our truth and the truth, a methodology of militant separatism is preached, practiced, and has been passed on from the American Church, to the missionary, and ultimately to national leaders.

Second, the failure to train national theologians and to equip them with the intellectual tools necessary for dialogue, as well as the academic credentials necessary for participation in theological associations severely limits independent Baptists' opportunities for participation and influence. As most independent Baptist national pastors and leaders only possess Bible Institute level training, they lack the linguistic (Greek and Hebrew), theological, and literary skills to effectively participate in international theological dialogue.

The historic distinctives of Baptists are not the result of theological whims, rather they reflect years of exegetical, theological, and ministerial reflection. These beliefs offer valid and consistent exegetical constructs that have well served Baptist churches for centuries. Our belief in these tenets should encourage the pursuit of amicable discussion within the hermeneutical community both to further refine our beliefs and to influence others. This is consistent with Paul's command that Timothy "entrust" what he heard from Paul "to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).

This opens the discussion regarding what constitutes a viable pastoral training model in a Latin American context. Resources such as M. Daniel Carroll's article "Tendencias y retos en la educación teológica evangélica en Ámerica Latina" in the Hispanic theological journal *Kairos,* Rene Padilla's book *Nuevas alternativas de educación teológica,* and Benjamín Alicea-Lugo's article, "Salsa y Adobo: Latino/Latina Contributions to Theological Education" analyze the need for cultural diversity in the educational process.

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This was the impetus behind the Theological Education by Extension model (TEE). Ralph D. Winter's *Theological Education by Extension* documents the rise of this movement and along with Ted Ward's *Programmed Instruction for Theological Education by Extension*, Stewart G. Snook's *Developing Leaders through Theological Education by Extension*, and Ross Kinsler's *Diversified Theological Education,* explains the specifics of the TEE program and its benefits over more traditional educational models.

These are not the only contextualized educational alternatives. Paul R. Gupta in *Breaking Tradition to Accomplish Mission* proposes a non-formal approach that adequately promotes both academic and practical learning objectives. Kinsler provides case studies from all over the world that illustrate diverse models of theological education. William H. Smallman in *Able to Teach Others Also: Nationalizing Global Ministry Training*, offers a more traditional tactic. Without a significant modification to the academic program he encourages the deliberate transition of administrative power to nationals, thus placing the decision-making process in their hands.

Important to this process is the rise of national theologians who will serve as professors in national pastoral training institutions. Reese's article "Sustainable Theological Education" in the *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* suggests that indigenization is incomplete until nationals are an integral part of the training team. Likewise, as Alec Gilmore discusses in "Third World Theological Libraries," more and better resources must be readily available.

> Travelers to Third World theological colleges in particular will be familiar with the need for library development. Theological College libraries vary considerably, from one which is well-stocked with thousands of volumes built up over many years, carefully catalogues and maintained by professionally trained librarians, in air-conditioned rooms with light and space for students and faculty to work, to another with not more than five hundred titles, many of them duplicates, occupying a few unsteady shelves in an untidy room, looking as if they were chosen and maintained by nobody, and shouting aloud to all comers, "This is all we have"--and all stations in between. (Gilmore 1994, 237)

Curriculum

What should an effective pastoral training curriculum include? M. David Sills correctly

encapsulates the major areas of focus in leadership training. He writes, "we train hearts, heads,

and hands in an integrated fashion, constantly connecting personal discipleship to the content of

theological education and teaching practical pastoral ministry applications" (Sills 2016, 12).

This breadth of training is consistent, as we have already seen, with Paul's emphasis in the

Pastoral Epistles upon sound doctrine and godly behavior. Adequate preparation in one of these

areas to the neglect of the other is insufficient. Sadly, many have experienced the ministry of an

imbalanced pastor. Perhaps his preaching is phenomenal, but his personal ministry skills are

lacking or even worse, his personal life is a wreck. Perhaps he is a godly and compassionate

man, but his interpretation of God's Word and his resultant theology is suspect. Both scenarios

are recipes for disaster. The growing cultural and linguistic distance between the contemporary

pastor and the biblical text coupled with the increasingly de-Christianization of modern society

complicates the training process and requires a growing list of academic, spiritual, and

ministerial disciplines that must be mastered.[17]

Discussions surrounding theological curriculum are as old as the Old Testament (Deut.

6:1-8; Jos 1:8). A. B. Bruce's classic, *The Training of the Twelve,* describes the means and

methods through which Christ prepared his disciples. Justo L. González's *History of Theological*

Education unpacks the development of theological education from the early church through the

Medieval schools, Scholasticism, and the Reformation to today. Particularly relevant to today's

academic environment is González's explanation of the rise of the modern university. This

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[17]Leroy Ford in his book, *A Curriculum Design Manual for Theological Education*, lists
thirty-six core disciplines for ministerial training.

moved theological studies from the church to the public square. It also sought to defend

theology as a viable academic discipline.

> In the modern university ... science would rule, and fields such as theology would have to justify their presence. Ironically, theology, which centuries earlier had given birth to the universities, now had to defend its place within them. In order to do so, Schleiermacher and others like him had to show that theology is a science--a *Wissenschaft.*
>   Historians and biblical scholars had to show that their studies were scientific, and therefore the purpose of these studies was no longer to inquire as to what the history of the church or the Bible meant for the life of society and of the church, but rather to attain a "scientific" knowledge of the Bible as well as of history. (González 2015, 107, 108)

Schleiermacher was key to this transformation. As founding member and professor at

Berlin University, the forerunner of the modern university movement, Schleiermacher, as part of

his duties at the university, proposed a curriculum model that divided theological studies into

three headings: philosophical theology, dogmatic theology, and practical theology.

Philosophical theology emphasized Schleiermacher's emphasis upon religious feelings as

foundational to the Christian faith. Dogmatic theology would teach Church doctrine as it has

been presented throughout the ages, and practical theology would train in the necessary functions

of ministry (Gonzalez 2015, 105-7).

To Know and Love God by David K. Clark offers an extensive and valuable discussion on

the development of theology curriculum. His chapter, "Unity in the Theological Disciplines," is

especially helpful to understand the theological encyclopedia and its import on theological

studies. "A new curriculum structure that distinguished several facets of theology began

evolving around 1760 .... By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the so-called theological

encyclopedia used the word 'theology' in a broad sense to include the four allied theological

disciplines: Bible, church history, systematics, and practical theology" (Clark 2003, 166).

D. G. Hart and R. Albert Mohler broadly analyze the subject in *Theological Education in*

the Evangelical Tradition demonstrating different academic emphases within the distinct

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branches of evangelicalism. Timothy George's chapter on theological education in "The Baptist Tradition" is especially helpful. Harold W. Burgess discusses the philosophical end of the subject in *Models of Religious Education: Theory and Practice in Historical and Contemporary Perspective.* Robert L. Kelley, around the turn of the twentieth century, examined 161 pastoral training schools in the United States and Canada in *Theological Education in America*. Here he documents the diverse and changing nature of academic programs of theological study. He also provides early historical documentation of the evangelical progress toward modern accreditation standards.

As with any discipline, theological training for ministry is under constant scrutiny as church leaders and missionaries search for more effective models. Calls for renewal in theological education have been ongoing. Edward Farley's *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* laments the dissipation of theological studies. Of course, Robert Kelley had documented this movement to a clerical model as far back as 1924. In response Farley writes, "once the theological school and the course of theological study is thought of as a plurality of sciences, theology as a single science (discipline) is lost .... Theology becomes one of the specialties along with biblical studies, ethics, pastoral care, etc." (Farley 2001, 42). Farley thus calls seminaries to promote a more integrated approach he calls "theologia"--a *habitus* or a disposition of the soul. In a similar way Kelsey identified two major approaches to theological education. In *Between Athens and Berlin* he analyzes American theological education along an axis between transformational and vocational methods. Brian Edgar's article "The Theology of Theological Education" expands this paradigm to include confessional and missional models. His chart provides a helpful typology of the four different methods.

CLASSICAL	Transforming the individual	Knowing God	CONFESSIONAL
	ATHENS Academy		GENEVA Seminary
	THEOLOGIA	DOXOLOGY	
	MISSIOLOGY	SCIENTIA	
	JERUSALEM Community		BERLIN University
MISSIONAL	Converting the world	Strengthening the church	VOCATIONAL

Figure 2. The typology of theological methods in diagrammatic form (Edgar 2005, 213).

Other works address the need for renewal from different perspectives. The International Council on Evangelical Theological Education's *Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education* declares that "evangelical theological education on the whole today needs earnestly to pursue and recover a through-going theology of education" (International Council on Evangelical Theological Education 1995, 303). Robert Banks' *Reenvisioning Theological Education* encourages a return to a missional model arguing the *missiologia* is what "gives theological education its coherence" (Banks 1999, 146). The recent contribution, *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination* by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching forwards four signature pedagogies of theological education: pedagogies of interpretation, pedagogies of formation, pedagogies of contextualization, and pedagogies of performance (Foster et al. 2006, xi). Similarly, Daniel O. Aleshire's article "The Emerging Model of Formational Theological Education" suggests that current academic practices need to be "recalibrated" and current academic efforts to teach pastoral skills needs to

be "repositioned" so as to emphasize "the human and spiritual dimensions of ministry" (Aleshire 2018, 33-37).

This discussion is complicated even more when applied outside of the United States of America. As has been mentioned before, many argue that pastoral training in foreign contexts is too dependent upon Western models of education and that contextualized models of pastoral training are needed to more effectively prepare national theologians. Rupen Das's booklet, *Connecting Curriculum with Context,* written for the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education, highlights the importance of understanding and applying theological training to specific contexts. He writes, "theology and context are integrally linked and this needs to be reflected in the training at seminaries" (Das 2015, 3-4). Particularly helpful is his Sample Toolkit. This is a list of suggested questions to ask graduates so as to properly evaluate the success of an institution's contextual training. Robert Banks, whose work is also cited above writes,

> In the Third World, some have insisted that the prevailing paradigm of theological education, and even current proposals for its reform, exists within a Western frame of reference that is fundamentally flawed ... since virtually all theological institutions in developing countries have adopted the Western model, they are unable to train their own students for ministry in the most appropriate way. (Banks 1999, 10)

Finally, Leroy Ford wrote *A Curriculum Design Manual for Theological Education: A Learning Outcomes Approach* to promote a more strategic approach to curriculum. He addresses the need for a clear institutional purpose, educational goals and objectives, and course descriptions, all formulated in response to defined educational outcomes. "The Most significant omission from many curriculum designs in theological education is the absence of a comprehensive statement of meaningful educational goals and objectives for the learners" (Ford

1991, 83). According to Ford, this strategy will allow each institution to develop a curriculum based upon the cultural context and the ministerial needs as defined by the church.

Scholarship

A dearth of evangelical scholarship has been documented for many years. Mark Noll's book, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, David Well's *No Place for Truth: Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology*, and his *God in the Wasteland: The Reality of Truth in a World of Fading Dreams* each take the evangelical church to task for their academic weakness. Noll writes, "the scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind" (Noll 1994, 3).

Theological education has also been affected by a lack of scholarship. In the early 1900s, the growth of specialized academic disciplines along with an emphasis upon the practical aspects of ministry influenced American Bible colleges and seminaries to pursue a more clerical model of pastoral training. This is documented in Kelley's *Theological Education in America.* Kelley concludes that by 1921-22 practical theology was "approximately coordinate with exegetical theology in the number of hours offered" (Kelley 1924, 83). González writes, "the development of the sciences in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries complicated the theological curriculum through a huge expansion in the field of 'practical theology'" (González 2015, 110). Likewise, C. C. Goen's 1963 article in *Foundations Journal* on the "Changing Conceptions of Protestant Theological Education in America," and Glenn Miller's *Piety and Profession: American Protestant Theological Education 1870-1970* touch upon the subject.

In many ways, Baptists, especially independent Baptists, were at the forefront of the anti-intellectual movement in the United States. George M. Marsden, in *Fundamentalism and American Culture,* and *Reforming Fundamentalism*, along with Mark A. Noll's *The Scandal of*

the Evangelical Mind demonstrate how the confluence of pietism, revivalism, the Great Reversal, and Darwinism led Fundamentalists, of which Baptists formed a major block, to withdrawal from academia and establish their own pastoral training institutions. Marsden writes, "During the early decades of the twentieth century, as denominational colleges and seminaries cut themselves loose from their evangelical moorings, Bible institutes sprang up as alternatives, usually emphasizing evangelism, missions, and dispensationalist Bible study" (Marsden 1980, 5).

Arthur L. Walker, Jr. ("Baptists and Higher Education, 1839-1989") and Stewart Newman ("Where Baptists Stand on Anti-Intellectualism 1973-1989") discuss anti-intellectualism in Southern Baptist institutions of higher education. George Dollar, writing with an insider's perspective documents in *A History of Fundamentalism in America* the academic weakness of Fundamental (predominantly independent Baptist) Bible colleges and seminaries.

> Since Fundamentalists have taken their place outside the denominational structures, they have separated themselves from the time-honored schools of higher learning and been forced to erect their own .... In too many cases, almost any kind of academics has been defended on the ground of the Christian character of the teachers. Their gifts in the classroom and their broad exposure to the masters of their fields have been limited, while mature judgments based on proper research and graduate disciplines have, in too many cases, been non-existent. The picture at this point is extremely blurred. Bible institutes have resorted to rote memory as a sole classroom exercise and many graduating from such backgrounds have assumed they had a respectable education .... Inferior standards prevail on a national scale, while unsuspecting pastors and parents believe they are supporting and paying for a first-class education. (Dollar 1973, 269)

Without question, God has used these schools and their graduates to accomplish great things for his glory; however, the anti-intellectual spirit found among many has negatively affected the movement. Noll's comments are applicable to many of the institutions in the independent Baptist movement. He writes,

[A]n extraordinary range of virtues is found among the sprawling throngs of evangelical Protestants in North America, including great sacrifice in spreading the message of salvation in Jesus Christ, open-hearted generosity to the needy, heroic personal exertion on behalf of troubled individuals, and the unheralded sustenance of countless church and parachurch communities. Notwithstanding all their other virtues, however, American evangelicals are not exemplary in their thinking, and they have not been so for several generations. (Noll 1994, 3)

An implication of the independent Baptist anti-intellectual spirit is their apprehension about accreditation. While many stateside independent Baptist pastoral training institutions have now accepted the biblical validity and academic value of accreditation, the diffidence found in previous generations is still rampant among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions on the mission field.[18]

Accreditation

Accreditation is a broad subject that encompasses socio-political, educational, theological, and financial concerns. Many of these concerns relate to the process itself. What is its purpose? How is it administered? What options are available for pastoral training institutions in Latin America? How difficult is the process? First, this section will explore literature on general aspects of accreditation, including its purpose and history. Then we will unpack (with greater specificity) accreditation as it relates to theological institutions in Latin America.

Why is Accreditation Important?

God's people are called to excellence in all that they attempt to accomplish for God's glory (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17). This quest for quality should characterize every facet of ministry, especially pastoral training. This is the point of Carnegie Samuel Calian's work *The*

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[18]Of the 176 affiliated institutions listed on the Asociación Evangélica de Educación en América Latina's (AETAL) website, only a few in Brazil are associated with the independent Baptist movement.

Ideal Seminary: Pursuing Excellence in Theological Education. "The difference between excellence and mediocrity reduces itself ultimately to the common resolve in each institution to be a committed, disciplined, and truthful community" (Calian 2001, 24). Victor Klimoski in his article "Assessment and Good Teaching" argues that "good schools have a sense of accountability to their partners, including the students, sponsoring bishops and religious communities, and those congregations and institutions that will depend on the skillful leadership and talent of graduates" (Klimoski 2005, 77). John F. VerBerkmoes's chapter "Understanding and Fostering a Culture of Assessment" in Billman and Birch's book *C(H)AOS Theory: Reflections of Chief Academic Officers in Theological Education* argues that institutions of excellence energetically promote well thought out systems of institutional and programmatic assessment.

> Without credible systems of assessment, the strategies and curricula employed to foster student learning and ministerial formation will go unchanged. They will tend to reflect faculty research interests and academy values more than the needs of students and the requirements of ministerial leadership roles. Such situations reflect unintended compromises in systems and institutional integrity. In contrast, well-crafted systems of assessment enable the institution to function with greater integrity in regard to the fulfillment of its promises and mission…This objective view then provides a basis for decision making about quality improvement. (VerBerkmoes 2011, 348-49)

Both Klimoski and VerBerkmoes insist that each administrator's responsibility is to create an environment that appreciates accountability and enthusiastically participates in the process of quality assessment. They write, "the hard questions must be asked and the dean is the one to do it" (Billman and Birch 2011, 345).

This pursuit of excellence, institutional accountability, and the quality assessment of personnel and programs are all primary features of an accreditation model. Accreditation encourages these pursuits as a process to excellence. In fact, it is argued that "accreditation is the primary means" by which the improvement of theological education is accomplished (Taylor

1978, 50). Robertson recalls that the accreditation process was a pain in the neck, especially in the fledgling years of the Atlantic School of Theology. There was so much to do just to keep the school running that they were more concerned about other matters. He writes, "At the time we asked, why bother with accreditation? We are not in competition with anybody and we are scrutinizing ourselves." However, over the years he would change his assessment. "Our conclusion? The accreditation process is truly an aid to the improvement of theological education. It is not a pain in the neck, but it does involve pain--growing pain. That kind of pain that we all need" (Robertson 1978, 56, 57). Judith S. Eaton, in *Accreditation: Assuring and Enhancing Quality* writes, "Accreditation is the process of external quality review created and used by higher education to scrutinize colleges, universities, and programs for quality assurance and quality improvement" (Eaton 2009, 79).

When and Where Did Accreditation Begin?

Several works provide valuable insight into the history of American accreditation. Eugene Van Antwerp's article "New Foundation for Institutional Assessment" in the Spring 1976 edition of the *Theological Education Journal* gives a brief historical overview of the subject. In 1992 Semrow, Barney, Fredericks, Fredericks, Robinson, and Pfinster wrote *In Search of Quality: The Development, Status and Forecast of Standards in Postsecondary Accreditation.* Barbara Brettingham's article, "Accreditation in the United States: How did we get where we are?" was published in the Spring 2009 edition of *New Directions in Higher Education* and in 2010 Andrew Gillen, Daniel L. Bennett, and Richard Vedder wrote a policy paper titled *The Inmates Running the Asylum* for the Center for College Affordability and Productivity.

Van Antwerp observes that accreditation began as "uniquely American way to both approve and improve educational institutions" (Van Antwerp 1976, 180). Early practices of

academic accountability in the United States served to differentiate academic institutions that

offered secondary education from those who offered a college degree. Brettingham writes,

> As America expanded westward, settlers started businesses, churches, and colleges. By
> the 1860s, over five hundred colleges had been established, though fewer than half of
> them were still operating. Tracing the history of American higher education institutions
> is made more difficult because the term *college* might be applied to any number of types
> of institutions, including technical institutes and seminaries. Indeed, one of the early
> tasks of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges was sorting out which
> institutions were in fact colleges, an undertaking made more difficult by the number of
> "academies" that sometimes spanned the boundaries between secondary and collegiate
> education. (Brettingham 2009, 11)

In the late 1800s, cross-cultural academic engagement encouraged a more stringent

accreditation model in the United States. Semrow writes, "by the first decades of the twentieth

century the educational forums created in the 1880s and 1890s had transformed themselves into

certifying and accrediting agencies. They began to define criteria for membership and developed

systematic procedures for determining whether institutions qualified for membership" (Semrow

et al. 1992, 9). Brettingham identifies the 1890s as the years when the first United States'

accrediting agencies were established; however, the term "accreditation" was not used until 1952

(Brettingham 2009, 13-14).

Gillen, Bennett, and Vedder identify four distinct eras in the history of accreditation in

the United States (Gillen, Bennett, Vedder 2010, 3-5). They named the first era "Pre-1936: A

voluntary system to inform the public."

> Accreditation developed from a need in the late nineteenth century to define what a
> college-level education was and to distinguish institutions that possessed adequate
> capabilities for undertaking such studies. Prior to its development, there was no
> generally accepted criteria for what should be considered a college. Furthermore, there
> was widespread unfamiliarity with educational institutions beyond one's own small
> geographic area. This lack of information combined to make it difficult for the better
> institutions to distinguish themselves and difficult for students to decide which institution
> to attend. (Gillen, Bennett, and Vedder 2010, 3)

It is in this era that Van Antwerp sees the initial effects of globalization upon higher education. "Prompted by the need of the German universities to determine which American graduates were qualified to enter their graduate schools, some criteria of judgment began to be developed. Largely quantitative, such criteria were helpful, and at least seemed objective" (Van Antwerp 1976, 181).

Gillen, Bennett, and Vedder identify the second era as "1936-1952: A quality improvement role is added." During this period, it was concluded that institutions ought to be evaluated according to self-defined institutional purposes. This was a significant step for theological institutions. "Instead of conforming to a universal application of set standards, an institution would be evaluated on what it claimed to be doing ... this new approach opened the door for a wide variety of postsecondary education institutions" (Van Antwerp 1976, 181-82). Brettingham claims that the term "accreditation" was first used at the end of this era, in 1952 (Brettingham 2009, 13).

The third era is categorized as "1952-1985: A Quality Assurance Role is Added." Following World War II, the GI Bill encouraged veterans to enroll in college, but there was growing concern that government funds not be wasted on *diploma mills*. Six regional agencies were named as official accreditors to better identify quality institutions.

> In addition to their prior roles, accreditation was now tasked with a quality assurance role as well. This marked the beginning of accreditation's partnership with the federal government in monitoring institutional quality, with the accreditors acting as the gatekeepers to federal funds. It was during this time that accreditation as we know it today began to take shape. (Gillen, Bennett, Vedder 2010, 4)

The final era Gillen, Bennett, and Vedder identify as "Post 1985: The rise of the Accountability and Assessment Movement." Concern regarding the perceived decline of higher

education, as well as rising abuses of funds, led to enhanced procedures to ensure accountability and institutional advancement.

What about Latin America?

Globalization identifies an "increasingly complex interrelatedness on multiple levels across traditional boundaries" (Ott and Netland 2006, 18). As communication technology and air travel proliferate, the world becomes smaller and more interconnected. Gone are the days when one had to wait weeks, days, or even hours to communicate with another on the other side of the globe. Through cell phones and computers, today's communication is immediate. Likewise, one can be in Chicago in the morning and in Argentina by the afternoon. These factors touch upon every area of life including higher education. It is not uncommon today for a student to obtain their undergraduate degree in one country, their master's degree in another, and a doctor's degree in a third. Globalization is a driving impetus in the development of an international academic standard.

In 1999, the Bologna Declaration was signed by twenty-nine European countries to pursue comparability in the standards and quality of higher education. It was named after the University of Bologna in Bologna, Italy, where the initial conference took place. Ensuing conferences have been held in Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), Bergen (2005), London (2007), and Leuven (2009). Currently forty-eight European countries participate in the process (European University Association 2017, accessed June 2017). "The Bologna Process Implementation Report 2015" (European University Association 2015, accessed June 2017) provides the most up to date information on this process for the European Higher Education Area.

These gatherings led to the Tuning Project for Europe in 2001 and then for Latin America in 2004. Building off the metaphor of "synchronizing a radio to the desired frequency" the

Tuning Project was developed to "allow programmes offered in the educational structures to be

'agreed,' 'tempered,' and 'tuned' so that they could be understood, compared, and recognized"

throughout Latin America" (Beneitone et al. 2007, 11). Although participation in the project is

non-binding, nineteen Latin America countries participated--Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil,

Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico,

Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The

Final Report titled *Reflections on and Outlook for Higher Education in Latin America* was

published in 2007. Included in Appendix II of their reports is the identification and description

of the official assessment and accreditation bodies in each country (Beneitone et al. 2007,

329-403).[19]

> In most countries higher education is regulated in the national constitution and these
> principles are developed in basic or general acts of government. Higher education is
> often the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. In other countries, Boards of
> Higher Education exist, some of which are autonomous while in others they answer to the
> Ministry of Education, giving different degrees of power in this area. There are also
> countries in which this responsibility has been entrusted to a public university (Uruguay,
> Honduras, Guatemala). In the case of the private universities, in some countries, special
> supervisory and regulatory bodies have been created. Practically, all counties have
> official assessment and accreditation bodies. Nonetheless, in some countries these bodies
> have yet to start operating. (Beneitone et al. 2007, 25)

Several other resources provide additional information on the subject. Both Ana García

Fanelli's *Universidad, Organización e Incentivos* and Fernandez Lamarra's *Universidad,*

Sociedad e Innovación document the changes taking place in Latin American society and the

impact upon higher education. Lemaitre and Anderson's PowerPoint presentation *Quality*

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[19]This appendix also provides valuable information on each country: the number of
higher education institutions and the number of students enrolled, the types of degrees offered,
teaching staff, academic periods, grade scale, tuition fees, admission and graduation criteria,
academic credits, and recognized assessment/accrediting agencies.

Assurance in Latin America distinguishes the diversity of models for quality assurance. They

identify four types of secular accrediting agencies found in the region:

>1. Autonomous national agency or agencies, created legislatively, supported by public funds--Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay
>2. Government (Ministry of Education)--Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico
>3. Consortium of Universities, Public or Private--Bolivia, Costa Rica, Panama
>4. Multiplicity of agencies carrying out different aspects of quality assurance--e.g., Columbia. (Lemaitre and Anderson 2010, 16)

Finally, the World Education News and Reviews website identifies information on

secular and/or governmental accreditation and quality assurance programs for many of the

countries in Latin America. This site also documents the growing number of regional

accrediting agencies in Central and South America (World Education News and Reviews 2016,

accessed December 2016).

As private religious institutions, theological schools often fall outside of the rubric of

governmental oversight and obligatory assessment mentioned above. In 1999, *KAIRÓS* Journal

published an article titled "Tendencies and challenges for Theological Education in Latin

America." In it the author summarized that "in many countries of the continent governmental

accreditation is not possible" (Carroll and Daniel 1999, 50); H. Fernando Bullón in his 2014

book *Misión, educación y desarrollo: Reflexiones desde América Latina* [Mission, Education

and Development: Reflections from Latin America] and César Lopez in his 2013 PhD

dissertation, "Theological Education in Brazil," document how this situation is slowly beginning

to change. For example, Bullón explains how the Universidad Nazarena (UNAZA) in Costa

Rica, after a ten-year process, was granted university status by the Ministry of Education.

Likewise, in a personal email to the author, Matt Bixby, the Secretario General of La

Universidad Cristiana de las Americas in Monterrey, Mexico, explained that the accreditation

requirements for theological schools

> are no different than for any other degree program here. First, the institution has
> to obtain recognition through the Department of Education (fulfill all the
> requirements including the facilities, etc.). Then the actual degree program has
> to be approved, which involves a copious amount of paperwork: educational
> philosophy, the reasons justifying that particular degree, a scope and sequence
> for the major, a description for each of the subjects in the major, paperwork on
> every teacher, etc. (Matt Bixby, June 22, 2017, email message to author)

At the same time a growing number of accreditation options are available through

religious agencies both in the United States and in Latin America. These options will be

explained below.

Does Accreditation Violate the Independence
and Authority of the Church?

Independent Baptist churches and the pastoral training institutions under their purview

rightly recognize that the Church bears primary responsibility to preserve and proclaim truth.

Key to the perpetuation of sound doctrine is the theological training of pastors and ministry

leaders. As was demonstrated in the previous section on biblical support, this responsibility must

not be abdicated. Key to any discussion among independent Baptists regarding the accreditation

of pastoral training institutions is an assurance that doctrinal responsibility and missional

integrity not be compromised.

The accreditation of pastoral training institutions in Latin America is voluntary. While

governments can impose academic requirements on public institutions, in most Latin American

countries, the freedom of private and religious institutions to run their academic programs

without interference is still well attested (Carroll and Daniel 1999, 50). Likewise, independent

Baptist participation with religious accrediting agencies cannot be externally imposed. The

self-study handbook of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) agrees, stating that "historically, accreditation has been a voluntary activity in which institutions agree on standards of educational quality and then hold themselves accountable to those standards" (Association of Theological Schools 2015b, 1).

An integral part of the accreditation process is the responsibility to self-determine institutional purpose and goals. In other words, even within the accreditation process institutional purpose is not externally determined, rather, accrediting agencies evaluate institutions based upon each institution's self-determined objectives.

The first step in preparing for accreditation review involves the articulation of the institutions' philosophy of education, purpose, objectives, and pedagogical orientation (AETAL 2015, 10). These requirements not only allow the institution to retain institutional authority over its doctrinal distinctions and institutional identity, but the accreditation process requires the institution's continual commitment to and fulfillment of these institutional distinctions.

What Accreditation Options are Available for
Theological Schools in Latin America?

The history of the American Theological Association is well documented in *A Community of Conversation: A Retrospective of the Association of Theological Schools and Ninety Years of North American Theological Education* (Miller 2008). Earlier works on the subject provided vignettes of distinct periods in the Association's development. In 1924 Robert Kelley published his *Theological Education in America* that surveyed 161 theological schools. While Kelley offered few, if any, solutions, he did identify significant problems that needed to be addressed (Kelley 1924, 210-27). Ten years later, William Adams Brown and Mark A. May published a four-volume work titled *The Education of American Ministers* that summarized

popular surveys given to churches and theological schools. From these they made proposals on curriculum content. In *Piety and Profession* Glenn T Miller unpacks the history of the theological education movement in the United States from 1870 to 1970. In 1984, Jesse Zieglar published *ATS Through Two Decades: Reflections on Theological Education 1960-1980*. Leon Pacala followed in 1998 with *The Role of ATS in Theological Education 1980-1990*.

Although voluntary associations of theological schools had formed in the United States several decades earlier, their need to address the lack of common standards, the confusion surrounding the transfer of credits, and the significant economic and political challenges brought on by the First World War, encouraged the rise of a formal theological accrediting agency. The history of American theological institutions and accrediting agencies record a slow, yet consistent advancement. Miller writes concerning the ATS, "This organization was not built in a day. Its present sense of unity and purpose took ninety years to grow, develop, and prosper" (Miller 2008, 1). These histories provide context to the growing movement toward the accreditation of pastoral training institutions in Latin America. They also should inspire hope and encourage a patient and methodical approach.

The challenges associated with governmental accreditation in Latin America and the unique academic context of the region have encouraged the rise of a diverse array of accreditation models for pastoral training institutions. Bullón dedicates an entire chapter to the benefits of accreditation for evangelical higher education. In this chapter he enumerates twelve distinct means through which pastoral training schools can pursue different levels of public credibility and accreditation:

> Establishment of self-accreditation (credibility) through the excellence of one's academic program.
> Denominational accreditation that provides internal credibility but does not to those outside of the denomination.

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External examination by a foreign evangelical institution.
External examination, by a regional accrediting agency.
Affiliation with a foreign accrediting agency.
An extension site of a foreign "mother school."
Degree granted by a local university.
Endorsement of institutional diplomas by a local university.
Acceptance of graduation with advanced status and then a shorter period of study in a foreign institution who grants the degree.
Accreditation by an international or national religious agency, even when located outside of the region in which the institutions seeks accreditation.
Local governmental recognition for legal operation (not necessarily academic accreditation).
Local or national secular accreditation. (Bullón 2014, 133)

Each of these options offers certain benefits and detriments. The selection of a model to pursue must be made with care, taking into account both present and future realities. The path of least resistance may appear to be the best option; however, it may not offer the best long-term benefit for the institution, the Church, or the individual student.

Asociación Evangélica de Educación en América Latina

The Asociación Evangélica de Educación Teológica en América Latina (AETAL) is emerging as the primary agency for theological accreditation in the region. AETAL is a member of the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE), currently working with 176 affiliated institutions in twelve Latin American countries.[20]

According to their *Accreditation Manual,* AETAL exists for three primary purposes. First, it promotes association between theological education institutions in Latin America. Secondly, AETAL assesses the development of affiliated schools and promotes levels of excellence for the theological education programs. Third, it accredits biblical and theological

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[20]The affiliates are found in the following countries--Brazil (110), Guatemala (14), Peru (12), Mexico (7), Bolivia (7), Argentina (7), Columbia (5), Costa Rica (5), Paraguay (3), Ecuador (3), Honduras (2), and Chile (1).

institutions in Latin America according to their predetermined standards of accreditation (AETAL 2015, accessed December 2016).

The aforementioned Accreditation Manual provides interested parties with significant information on the process, procedures, and standards of accreditation. AETAL provides answers to two foundational questions about the accreditation process.

First, what are recognized levels of academic instruction? Similar to the early days of theological education in the United States, academic standards in Latin American theological education are fluid. AETAL has identified basic standards for academic programs from high school (Secondary) to post graduate studies.

Table 2 provides an important service to the evangelical academic community. Each institution can now compare their programs with these accepted standards, thus providing each with clear and concrete goals for growth and development.

Table 2. Comparative table of programs and academic levels

Program Levels	Degrees	Admission Requirements	Normal Length of Program	Required Academic Load (Semester Credits)	Library Requirements - = minimum + = ideal
Level I Secondary	1. Certificate	In Study Phase			
	2. Diploma				
	3. Bachillerato or Secondary complete	Basic cycle or internedio de Educatión Media	3 years	90	- 2.000 + 4.000
Level II University	1. Technical or Technological	In Study Phase			
	2. Bachillerato University or Professor	Bachillerato or Secondary	4 years	120 plus paper	- 4.000 + 6.000 + 15 periodicals
Nivel III	1. Technical	In Study Phase			
	2. Licenciatura	Secondary 3	5 years	150 plus Thesis	- 6.000 + 10.000 + 25 periodicals
		University 2	1 year	30 plus Thesis	
Post-Graduate	3. Masters	University 2	2 years	60 plus Thesis	- 8.000 + 12.000 + 30 periodicals
		Post-Grad 2	1 year	30 plus Thesis	
	4. Doctorate	In Study Phase			

The second question AETAL answers is how does a pastoral training institution pursue accreditation through AETAL? The process for accreditation through AETAL in Latin America is similar to that of the ATS, ABHE, and other accrediting agencies in the United States. There are three basic phases to the process with specific steps for each. These three phases are clearly explained within the AETAL "Accreditation Manual": application phase, candidate phase, and maintenance phase.

During the application phase, the institution completes the necessary documentation for application. It also acknowledges its agreement with the doctrinal statement of AETAL, which is solidly evangelical and consistent with such statements of ABHE and ATS.[21]

Likewise, institutions that pursue accreditation must demonstrate a clear understanding of the accreditation process as well as the institution's ability to fulfill, within a period of four years, all the required accreditation standards (AETAL 2015, 9-18). If the Committee approves their application and agrees with the institution's assessment of their ability to meet all requirements, the institution is granted candidate status.

The candidate phase involves three crucial steps. The first step involves self-evaluation using AETAL's Self-evaluation Guide. During this stage the institution's leadership must critically appraise the institution's purpose, goals, objectives, programs, personnel, facilities, etc. A detailed report of this evaluation must be submitted to the Accreditation Committee. The second step requires an onsite visit by an AETAL Accreditation Team during which they "will verify if the information provided by the institution in their final Report corresponds to the functioning of the institution and if it is in agreement with AETAL accreditation standards"

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[21]"AETAL affirms the following principles to which its affiliated members must submit in order to guarantee their evangelical nature: (1) We believe in the creation of the universe and the human being by God in His image and likeness and the subsequent fall of man and the universe by sin; (2) We believe in the existence of God, one and subsistent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; (3) We believe in the divine inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice; (4) We believe in the eternal existence and deity of Jesus Christ, His incarnation, His virgin birth, His atoning death on the cross, His resurrection, His ascension, His intercession as the only mediator between God and men and His return in glory; (5) We believe in the justification of the sinner only by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ; (6) We believe in the Church as the community of the saved in Christ Jesus; (7) We believe in the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification; (8) We believe in eternal life in Jesus Christ, and the resurrection of the body, the judgment of the world through Jesus Christ, the eternal blessedness of the righteous and the eternal punishment of the wicked." (AETAL 2018, accessed August 2018).

(AETAL 2015, 6). The third step in the candidate phase is the committee meeting in which all of

the information gathered during steps one and two will be presented to the Accreditation

Committee. The Committee will evaluate the reports and decide on the institution's accreditation

status. There are four possible determinations by the committee: full approval, approval with

unfulfilled requirements, temporary rejection, denial.

Those who have been granted approval participate in what AETAL calls the maintenance

phase. Accredited institutions are required to pay annual dues to the Association as well as to

supply annual reports that document the institutional progress. These reports demonstrate the

institution's continued compliance with accreditation standards, as well as the institution's

persistent pursuit of excellence. Accreditation recognition through AETAL lasts for seven years

at which time the institution must renew their certification.

Finally, the AETAL web site (www.aetal.com) supplies additional details on the

Association, the process of acquiring accreditation status, affiliated institutions, and other

administrative helps.

Distance Education Accreditation Council

Another accreditation alternative for Latin America pastoral training institutions is the

Distance Education Accreditation Council (DEAC). The DEAC is recognized by the United

States Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) as

an accreditation association of distance education models both within the United States and

throughout the world (DEAC 2017, 9). According to the DEAC "Accreditation Handbook"

distance education includes:

1.   The internet
2.   One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communication devices.
3.   Audio conferencing
4.   Video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (3). (DEAC 2017, 5)

This option may be ideal for smaller institutions who lack the capital to purchase property and to construct buildings sufficient for AETAL regulations. The DEAC website also provides a useful "Accreditation Handbook" that provides "guidelines, suggestions, and helpful hints for institutions that are considering or seeking accreditation" (DEAC 2017, accessed August 2018).

Strategic Planning

While corporate and organizational planning processes have always employed a certain level of strategizing, the conscientious and structured discipline known as strategic planning is relatively new. Phillip Blackerby's article "The History of Strategic Planning" documents its origins as well as its entrance into business, organizations, and the public sector. He writes,

> Our term "strategy" derives from the Greek *"strategos,"* which means, "general of the army." Each of the ten ancient Greek tribes annually elected a *strategos* to head each regiment. At the battle of Marathon (490 BC) the *strategoi* advised the political ruler as a council. They gave "strategic" advice about managing battles to win wars, rather than "tactical" advice about managing troops to win the battles. In time, the job of the *strategoi* grew to include civil magisterial duties as well, largely because of their status as elected officials. (Blackerby 1994, 23)

In the 1920s the Harvard Business School developed the Harvard Policy Model for private business and by the 1960s strategic planning was a standard management practice for virtually all companies and organizations.

Strategic planning involves the focused consideration and implementation of necessary steps to ensure the accomplishment of specific organizational goals. The book *Strategic*

Planning for Nonprofit Organizations defines strategic planning as "a systematic process through

which an organization agrees on and builds key stakeholder commitment to priorities that are

essential to its mission and responsive to the organizational environment. Strategic planning

guides the acquisition and allocation of resources to achieve these priorities" (Allison and Kaye

2015, 1).

Most contemporary literature on strategic planning provides instruction on the necessary

steps for plan development. Aubrey Malphurs's book *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New

Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* is specifically addressed to pastors and ministry leaders.

Michael Allison and Jude Kaye address a broader audience in *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit

Organizations: A Practical Guide for Dynamic Times.* Their work is comprehensive and more

cumbersome, but the printing of the third edition demonstrates its value to nonprofit

organizations. Dan Ebener and Frederick Smith's *Strategic Planning: An Interactive Process of

Leaders* focuses even more broadly on not-for-profit groups, governmental organizations, and

businesses. They write that

> it is the content of strategy, not the strategic planning process itself, that differs between
> the three sectors. The for-profit sector requires more attention to the competitive nature
> of business. The not-for-profit sector has to respond to more public scrutiny. However,
> we believe the process of planning strategically is essentially the same. (Ebener and
> Smith 2015, ix)

They attempt to offer a simpler, more straightforward presentation. Their shorter book is written

"to be read, understood, and put into practice" (Ebener and Smith 2015, ix). Finally, in John

Bryson´s book *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*, the aim is broad so to

encompass both the public and the private sectors. His book is purposefully academic and the

most comprehensive of those mentioned, purposefully directed toward professional managers

and educators of strategic planning and management (Bryson 2004, xiv). This book is filled with

figures, diagrams, exhibits, and resources to explain and expedite the planning processes.

These volumes all document the varied steps to a strategic planning process.[22] First is the

clarification of the mission, vision, and core values. These three aspects all seek to answer basic

questions concerning the what and why of an organization. What does the project propose to

accomplish? Why does the organization exist? To what end is the specific ministry? And, what

are the beliefs and values that will guide the organization?

Secondly, the process involves an analysis of the surrounding environment. This scan

will include a survey of the culture, technology, the economy, politics, the business model,

organizational capacity, philosophical concerns, and leadership (Malphurs 1999, 116-32; Allison

and Kaye 2015, 99-108). In short, this step analyzes the external and internal factors in play, as

well as the opportunities that are present and the major threats to its fulfillment. Often this step

includes a SWOT analysis that seeks to identify the particular strengths, weaknesses,

opportunities, and threats to the mission, purpose, and values. Scenario planning is another

frequent tool used during the environmental scan. "Scenario planning helps planners prepare for

trends or developments that would be game changing, or *might* happen, but for which the

outcome won't be known for some time .... The point of scenario planning is to increase

readiness" (Allison and Kaye 2015, 101).

The next step articulates the key strategic components. Ebener and Smith entitle this step

the "strategic cascade" as strategic plans move forward from the general to the specific (Ebener

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[22]There are differences of opinion concerning the exact number of steps involved in the
strategic planning process. Ebener and Smith list eight steps. Malphurs proposes nine. Allison
and Kaye employ ten. In spite of the numerical disagreement, there is basic agreement on the
overall direction of the process. For the purposes of this paper I have grouped them together to
form four basic steps in the overall process.

and Smith 2015, 75). This step includes the identification of the specific strategic goals which the ministry hopes to accomplish, the strategic objectives that will work toward the fulfillment of said goals, and the particular action steps to ensure the complete, timely, and measurable completion of the strategic objectives.

The last step is the implementation of the strategic plan. "Most experts on planning and strategic thinking have identified implementation as the greatest problem in the strategizing process" (Malphurs 1999, 175). Vital to successful implementation of the strategic plan is the preparation of all team participants so as to ensure the enthusiastic and informed completion of their tasks. This is especially urgent if the participants were not party to the plan's development. Clear communication is key. Participants must catch a vision of how this strategic plan will aid the organization, project, or ministry to realize its vision through the completion of its mission in faithful adherence to its core values. Additionally, the necessary resources must be allocated, operation plans developed, contingencies prepared for, and an accountability chain identified. Finally, a system of consistent monitoring should be established to as to track progress and address challenges.

While Malphurs may overstate his case for strategic planning with his claim that without the "rudder" of strategic planning the typical church in North America is like a sailboat drifting aimlessly through the "winds of change and the currents of postmodernism" (Malphurs 1999, 9), strategic planning is a valuable tool to aid organizations, churches, and even specific projects in the completion of their intended mission. Allison and Kaye are correct when they declare that "the strategic planning process helps leaders of an organization articulate their vision about where they are going and to choose the best road to take the organization there" (Allison and Kaye 2015, 229).

Summary

This chapter has examined a broad range of literature that touches upon the need for an accreditation model in independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America. While accreditation is not a biblical process, it is consistent with a significant number of related biblical themes. Scripture consistently presents a pattern of training for those involved in ministerial leadership. Additionally, there is strong biblical emphasis upon the authority of the local church in pastoral training, the place of academic rigor in the preservation of sound doctrine, the need for interdependence to ensure the breadth of necessary instruction, and the importance of epistemological humility.

Likewise, academic literature is rich on subjects related to accreditation and pastoral training in a missionary context. Through the course of this review, we touched upon the themes of the indigenous Church, contextualization, self-theologizing, curriculum, scholarship, accreditation, and strategic planning. Now we turn to the methodology that will guide the project's quantitative and qualitative research.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Chapter one of this project documented the exponential growth of the Hispanic evangelical church. While this growth is primarily found in charismatic churches, independent Baptist churches have also grown significantly in both their number and congregational size. Sadly, the training of national leadership has not kept pace with this rapid growth. This deficiency is reflected as much in the low percentage of trained pastors as in the quality of education offered by pastoral training institutions. While accreditation is now a commonly accepted practice in most Stateside pastoral training institutions, its acceptance by the Hispanic evangelical church has been measured. As mentioned in chapter one, this reticence to pursue academic accreditation is especially prevalent among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Latin America.

Chapter two examined biblical and non-biblical literature relevant to the discussion of accreditation of pastoral training institutions. This study was invaluable to the author's understanding of the topic so as to lay the groundwork for the development of a strategic plan that encourages the pursuit, by these institutions, of an accreditation model.

This chapter will document the methodology used to conduct a survey among a group of experts in the fields of theological education in Latin America. The purpose of the survey is to identify the primary impediments to the pursuit of accreditation. Primary obstacles were identified through the application of a Delphi method survey given to a panel of experts to analyze the impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model and to propose strategic objectives to mitigate these impediments.

The Delphi method was developed by the RAND Corporation in the 1950s for technology forecasting. Today it is used in a wide variety of disciplines as "a technique to obtain the most reliable consensus of a group of experts" (Okoli and Pawlowski 2004, 16). Table 3 describes the characteristics of the Delphi method and demonstrates why it is preferred over a traditional survey when key judgmental information is needed.

> Delphi is essentially a series of questionnaires. The first questionnaire asks individuals to respond to a broad question. (Delphi questions might focus on problems, objectives, solutions, or forecasts.) Each subsequent questionnaire is built upon responses to the preceding questionnaire. The process stops when consensus has been approached by the participants or when sufficient information exchange has been obtained. (Delbecq 1975, 83)

Table 3. Preferability of Delphi method over traditional survey

Evaluation Criteria	Traditional Survey	Delphi Method
Representatives of sample	Using statistical sampling technique, the researchers randomly select a sample that is representative of the population of interest.	The questions that a Delphi study investigates are those of high certainty and speculation. Thus, a general population, or even a narrow subset of a general population, might not be sufficiently knowledgeable to answer the questions accurately. A Delphi study is a virtual panel of experts gathered to arrive at an answer to a difficult question. Thus, a Delphi study could be considered a virtual meeting or as a group decision technique, though it appears to be a complicated survey.
Sample Size	Because the goal is to generalize results to a larger population, the researchers need to select a sample size that is large enough to detect statistically significant effects in the population. Power analysis is required to determine an appropriate sample size.	Because the goal is to generalize results to a larger population, the researchers need to select a sample size that is large enough to detect statistically significant effects in the population. Power analysis is required to determine an appropriate sample size.

Table 3 (*continued*)

Evaluation Criteria	Traditional Survey	Delphi Method
Individual versus group response	The researcher's average individuals' responses to determine the average response for the sample, which they generalize to the relevant population.	Studies have consistently shown that for questions requiring expert judgment, the average of individual responses is inferior to the averages produced by group decision processes; research has explicitly shown that the Delphi methods bears this out.
Anonymity	Respondents are almost always anonymous to each other, and to the researcher.	Respondents are always anonymous to each other, but never anonymous to the researcher. This gives the researcher more opportunity to follow up for clarifications and further qualitative data.
Non-response issues	Researchers need to investigate the possibility of non-response bias to ensure that the same remains representative of the population.	Non-response is typically very low in Delphi surveys, since most researchers have personally obtained assurances of participation.
Richness of data	The richness of the data depends on the form and depth of the questions, and on the possibility of follow-up, such as interviews. Follow-up is often limited when the researchers are unable to track respondents.	In additional to the richness issues of traditional surveys, Delphi studies inherently provide richer data because of their multiple iterations and their response revision due to feedback. Moreover, Delphi participants tend to be open to follow-up interviews.

Source: Data modified from Okoli and Pawlowski 2004, 19

Flexibility is a key attribute of the Delphi method. Scholars have developed multiple variations of the Delphi method to fit their specific research needs, one of which is the ability to rank the relative importance of individual responses. This project employed two groups of participants: (1) a Delphi support team, and (2) a Delphi panel of experts. The Delphi survey was administered in electronic form and followed the normal pattern for Delphi surveys with slight variations. The steps are listed below. A more detailed explanation of each step will follow.

1.   A Delphi support team was selected to nominate the Delphi panel, to assess questionnaire responses, and to suggest solutions to the identified impediments.

2.   A nomination worksheet was developed.

3.   A panel of experts was selected to participate in the Delphi survey.

4.   The first-question survey was sent in which the panel was asked to identify three to five of the most difficult impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model in independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Latin America.

5.   The first-question responses were analyzed and the second questionnaire was formulated.

6.   The second-question survey was sent to the panel.

7.   The second-question responses were analyzed and the third-round questionnaire was formulated.

8.   The third-question survey was sent to the panel.

9.   The third-question responses were analyzed and a report was prepared identifying the most prevalent impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model of pastoral theological education.

10.   The report of panel responses was sent to expert panel participants.

11.   The Delphi support team convened to propose solutions for the identified impediments.

12.   A strategic plan was written.

Selection of a Delphi Support Team

The Delphi support team was charged with developing the nominating worksheet, reviewing and summarizing responses to the three questions, and proposing solutions for the identified impediments. They also were integral in the development of a strategic plan to address the identified impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model.

For the Delphi support team, I recruited four BMM missionaries who are members of the EBI ministry team where I serve. (A copy of the invitation letter requesting their participation on the committee appears in appendix 1.) I formed the fifth member of the team. Several reasons led me to choose the Delphi support team from among my coworkers. The first reason was proximity. As the support team would assemble on multiple occasions, it was necessary to choose participants who could gather together. Two of the support team reside in Sebring, Florida, where the EBI offices are located. The other two live out of state, but they travel to the office periodically. As it turned out, the first and second meetings of the support team were held at the EBI offices. The last four meetings were held as a mixed venue with two members of the team physically present and the other two joining us via a video conference call.

The academic training, ministry, cross-cultural experience, and godliness of each expert panel member was the second reason that I chose participants from among my coworkers. Each member has graduate level degrees in biblical studies. One of the participants is a Paraguayan national who has pastored a Hispanic church in Greenville, South Carolina, for almost ten years. The other three team members are Americans who have spent decades in Latin America serving as missionary church planters and pastoral trainers.[1] All have been involved in different levels of pastoral training. Their training and experience proved beneficial in interpreting the panel's responses to the surveys and in helping to construct a strategic plan to address the identified impediments. Additionally, these are mature men in their walk with Christ and godly in character, allowing for significant interaction on important subjects with no angry conflicts.

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[1]Each member of the Delphi survey support team has significant ministry experience in Spanish-speaking Latin America. Team member 1 served in Ecuador and Peru for thirty-five years, team member 2 served in Peru for thirty years, and team member 3 served in Mexico for eleven years.

The third, and final reason, that I chose these participants is that all of them speak Spanish fluently. The expert panel, of necessity, was composed of skilled professions from both Latin America and the United States. Some of the panel are bilingual, some speak only English and others only speak Spanish. As the support team was charged with reading, understanding, and evaluating each response, dual language participants were required.

Development of a Nomination Worksheet

As the strength of the Delphi method lies in the informed opinions of a knowledgeable and experienced panel that have a thorough understanding of the situation, the selection of qualified experts is vital for the success of the survey. The selection of experts in the field admittedly eliminated the most vocal critics among independent Baptists of robust theological education and an accreditation model. As such critics would have little experience in the field of theological education, they could not be classified as experts and thus could not serve as viable participants for the Delphi survey. I do want to be clear that the intent of the Delphi support team with this choice was not to silence the voice of those critical to an accreditation model, rather, it was anticipated that their voice would be adequately presented through the experience of independent Baptist experts in Spanish-speaking theological education.

As the number of independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America is few and as none currently are accredited, it was determined that the Delphi panel should be composed of three distinct subgroups. Ideally each subgroup would have eight participants who could effectively represent the experience and viewpoint of their constituency. The three subgroups were: independent Baptist missionaries who are presently serving as pastoral trainers in Latin America, Latin American leaders who have graduated from

independent Baptist Spanish-speaking pastoral training institutions, and theological educators who have experience with the accreditation process.

On January 19, 2017, the Delphi support team met at the EBI office in Sebring, Florida, to develop criteria for nomination to the Delphi panel (Okoli and Pawlowski 2004, 20-22). All four members of the support team were present. After several hours of deliberation, the support team decided upon the following characteristics for nomination to each of the three subgroups.

Subgroup 1

1. Independent Baptist missionaries

2. Involved in pastoral training in a formal academic institution in Latin America

3. Representing a variety of independent Baptist mission agencies

4. Possession of a master's degree or above from an accredited institution

5. Shall have served in pastoral training on the mission field for at least five years

6. Speaks Spanish language with a basic understanding of Latin American culture

Subgroup 2

1. Independent Baptist Hispanic believer

2. Ministering in Latin America

3. A balance between local church pastors and professors in pastoral training institutions

4. Representing a variety of Latin American countries

5. Preference given to those with training (secular or religious) in an accredited institution

Subgroup 3

1. Theological educators

2. Preference to those with ministry experience in Latin America

3.   Experienced in the accreditation process either as an educator or as part of an accreditation team

4.   Appreciation for and active participation in foreign missions

5.   Representing experience with different accreditation agencies

A list of potential candidates from each subgroup was nominated by the Delphi support team and the candidates for each subgroup were ranked according to their experience and qualifications.

Selection of a Delphi Panel of Experts

The Delphi support team invited the nominated experts from each subgroup to participate, pursuing a panel of twenty-four participants. Ideally, the panel would be composed of eight participants from each subgroup. The English invitation letter requesting their participation in the Delphi survey appears in appendix 2. Most of the participants in subgroup 2 only speak Spanish so their letter was translated into Spanish. The invitation letter was sent to the nominees from each subgroup along with an informed consent form in which they acknowledged that they had been adequately informed regarding the study, that they were free to withdraw at any time, and that they freely consented to participate. To personalize the invitation, especially to the Hispanic nominees, I shot a short video that explained the purpose and process of the survey, while personally soliciting their participation. This video accompanied the invitation letter and was sent to all Spanish language and bilingual nominees. In the end twenty-two participants volunteered to participate. The final breakdown included nine participants from Subgroup 1, six participants from Subgroup 2, and seven participants from Subgroup 3.

First-Round Questionnaire

A cover letter explaining the Delphi survey method accompanied the first questionnaire which was electronically sent to all twenty-two experts on the Delphi panel. A copy of this letter and questionnaire appear in appendix 3. Both a Spanish and an English version of the questionnaires were prepared. An English version was sent to Subgroups 1 and 3 and a Spanish version to Subgroup 2.

In an attempt to facilitate the reception of and response to the first questionnaire, I used the program Adobe Sign. This is an electronic document management service that assures a secure electronic delivery and transfer of important documents. The program required that the two questionnaires (English and Spanish) be reconstructed within the Adobe Sign online program. I was then able to individually send the Adobe Sign document to each of the twenty-two participants.

There were several problems associated with the Adobe Sign documents. First of all, the initial attempt did not provide the respondents with sufficient space to record their answers. In the few responses that I received both the identified impediments and their comments were truncated. After several complaints, a follow-up letter and questionnaire was sent in which I apologized for the confusion and clarified the instructions, correcting the concerns and the problems associated with the first attempt. Second and most importantly, the Adobe Sign process proved more unwieldy than anticipated. Several participants were unable to navigate the program effectively while others expressed frustration. One participant gave up on Adobe Sign, responding via a Word document and another participant did not respond at all. In total, twenty-one participants submitted their responses, proposing eighty-three individual impediments.

To more effectively track the participants' responses, I created an Excel spreadsheet to record the date when each round of questionnaires was sent. I also recorded the reception date of each participant's response.

Analysis of First-Round Questionnaire Responses

Upon receipt of the first-round questionnaire, raw responses, with the participants' names removed, were sent to the other four members of the Delphi support team. Three team members were present in Sebring, Florida, and the other two participated via video conference.

One of the strengths of the first round in the Delphi method is the opportunity for participants to formulate their own responses. However, this individuality of response complicated their interpretation and synthesis. After a significant period of evaluation and discussion, the Delphi support team eliminated duplicate responses and wrestled between nuances of meaning. Twenty-two distinct impediments were identified and their meanings were clarified.

- Excessive governmental restrictions on institutions pursuing accreditation.
- Insufficient academic preparation of professors.
- A lack of quality resources (library, buildings, etc.).
- The poor economic situation in many Latin American countries. Thus, the cost of the process and of sustaining stringent academic standards is too high.
- Lack of interest. Churches and pastors do not see the value in advanced theological education and/or accreditation.
- Established academic institutions are not interested in helping young institutions with the process or young institutions lack connections with established institutions.
- Difficulty in the advanced training of professors (cost, time, distance, etc.).

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- Fear of government or secular intervention. Separation of church and state.

- Difficulty of the accreditation process. Too much work. Can it be done?

- Fear that accreditation will require that institutes compromise on key theological or ecclesiastical issues.

- Independent spirit. Belief that theological education should be centralized in each local church. Lack of cooperation among independent Baptist churches/schools.

- Complicated requirements for accreditation.

- Immature church or institute, not large enough or mature enough for a sophisticated academic structure.

- Lack of interest in vocational ministry. Not enough students to justify the process.

- Lack of agencies that would accredit independent Baptist schools.

- Lack of knowledge of accrediting benefits, process, and opportunities.

- Government does not recognize theological institutions.

- Low academic level of potential students dictates the educational level of the school thus, the school teaches at a level that is below academic level required of accreditation standards.

- Lack of institutional planning: purpose, vision, long-term goals.

- Historically, Hispanic culture has not valued advanced theological education. The process is harder than the anticipated benefits. Many choose the path of least resistance.

- Lack of training in pedagogy/andragogy.

- Missionary agencies do not promote accreditation in schools they establish.

Second-Round Questionnaire

The twenty-two distinct impediments identified by the Delphi support team became the basis for the second-round questionnaire. In this second round, the Delphi method allows the participants to interact anonymously with the other participants' responses. Each participant was asked to (1) select the ten impediments on the questionnaire that they consider to be the greatest, (2) rank the ten in order of importance with 10 being the greatest impediment and 1 the least important among the top ten, and (3) provide any additional comment that will help the committee to understand their ranking. The participants were asked to return the questionnaire within seven days.

Since the Adobe Sign process did not work well for the participants in the first round, the second-round questionnaire was designed as a Word document then modified to a PDF. As with the first-round questionnaire, both a Spanish and an English version of the questionnaires were prepared. An English version was electronically sent to Subgroups 1 and 3 and a Spanish version to Subgroup 2. A copy of this questionnaire is found in appendix 4.

While the Word/PDF document was much easier for the participants to navigate, the translation of the question into Spanish seemed to confuse some participants from Subgroup 2. The confusion surrounded the meaning of the translated word "rank." The translation of the question, at least for some participants, did not accurately communicate the intended result. Consequently, several Hispanic participants ranked multiple impediments with the same score. This confusion invalidated their responses and required a follow-up letter to those participants that more clearly explained the intended process. The second-round questionnaire was resent to these participants with a request that they resubmit their response.

In total nineteen responses for the second-round questionnaire were received. Two of these were not tabulated as the instructions were not correctly followed. This resulted in seventeen correct responses, including all nine participants of Subgroup 1, two participants from Subgroup 2 and six participants from Subgroup 3.

To better guard the anonymity of each respondent and to more effectively analyze their individual responses each participant was assigned a specific participant number. These numbers were assigned in the order in which the second-round questionnaire was received. In hindsight, it would have been better to assign the participant numbers by subgroup (Subgroup 1--numbers 1-9; Subgroup 2--numbers 10-15; Subgroup 3--numbers 16-22) prior to the delivery of the first-questionnaire. This would have better grouped the participants and simplified the post-survey analysis.

Analysis of Second-Round Questionnaire Responses

Since the second-round responses were numerical, the analysis was more straightforward than that of the first-round responses. An excel spreadsheet with an auto sum formula was created to tabulate the results (table 4). Each of the participants' responses were inserted into the spreadsheet according to their participant number. The auto sum formula tabulated the results and the top ten impediments were identified.

Table 4. Survey 2 tabulation chart

Impediment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	Totals	Mean
Insufficient academic preparation of professors	4	8	0	6	0	10	8	4	10	8	8	4	7	9	7	8	0	7	0	108	6.00
Poor economic situation in country	1	9	0	3	3	6	0	10	3	10	0	7	4	0	2	9	8	0	0	75	4.17
Lack of interest	5	4	0	5	0	0	10	2	1	0	10	0	0	8	10	7	0	9	0	71	3.94
Difficulty of advanced training of professors	0	0	0	4	5	9	7	0	0	0	6	6	8	7	6	4	7	0	0	69	3.83
Lack of quality resources	0	7	0	7	4	0	0	3	2	9	7	1	6	3	5	0	4	5	0	63	3.5
Difficulty of accreditation process	0	0	0	0	9	1	6	7	9	0	2	0	10	1	0	5	0	4	0	54	3.00
Independent spirit	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	7	9	9	3	0	9	0	1	8	0	54	3.00
Culture does not value theological education	0	1	0	0	10	0	9	0	0	3	0	8	0	5	8	0	0	10	0	54	3.00
Excessive government restrictions	9	10	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	10	0	10	0	0	9	0	0	53	2.94
Lack of knowledge of benefits	6	0	0	10	0	3	1	8	0	6	0	0	1	4	0	6	2	3	0	50	2.78
Low academic level of students	3	6	0	2	6	4	0	0	6	2	3	5	0	0	1	3	6	0	0	47	2.61
Complicated requirements for accreditation	10	0	0	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	6	0	0	0	6	0	40	2.22
Fear of compromise	0	5	0	0	1	0	3	9	7	4	0	3	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	38	2.11
Immature church or institute	0	0	0	0	0	7	2	5	8	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	32	1.78
Lack of institutional planning	0	3	0	9	2	0	0	6	0	5	1	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	31	1.72
Government does not recognize theological institutes	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	0	27	1.50
Lack of accrediting agencies for Baptist ministries	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	18	1.00
Missionary agencies do not promote	0	0	0	8	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	18	1.00
Lack of interest in vocational ministry	2	2	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0.89
Separation of church and state	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	12	0.67
Lack of training in pedagogy/androgogy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.22
No interest to help young institutions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.06
	55	55	0	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	0		

As with the analysis of the first-round questionnaire, the individual responses and the tabulation chart for the second-round questionnaires were sent to the other four participants on the Delphi support team. Three of the support team met in Sebring, Florida, while two others joined the meeting via a video-conference. The team verified the tabulation chart's results and with these results formulated the third-round questionnaire. The top ten identified impediments were:

1. Insufficient academic preparation of professors

2. Poor economic situation in country

3. Lack of interest

4. Difficulty of advanced training of professors

5. Lack of quality resources

6. Difficulty of accreditation process

7. Independent spirit

8. Culture does not value theological education

9. Excessive government restrictions

10. Lack of knowledge of benefits

Based upon the responses, particularly the additional comments of the participants, the support team decided to unify the impediments "Insufficient preparation of professors" and "Difficulty of advanced training for professors" into one impediment. The participants thought that there was too much similarity between these two options. This change allowed the inclusion of the eleventh ranked response, "Low academic level of students" into the third-round questionnaire.

Third-Round Questionnaire

The top ten impediments identified through the second-round questionnaire became the basis for the third-round questionnaire. A Word/PDF document was once again used for this questionnaire. As with the second-round questionnaire, each participant was asked to (1) select the five impediments on the questionnaire that they consider to be the greatest, (2) rank the five in order of importance with 5 being the greatest impediment and 1 the least important among the top five, and (3) provide any additional comment that will help the committee to understand their ranking. A copy of the questionnaire is found in appendix 5.

The participants responded better in this round, after a reminder was sent to eight of the participants. All twenty-two of the participants provided adequate responses.

Analysis of Third-Round Questionnaire Responses

An excel spreadsheet with an auto sum formula was created to tabulate the results. Each of the participants responses were inserted into the spreadsheet according to their participant number. The auto sum formula tabulated the results and the top five impediments were identified.

Table 5. Survey 3 tabulation chart

Impediment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	Totals	Mean
Insufficient academic preparation of professors	5	5	4	3	1	3	2	3	5	2	4	1	5	4	4	4	4	5	0	5	3	5	77	3.5
Excessive government restrictions	1	4	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	5	0	5	0	5	0	5	5	0	2	0	1	0	39	1.77
Lack of interest	4	0	0	4	0	1	5	0	0	1	3	0	0	3	5	1	0	4	0	4	0	4	39	1.77
Poor economic situation in country	0	3	0	2	2	0	0	5	4	3	0	3	4	0	0	2	3	0	1	0	4	0	36	1.64
Lack of knowledge of benefits	3	0	1	5	0	5	0	2	1	0	5	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	33	1.5
Low academic level of students	2	1	0	0	4	4	1	0	3	0	1	2	3	0	0	3	1	0	4	0	0	0	29	1.32
Culture does not value theological education	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	1	5	1	20	0.91
Complicated requirements for accreditation	0	0	0	0	3	0	4	1	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	2	20	0.91
Lack of quality resources	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	19	0.86
Independent spirit	0	0	5	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	4	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	18	0.82
	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15		

The individual responses and the tabulation chart for the third-round questionnaires were sent to the other four participants on the Delphi support team. The schedules of the Delphi support team did not allow for a meeting, so each examined the results individually and responded with their verification. The support team verified the tabulation chart's results. The top five identified impediments were:

1.   Insufficient academic preparation of professors

2.   Excessive government restrictions

3.   Poor economic situation in country

4.   Lack of interest

5.   Lack of knowledge of benefits

A follow-up letter was electronically sent to each member of the Delphi panel requesting additional comments or details from their personal and ministerial experiences concerning the five identified impediments. As with previous correspondence, this letter was composed in English for Subgroups 1 and 3 and in Spanish for Subgroup 2. The relevant comments were received and catalogued for use by the Delphi support team during the session of strategic planning.

Development of Strategic Plan

On November 16, 2017, the Delphi support team met at the EBI offices in Sebring, Florida, to develop a strategic plan based upon the top five impediments identified. During the ensuing months, one member of the Delphi support team had resigned from BMM, leaving us with only three. A substitute was chosen to take his place and to finish the assignment.

In preparation for the strategic planning meeting, each of the Delphi support team was supplied with chapters one and two of this project. This would furnish them with additional

context to the survey. A mission statement was drawn from the project's introduction: To develop a strategic plan that will mitigate the identified impediments to accreditation and encourage these independent Baptist pastoral training institutions to understand, accept, and pursue more rigorous academic standards leading to eventual accreditation. Likewise, the biblical themes identified as being foundational to the project were established as core values that would guide the strategic discussion. These values are:

- Scripture promotes the training of pastoral/theological leadership.

- The Church is the God-ordained means of leadership training.

- Pastoral training should be academically rigorous.

- Effective leadership training requires interdependence.

- Humility is vital to its success.

A SWOT analysis was also conducted by the Delphi support team. SWOT is a structured planning methodology that evaluates four key areas of organization's environment: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. While the five impediments identified in the Delphi survey would form the primary point of departure for the development of a strategic plan, they only identified the obstacles to accreditation. The Delphi support team wanted a more complete picture of the environment surrounding pastoral training in Spanish-speaking Latin America. The purpose of the SWOT analysis was to provide a fuller context into which the impediments could be read and understood. The following SWOT aspects were identified (* indicates an obstacle identified through the Delphi survey).

<div align="center">Strengths</div>

- Pastoral training in the region actually exists, even if it is not as broad as we would like.

- What is in place is practical, it is ministry oriented--emphasis on heart and hands training.

- There are interested students.

- There is intimate interaction between teachers and students.

- There is a limited infrastructure in place.

- Sound doctrinal position/parameters are in place.

Weaknesses

- Independent Baptists are notoriously independent. It is extremely difficult to obtain cooperation across the movement.

- There is a lack of standardization in academic programs.

- There is little to no peer review.

- Limited academic training of professors.*

- Materials being used for classroom instruction are dated.

- The academic level of many students is low.

- The economic situation in most countries is poor, thus limiting resources for improvement and growth.*

- There is a significant lack of quality academic resources in Spanish, available to institutions.

Opportunities

- EBI already serves Hispanic ministries from most segments within the independent Baptist movement.

- Growth in the number of independent Baptist churches in the region. (There are more independent Baptist churches in the region than there are pastors.)

- There is a growing desire for advanced pastoral training and a growing pressure for additional theological and practical knowledge.

- Financial support is available.

- Reliable accreditation is available (AETAL).

- There is a good exchange rate, dollars to national currency.

- Globalization creates an open environment for cross-cultural participation.

Threats

- Colonialization creates an environment that is not conducive to self-evaluation.

- There is a lack of interest in accreditation.*

- Governmental restrictions can be excessive and often prohibitive.*

- Internet options-based education.

- Independent educational alternatives provide the student with more options and thus threaten brick and mortar/residential institutions.*

- There is a significant lack of knowledge concerning the benefits of accreditation. (Why should we pursue it?)*

- There is a general lack of drive in the Latin culture, what the Hispanics call *conformismo*.

- Globalization also allows for easier academic migration. Students can more affordably study internationally, thus minimizing the need for local pastoral training institutions.

Finally, the Delphi support team identified specific goals and the resultant actions steps for each of the five primary obstacles to the pursuit of an accreditation model that were identified by the panel of experts who participated in the Delphi survey. The team took several weeks to refine the language within the strategic plan and to confirm that the action steps would, in fact,

lead toward the anticipated goals of overcoming the identified obstacles. This was done individually, with recommendations being submitted for consideration.

On January 16, 2018, the Delphi support team met to review their progress and to make final adjustments to the strategic plan. The support team determined that there was significant overlap between the action steps necessary to meet the stated goal of obstacle 3, *lack of interest in accreditation*, and obstacle 5, *lack of knowledge of the benefits of accreditation*. The support team agreed to combine these two obstacles. This allowed the team to add obstacle 6, *low academic level of students* to the strategic plan.

The support team met on two additional occasions to flesh out specific strategic objects and the necessary actions steps for each. A final version of the plan was sent to each of the Delphi support team members for their approval. It was approved unanimously.

Summary

This chapter has documented the methodology used to conduct the quantitative and qualitative research, its methods of documentation, the tabulation of results, and the process through which a strategic plan was developed. The five primary impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America were identified, along with explanatory comments from the Delphi panel that help to clarify the nature of each impediment within the Latin American context.   The next chapter will unpack these findings with explanations regarding their import for the Hispanic church in Latin America.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF DELPHI SURVEY

In chapter 1, the primary investigative goal of the project was stated as helping independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America to identify, understand, and address the doctrinal, philosophical, and practical impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model. This goal initially was addressed through a Delphi survey given to a panel of twenty-two experts in the field from three distinct subgroups. It was hoped that these subgroups would provide analysis on the cultural, ministerial, and academic issues relevant to the investigative goal.

After two preliminary rounds of questions, the Delphi panel had narrowed the suggested impediments to ten (see table 5 on page 117). These ten impediments formed the final questionnaire in which they were asked to rank the top five in descending order with 5 identifying the greatest impediment and 1 the least great impediment among the top five. The following tabulation chart documents the results of the third-questionnaire in both an aggregate total and the mean score, ranking the ten impediments in descending order.

The mean scores on the tabulation chart provide quantitative evidence sufficient to concretely identify the five greatest impediments. These scores also can be compared across the three subgroups, demonstrating the level of agreement between missionaries, Hispanic leaders, and theological educators. Did all three subgroups respond equally for the top five impediments or was there disagreement between them? Were any impediments identified as prominent by one subgroup, but not by the panel as a whole or did one subgroup disagree with the other two? What conclusions can be drawn from this data?

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Table 6. Round 3--significance of impediments as ranked by subgroups
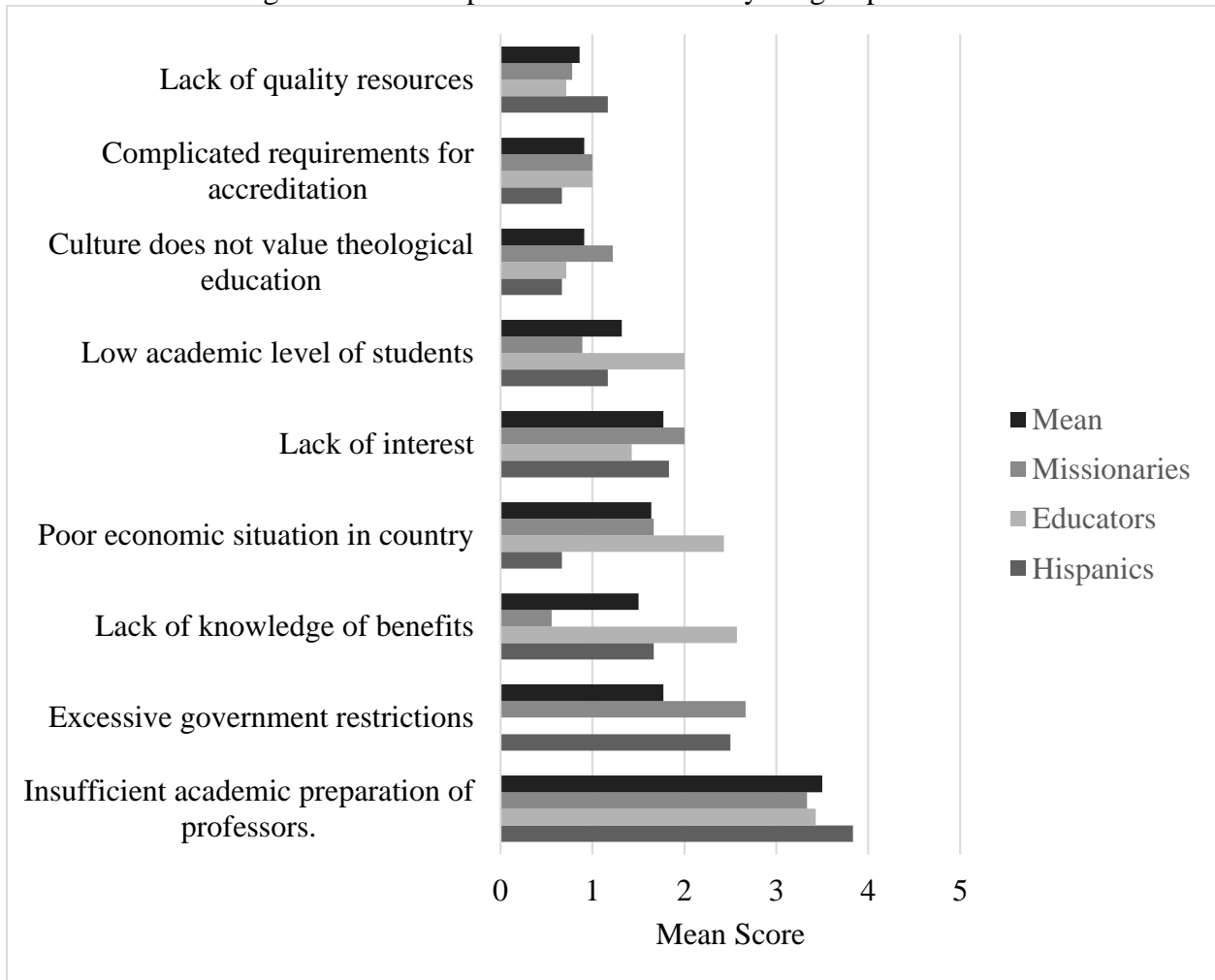
These scores also can be compared within each subgroup, analyzing the strength of agreement between the individual participants of each subgroup. In other words, was there unanimity within each group or was there a diversity of opinion? How do the responses of each subgroup compare with the whole? The following tables demonstrate the level of importance given to the top ten impediments by each of the Delphi panel participants.

Table 7. Round 3--significance of impediments as ranked by subgroup 1 missionaries

Impediment	#7	#10	#11	#12	#16	#17	#18	#21	#22	Group	All Subgroups
Insufficient academic preparation of professors	2	2	4	1	4	4	5	3	5	3.33	3.50
Excessive government restrictions	3	5	0	5	5	5	0	1	0	2.67	1.77
Lack of knowledge of benefits	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.56	1.50
Poor economic situation in country	0	3	0	3	2	3	0	4	0	1.67	1.64
Lack of interest	5	1	3	0	1	0	4	0	4	2.00	1.77
Low academic level of students	1	0	1	2	3	1	0	0	0	0.89	1.32
Independent spirit	0	0	2	4	0	0	2	0	0	0.89	0.82
Complicated requirements for accreditation	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	1.00	0.91
Lack of quality resources	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0.78	0.86
Culture does not value theological education	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	5	1	1.22	0.91

Table 8. Round 3 significance of impediments as ranked by subgroup 2 Hispanic nationals

Impediment	#1	#2	#3	#14	#19	#20	Group	All Subgroups
Insufficient academic preparation of professors	5	5	4	4	0	5	3.83	3.50
Excessive government restrictions	1	4	3	5	2	0	2.50	1.77
Lack of knowledge of benefits	3	0	1	1	5	0	1.67	1.50
Poor economic situation in country	0	3	0	0	1	0	0.67	1.64
Lack of interest	4	0	0	3	0	4	1.83	1.77
Low academic level of students	2	1	0	3	4	0	1.17	1.32
Independent spirit	0	0	5	3	0	0	0.83	0.82
Complicated requirements for accreditation	0	0	0	2	0	2	0.67	0.91
Lack of quality resources	0	2	2	0	0	3	1.17	0.86
Culture does not value theological education	0	0	0	0	3	1	0.67	0.91

Table 9. Round 3 significance of impediments as ranked by subgroup 3 educators

Impediment	#4	#5	#6	#8	#9	#13	#15	Group	All Subgroups
Insufficient academic preparation of professors	3	1	3	3	5	5	4	3.43	3.50
Excessive government restrictions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	1.77
Lack of knowledge of benefits	5	0	5	2	1	2	3	2.57	1.50
Poor economic situation in country	2	2	0	5	4	4	0	2.43	1.64
Lack of interest	4	0	1	0	0	0	5	1.43	1.77
Low academic level of students	0	4	4	0	3	3	0	2.00	1.32
Independent spirit	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	0.71	0.82
Complicated requirements for accreditation	0	3	0	1	2	1	0	1.00	0.91
Lack of quality resources	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	0.71	0.86
Culture does not value theological education	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0.71	0.91

Finally, qualitative data drawn from explanatory comments that the participants included on the three rounds of questionnaires and from individual phone conversations on the subject matter will be considered. This data will provide additional information to better explain the

nature of each major impediment and its impact upon independent Baptist pastoral training institutions' pursuit of an accreditation model.

Insufficient Academic Preparation of Professors

Professors at accredited undergraduate institutions typically are required to possess an accredited degree in an appropriate field that is at least one academic degree above the level that they are teaching. Those teaching on the graduate level should possess a terminal degree in a related field (Association for Biblical Higher Education 2017, 26; AETAL 2015, 14). This requirement poses a significant challenge in Latin American countries where few graduate-level theological institutions exist and where churches place a low level of importance on accreditation. The result is that there are few professors with graduate level education and even fewer with terminal degrees in related disciplines.

With a mean score of 3.5, the *insufficient academic preparation of professors* was clearly identified as the greatest impediment to the pursuit of an accreditation model. In fact, its tally was almost 100 percent higher than the next ranked obstacle. Six of the twenty-two participants on the Delphi panel listed it as the greatest impediment and seven others listed it as the second greatest impediment. In fact, only one of the twenty-two panel participants did not include it in the top five impediments. Additionally, it was the highest-ranking impediment by all three subgroups.

With an average ranking of 3.83, the Hispanic leaders' subgroup rated this obstacle higher than the other two subgroups, even higher than stateside theological educators. Three of the six Hispanic participants gave this obstacle a 5 ranking, the highest possible, and one Hispanic participant ranked it as a 4. Only one Hispanic participant did not rank this obstacle within the top five. This high ranking by the Hispanic subgroup seems to imply a willingness to be

self-critical and honest in the assessment of their own training and the academic status of their institutions. As one Hispanic survey participant states, "There are few Hispanic independent Baptist theological educators who are able to give classes at the undergraduate level" (Participant 20, Hispanic). Likewise, another Hispanic survey participant writes,

> The lack of theological institutions and teachers with a doctorate in Latin America make the academic inequality obvious. Therefore, courses reflect the same, which makes it difficult to pursue accreditation. I am speaking specifically about the fundamental (independent) Baptist movement in Latin America. Small Bible institutes or seminaries are the norm staffed by teachers with little preparation. (Participant 3, Hispanic)

This acknowledgement by Hispanic independent Baptist theological leaders is consistent with the Delphi support team's recognition of opportunity in their SWOT analysis for the strategic plan. They concluded that there is a growing desire for advanced pastoral training in the region and a growing pressure for additional theological and practical knowledge. In other words, the Hispanic independent Baptist church is increasingly more self-aware. Although not spread evenly throughout the movement, there is a developing awareness of theological superficiality and an increasing hunger for better trained theological leaders.

With an average ranking of 3.33, American missionaries rated this obstacle lower than the other two subgroups. While all nine of the missionaries included it within the top five obstacles, only two gave it a 5 ranking and three ranked it as a 4. Five of the nine missionary participants gave it a 3 or lower. Certainly, the statistical difference in the ranking of this obstacle between the three subgroups is minimal, however, the missionaries' lower score may reflect the indifference that independent Baptists have traditionally shown toward graduate level studies.

While God has used American missionaries in tremendous ways to bring the Gospel to the shores of Latin America, most have lacked the educational training, experience, and

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credentials to train pastors at an undergraduate level. One of the missionary participants writes, "Most institutions are founded and led by missionaries with vision and passion but deficient in academic qualifications" (Participant 4, missionary). Another confesses, "The Latin American independent Baptist movement has few teachers with terminal degrees and/or the graduate credits required within a teaching field" (Participant 9, missionary). Participant 17 states the situation clearly, "Without trained professors, how can an institution pursue accreditation? Even if accreditation processes were open to theological education, we do not have sufficient credentialed faculty in order to meet university-level requirements" (Participant 17, missionary).

This academic lack among missionaries has inevitably been magnified among independent Baptist Hispanic theological leadership. The truth is that "national pastors are a great asset to a Bible College because of their knowledge and experience; however, their lack of formal training, many times, will not allow them to teach at a College level" (Participant 11, Hispanic). One missionary candidly writes about the institution where he ministers:

> At the Peru Baptist Bible College, among the Peruvian professors, our director has a three-year degree from this college from when we were only offering a three-year program. The dean of studies has a three-year degree also, but he has done some postgrad work at what was Calvary Baptist Theological Seminary in Lansdale, PA. One professor has a degree in Philosophy from a university in town, and he is applying for online postgraduate studies at Dallas Theological Seminary. Another has a university degree in Psychology. All of our other Peruvian professors only have a four-year degree from our Bible college. (Participant 16, missionary)

Participant 18, who serves at another independent Baptist institution, further explains,

> Most of our teachers teach at the same level that they were taught, because in Spanish that was about the highest level of education possible. We created the M.Min. and the M.A. in our school in Hermosillo, Mexico, but I can't say that many other institutions in Mexico have done the same. Having said that, I am referring to the national teachers. Typically, Americans come down well-prepared, but I think the model going forward needs to focus on nationals getting the training to teach others--if not, you have permanent dependence on Americans or continual low-level education. (Participant 18, missionary)

But the challenge is, how can accredited training in theological and ministry related disciplines be accomplished? One missionary asks, "Since we don't have accredited programs, how do we get professors credentialed?" (Participant 18, missionary). Should potential professors be sent to accredited theological schools in the United States? This is the solution that many have pursued, but it only works for a select few. If a student speaks English, if a student possesses a degree from an accredited undergrad program within their own county, or if the family has the financial means to finance the tuition at an expensive undergrad program in an American university, if he can get an education visa into the United States, and if, if, if, then pursuing an accredited graduate degree is a possibility. However, that solution poses certain spiritual, familial, financial, and cultural dangers. Even if the student makes it to a stateside institution, there is sufficient anecdotal evidence of failure to create legitimate concern.

Another option is to send potential professors to seek training across denominational lines. As valuable as this solution might be for interdenominational understanding and appreciation, this may result in a student's change of belief or practice such that his continued participation in his denomination is in question. This danger is significant enough to discourage this solution at the undergraduate level.

Perhaps an even greater concern for established institutions is the effect that the pursuit of better trained professors would have upon faithful Hispanic leaders who are currently serving in these institutions without the necessary accredited degree. Participant 18 laments the "potential disqualification of current faculty members" (Participant 18, missionary).

> Many Bible colleges or seminaries already have staff and professors that have been involved in the ministry for years. They are often alumni of the institution. Becoming accredited means bringing current faculty up to standard, which may result in the loss of loyal, good faculty who share the vision, history, and direction of the school. On the other side, finding "qualified faculty" up front will often mean sacrificing positional issues for the sake of credentials. Often these are "professional" professors rather than

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alumni whose heart and loyalty are for the vision and purpose of the school. (Participant 21, missionary)

Excessive Governmental Restrictions

Excessive governmental restrictions was tied for the second-highest impediment among the top five. It received a mean score of 1.77. Five of the twenty-two participants rated it as the greatest impediment and one ranked it as the second greatest impediment. Interestingly, nine of the participants did not rank it within the top five.

With an average score of 2.67, missionaries ranked this impediment higher than any of the other subgroups. Hispanic leaders were next with a score of 2.5. Tellingly, not one theological educator ranked this obstacle within the top five. In contrast, every participant in the Hispanic subgroup ranked it among the top five, as did six of the nine in the missionary subgroup. This diversity of response between American theological educators and Hispanic nationals and missionaries to the region certainly reveals different perceptions toward government as a whole. While governmental institutions in the United States are perceived as being helpful to their constituency, even religious institutions, governments in Latin America are viewed with varying degrees of skepticism and distrust. But even that conclusion does not do justice to the varied responses received from the Hispanic and missionary participants.

Some context is necessary to understand these varied responses. As Andrés Bernasconi and Marcelo Knobel write, "The political and economic instabilities, allied with urgent challenges in many other sectors, makes the actual landscape of higher education in Latin America extremely complex. Each country has a different history, public policies, and challenges" (Bernasconi and Knobel 2016, accessed December 2017). In other words, the academic and political climate is distinct country by country, yet there are some similarities that

may provide explanations for the educational uncertainty in and difference of opinion on the subject of accreditation throughout the region.

First, Spanish-speaking Latin America was *discovered*, divided, and colonialized by two European countries, Spain in the west and Portugal in the east. During this colonial period, there was a close relationship between the Catholic church and the crown, with both playing a significant role in the establishment of institutions of higher education. "Spanish America's colonial institutions of higher education were neither private nor public according to contemporary terminology. The key factor in preventing either privateness or publicness from dominating these institutions was the Church-State relationship" (Levy 1986, 28). The nomenclature of many of these schools clearly symbolizes their joint participation. Royal and Pontifical universities were created in Mexico, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Panama, and Venezuela (Levy 1986, 30; Nuñez and Taylor 1989, 65). Universities thus were established to serve the needs of both the church and the State. In some countries this Catholic influence still affects governmental policy and practice. As one participant laments, "governmental accreditation of independent Baptist training institutions is difficult due to a predisposition to not cooperate with non-Roman Catholic entities" (Participant 12, missionary).

Second, the independence movement that swept through Latin America in the early nineteenth century liberated the region from European colonialization and promoted a secularism that elevated the role of the State over that of the church in higher education.

> A major battle of nineteenth-century Spanish America, waged in nation after nation, pitted liberals against conservatives in respectively promoting and opposing secularism. Education was one of the most crucial institution areas in which this battle was fought. Liberals were strongly influenced by the North American and especially the French revolutions, by the Enlightenment, and by a new faith in reason rather than in faith itself. They advocated State control over education and repeatedly demanded banishment of Church influences. (Levy 1986, 31)

The State thus wrested control of these institutions assuming a more significant role in their funding, administration, and teaching. "The national universities generally became the State's higher education arm. In Central America, for example, the universities of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua all held State monopolies on the authority to grant academic degrees and professional licenses" (Levy 1986, 31). The Catholic church, which for centuries had aligned itself with the government and against the people, began to lose its prestige and power (Nuñez and Taylor 1989, 84). The colonial schools from the previous period were taken over, sometimes violently by the State. Religious leaders were removed from their positions and theological degrees were eliminated (Arnove 1967, 45-53).

The results of this secularization are still felt throughout much of Latin America. Some countries still restrict theological institutions from pursuing governmental recognition. As Participant 17 from Peru notes, "historically it has been impossible to achieve this accreditation because the Ministry of Education has no category for theological education" (Participant 17, missionary).

Globalization has promoted the rise of private institutions of higher learning. Likewise, there is greater educational dialogue and cooperation across national and continental divides. The 2004 Tuning Project in Latin America encouraged the establishment of educational standards that could be "understood, compared, and recognized throughout Latin America" (Beneitone et al. 2007, 11). Nineteen Latin American countries are participating together on this project including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Venezuela. *Reflections on and Outlook for Higher Education in Latin America* was published in 2007. Included in appendix II of their report is the identification and

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description of the official assessment and accreditation bodies in each country (Beneitone et al. 2007, 329-403).[1] The application of these policies is slow and potentially painful. For instance, Participant 17 writes, "the university scenario in Peru is reeling from a new law that attempts to reform the system but has produced some negative effects. The system is too politicized and there is a moratorium on creating new universities" (Participant 17, missionary). Another Peruvian missionary agrees, "Presently, accreditation is granted by the national government and they are not accepting new universities at this time" (Participant 16, missionary).

However, it must be noted that the skepticism and distrust that Hispanics and missionaries exhibit toward Latin American governments may be confusing the ability of some to distinguish between restrictions and requirements. For example, a Hispanic pastor points to the impossibility of accreditation for pastoral training institutions in Mexico: "in Mexico, it is complicated to obtain accreditation on the part of the government because the national constitution is written so that education in Mexico must be separated from the Church. This signifies the impossibility that the government can provide accreditation to theological institutions" (Participant 1, Hispanic). However, participant 7 who is a missionary in Mexico, has obtained governmental accreditation for his institution. He writes,

> In many countries, including in Mexico where I minister, the accreditation process is handled by government agencies, not independent agencies. The tense and sometimes hostile relationships that exist between governments and Christianity creates fear. In Mexico the Department of Education must approve the school calendar, the courses offered, who can teach, and what students can be accepted. But so far, we have not encountered any problems. (Participant 7, missionary)

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[1]The appendix in this book also provides valuable information on each country: the number of higher education institutions and the number of students enrolled, the types of degrees offered, teaching staff, academic periods, grade scale, tuition fees, admission and graduation criteria, academic credits, and recognized assessment/accrediting agencies.

Interpreting the diverse laws governing accreditation in each Latin American country can be difficult and navigating the complexities of such laws is challenging. Participant 21 argues that the governmental requirements are a major hurdle:

> In most Latin countries, the legal and educational "red tape" is extensive, intrusive, and expensive. In some countries, they must reach the standards of the national accrediting agency, which makes it a major hurdle to overcome (bureaucratically more than academically), especially when most Bible schools and seminaries began without giving much thought to such organization and standards when they began. Going back and correcting will be daunting when compounded with other considerations. (Participant 21, missionary)

Participant 7 agrees:

> It can be difficult to gain approval for opening a school--facilities, budgets, teachers with formal recognized degrees, etc. The requirements go far beyond what most churches or ministries in Mexico or other countries can provide. Growing up in Spain and having visited multiple other mission fields, I think that this is true in many countries. As far as getting each major approved, in Mexico we have to turn in paperwork that amounts to three three-inch binders as part of the approval process. Just preparing that material is a daunting task. (Participant 7, missionary)

Likewise, Participant 20 writes, "in Mexico everything depends upon the approval of the Public Education Secretary. The requirements to receive an accredited bachelor's or master's degree depend upon their system. If you cannot accommodate your program to their system, then you cannot be accredited" (Participant 20, Hispanic). Participant 12 says, "accreditation of Bible institutes and seminaries would be more difficult to obtain due to more inclusive government requirements of faculty and curriculum than would be acceptable" (Participant 12, missionary). These comments demonstrate that while some governmental restrictions may prohibit the full exercise of religious and academic liberty, in many cases the requirements are simply more cumbersome than we would like. Being difficult is not the same as being unattainable.

In many countries, governmental accreditation is possible if the institutions are willing to do the necessary work. Participant 18 makes this point:

I would not necessarily say that the requirements are excessive. When the teachers have insufficient preparation, not enough money, and not enough knowledge nor interest, the requirements seem excessive. If the preparation, interest, and knowledge were increased, then the financial investment would follow suit and the government requirements would be more attainable. (Participant 18, missionary)

Finally, it should be pointed out that governmental accreditation is not the only option. Bullón, in his work *Misión, eduación y desarrollo,* enumerates twelve distinct means, previously listed in chapter 2, to obtain recognition or accreditation including recognition by an international religious accrediting organization like AETAL.

*Lack of Interest in Accreditation/Lack of
Knowledge of Accreditation Benefits*

When the Delphi support team began working on a strategic plan to overcome the top five impediments, it became evident that there was great similarity in the action steps necessary to overcome impediment 3 *lack of interest in accreditation*, and the action steps to overcome impediment 5 *lack of knowledge of accreditation benefits*. The Delphi support team decided to combine these two obstacles into one and then to incorporate the sixth ranked obstacle into the study.

Lack of interest in accreditation was tied for the second-highest impediment among the top five. It received a mean score of 1.77. However, only two of the twenty-two participants ranked it as the greatest impediment and ten participants did not rank it within the top five. With an average score of 2.00, the missionary subgroup ranked this the highest, followed by Hispanics at 1.83, and theological educators at 1.43.

Lack of knowledge of accreditation benefits was the fifth ranked impediment among the top five. It received a mean score of 1.5. Four of the twenty-two participants ranked it as the greatest impediment and eleven participants did not rank it within the top five. The subgroup of

theological educators ranked this the highest with an average score of 2.00. Their higher

evaluation is consistent with their emphasis upon and greater experience with accreditation. The

Hispanic subgroup was next with an average score of 1.67, and the missionary subgroup gave

this obstacle the lowest ranking among the three subgroups with an average score of 0.55.

These two impediments are the result of two perspectives prominent within independent

Baptist circles. The first viewpoint considers academic rigor, exegetical proficiency, and

advanced theological instruction as unnecessary elements in the pastoral training process.

Independent Baptists typically approach ministry from pietistic (heart) and ministerial (hands)

perspectives. They focus upon the nurture of godly men and women who can effectively do the

work of ministry. These outcomes are consistent with the purposes of the local church (Matt.

28:19, 20) and thus, in the minds of many, do not require external, academic constraints or

administration heavy institutions. Participant 7 commented,

> Many churches in Mexico downplay the importance of theological education. The emphasis is on practical teaching that men will need to pastor churches. High-level theological education is considered unimportant and even dangerous. Additionally, most of the pastors did not receive more than Bible institute level training, so they naturally do not view it as important. They certainly didn't get an accredited theological degree. If they are ministering "so successfully," why would anyone need more than what they received? (Participant 7, missionary)

This same sentiment was repeated over and over again by the panel. Participant 15

wrote, "many pastors in Latin America (particularly in Mexico), while desiring to develop

institutes in their local churches, have the idea that academic rigor in leadership training is not

very important. In some quarters, classes are oriented toward practical ministry, and there is a

lack of emphasis on theological study and precision" (Participant 15, missionary). And another,

"Since most Bible Institute or seminary graduates will be going into the pastorate, there is no

need for accreditation. Churches are not concerned with Education Department approval, so,

why would the educational institution go through the cost and headaches to getting the school and major approved?" (Participant 16, missionary).

This sentiment was supported by the analysis of the Delphi support team who, in the weakness section of their SWOT analysis, identified a lack of standardization in academic programs. Without such standardization, academic norms are left to the vagaries of each institution. Likewise, Participant 16 writes, "Many pastors in Peru are entering the ministry and doing fruitful work without much formal training. They are often more focused on evangelism, discipleship, church growth, and missions than they are on higher theological training. They are not opposed to training, but their circumstances and desires give them a different focus" (Participant 16, missionary).

The second prominent viewpoint among independent Baptists that influences this obstacle is their aversion to the concept of accreditation (see chapter 2). While accreditation, "a voluntary activity in which institutions agree on standards of educational quality and then hold themselves mutually accountable to those standards" (Association of Theological Schools 2015a, 1), is now an accepted practice among most independent Baptist Bible colleges and seminaries the United States, it is not yet seen as a necessary standard for independent Baptist training institutions in Latin America.

Few independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America have investigated the accreditation process or even reflected on its potential benefits. Only one missionary out of nine from the missionary subgroup ranked this obstacle within the top five. Participant 9 comments, "Some within the Latin American Independent Baptist movement likely don't appreciate the value of accreditation. They may think it is unnecessary because they are

generally not geared toward academics. Or they may think it is inappropriate to have outsiders

evaluating theological education" (Participant 9, missionary).

In contrast, theological educators who have participated in the accreditation process

ranked this obstacle higher than Hispanic nationals and much higher than missionaries serving

on the field of Latin America. Four of the five theological educators in that subgroup ranked

lack of knowledge of accreditation benefits within the top five; two of which ranked it as the

greatest obstacles. Participant 13, a theological educator who serves in Asia and the Middle

East, describes the benefit of accreditation in a foreign context:

> The founder of our ministry, a person from the Middle-East, conducted a conference
> ministry for Arabic speaking individuals for over twenty years. The conferences were
> well-attended, and the enthusiasm was high, but there were no observable changes over
> all those years. He went to the Christian college from which he graduated in the U.S. and
> asked if they would start a training program in the Middle East. They did so, and the
> college was accredited immediately. In the first five years, the students started over 140
> Bible study/house churches. That ministry has expanded with training occurring in four
> countries in the Middle East and many, many more churches have been started. The
> academic rigor, practical assignments, and constant accountability have been an integral
> part of the success of this program. Other institutions and churches now esteem the
> program highly. The accredited degree is also recognized internationally so that students
> are able to continue their studies elsewhere. (Participant 13, missionary)

The Delphi support team, in its SWOT analysis, identified this *lack of interest in*

accreditation as a significant threat, and several survey participants elaborated upon this low

view of accreditation with the following explanations. Participant 12 (missionary) wrote, "until

recently, the only accredited University in the Country was the Roman Catholic University in the

Capital city" (Participant 12, missionary). Participant 8 explained the thinking of many

independent Baptist pastors and theological educators. He asks, "we were working for so many

years without recognition, why is it necessary now?" (Participant 8, missionary). A Hispanic

theological educator (Participant 9) from a Stateside accredited university writes, "Some within

the Baptist movement likely don't appreciate the value of accreditation. They may think it

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unnecessary because they are generally not geared toward academics. Or they may think it is inappropriate to have outsiders evaluating theological education" (Participant 9, Hispanic). Participant 1 comments, "there are institutions that really do not see the need, importance, or benefits of accreditation, thus limiting their participation in advanced theological studies" (Participant 1, Hispanic). Participant 3 remarks, "the independent Baptist university of a good academic level does not have the desire to invest in this direction in Latin America because, simply, there is not business benefit to the institution" (Participant 3, Hispanic). And finally, Participant 16 states,

> Receiving a nationally accredited title sounds tasty, but in practical terms it has not been necessary in the explosive church planting efforts in Peru. It would be nice for seminary professors to have recognized studies to improve our academic quality but is amazing how much church planting is done by men without accredited theological studies. (Participant 16, missionary)

Poor Economic Situation in Country

Fourth on the list of identified impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America was the poor economic situation in these countries. This impediment received a mean score of 1.64. Only one participant ranked it as the greatest obstacle and ten of the survey participants did not rank it within the top five. The missionary subgroup, with an average score of 2.43, ranked it higher than the other subgroups. They were followed by the theological educators' subgroup at 1.59 and the Hispanics' subgroup with a low score of 0.67. Of the six Hispanic participants, only two ranked this impediment within the top five.

The differences between the three subgroups and the especially low score for this obstacle among the Hispanic participants most assuredly reflects different economic realities. Most all of the theological educators and missionaries are from the United States, one of the

world's wealthiest economies. As such, they are accustomed to a style of living and ministry very different from that of the rest of the world. Latin America, on the other hand, is part of the *Third World*. Although this term is no longer in vogue, it was coined during the *Cold War* period to identify, in aggregate, those nations with developing economies. While Latin America has seen significant economic growth in the last three decades, including a significant expansion of middle-income population, the majority of the populace still would be classified as lower-income (Gao 2015, accessed December 2017). Many still suffer from limited employment options and a significant shortage of available housing options. Although the work is now somewhat dated, it was suggested in the 1980s that many urban centers in Latin America had housing availability for only 20 percent of the population (Nuñez and Taylor 1989, 112-13). While current shortages have improved, visits to any of these countries reveal similar inequities today. Likewise, earthquakes, hurricanes, and other natural disasters have devastated regions of Mexico, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, while political crises in Venezuela and Cuba exacerbate the suffering of many.

As a result of significant suffering, Hispanics, as a culture, have developed "a strong sense of national pride ... an emphasis upon idealism ... the capacity to improvise and to 'fix things' as they go along the way," and the ability to relate to other people being "friendly, positive, and charged with a good sense of humor" (Nuñez and Taylor 1989, 188-90). The point of this being that Hispanic participants are less likely than their American counterparts to identify a poor economy as a significant obstacle.

Two economic issues are mentioned by the expert panel as affecting the pursuit of an accreditation model. First of all, meeting the stringent demands of accreditation is expensive. Participant 13 makes this point when he states, "accreditation is expensive. Overhead costs

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including salaries, facilities, libraries, computer software and hardware, accreditation visits, etc., are more costly than non-accredited programs" (Participant 13, missionary). Along the same lines Participant 17 relates, "my understanding is that traditional accreditation models require extensive library holdings according to the level of education. We share a building with a grade school and church and we do not have space at the moment to develop a large library, even if we could acquire the books ... I imagine that those services would be cost prohibitive for us" (Participant 17, missionary).

He goes on to conclude, "within the Peruvian economy, accreditation is sustainable for marketable degrees--not for ministry training. So, we have to create a revenue stream with marketable degrees within a university project" (Participant 17, missionary). In other words, the development of an accredited pastoral training institution is not economically viable on its own; it must participate under the umbrella of a larger institution.

The second financial issue related to this obstacle is the financial ability of potential students. Participant 3 writes, "the monetary cost for those who desire to prepare themselves in accredited universities is high in comparison to the standard of living in those countries. Not everyone can pay the cost to study in universities where they offer international accreditation" (Participant 3, Hispanic). Participant 16 says similarly, "There is an evangelical seminary in Lima that has national accreditation, but its costs are above the reach of most of our pastors" (Participant 16, missionary). And summarily, Participant 17 concludes that "within the Peruvian economy, accreditation is sustainable for marketable degrees--not for ministry training" (Participant 17, missionary). This lamentable conclusion is widespread throughout Latin America.

Regarding a proposed economic solution, one participant suggests that these financial challenges could be resolved through "fund raising" (Participant 18, missionary). Another writes, "Most training institutions on the field are barely making it financially. They depend on local churches, area missionaries, and sometimes Stateside funding to stay afloat" (Participant 22, missionary). The implication is that while the church in the United States has the resources to alleviate some of the financial concerns associated with the pursuit of an accreditation model, such funds are not forthcoming. Up until this point, most independent Baptist churches do not include support of pastoral training, and especially the expensive accredited variety, as part of their missions' budget.

Low Academic Level of Students

This sixth impediment was added to the list when the Delphi support team combined two previous impediments together. This impediment received a mean score of 1.32. Theological educators ranked this higher than the other two subgroups by a two to one margin. They gave it an average score of 2.00, while the Hispanic subgroup gave it an average score of 1.17 and the missionary subgroup an average score of 0.89. These scores reflect the greater importance that theological educators place upon a student's academic ability.

Inclusion of this impediment as a significant barrier to the pursuit of an accreditation model is consistent with secular research on the subject. Every three years the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) conducts an international study to evaluate the educational progress of participating countries. This testing, called the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), measures the competence of fifteen-year-old students in the area of science, reading, and math literacy. While the results show marked improvement in recent years, Latin American countries still rank among the lowest in all three academic

categories (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development 2015, accessed August

2018). According to an analysis of the program by the Education Department of the Inter-

American Development Bank (IDB), Latin American scores from the ten participating countries

"are equivalent to 2.5 years less schooling" than the OECD average (Inter-American

Development Bank 2015, accessed January 2018).

Participant 17 elaborated upon this situation in detail. He explains,

the problem isn't only that pastors haven't gone to a Bible college ... many of them have a poor quality of school education in general. The national education system in Peru is quite inadequate. Our seminary was created to offer training for ministry with a high academic standard. But some of our students don't really have the necessary foundation for university-level studies .... There is a real need for accredited, university-level ministry training, but across the country a majority of those who would train for ministry probably are not qualified and perhaps don't really need this level. We have chosen to focus on meeting the need for university-level ministry training. (Participant 17, missionary)

Likewise, Participant 11 wrote, "many believers in developing countries did not attend high

school or did not finish high school, therefore would not be accepted at a school with a college

level of education" (Participant 11, Hispanic).

Rote memory is the primary method of learning in many Hispanic educational

environments. Although cited earlier in the literature review, this statement is also relevant here:

The educational process in most Majority World nations is that of rote memory, and theological education has not been immune. Students are taught to repeat verbatim what the teacher presents. Theological statements are to be accepted and adopted without question. In fact, in such places as Latin America, the traditional Roman Catholic church teaches that one can lose his or her salvation if he or she questions the teachings of the church! While such training produces students who have the incredible ability to memorize, rote memory does not lend itself to the development of critical thinking skills. (Thornton 2015, 199)

This happens to coincide with a favorite pedagogical method of many independent

Baptists. I've already alluded to George Dollar's assertion that rote memory is the sole classroom

exercise of many Bible institutes. This leads to a perfect storm of pastoral training that equates

the memorization and regurgitation of information as quality education. Participant 5 writes, the same, "in my limited experience of teaching in Latin America, the students have not been well prepared academically" (Participant 5, educator) and Participant 17 adds, "the problem isn't only that pastors haven't gone to Bible college, many of them have a poor-quality school education in general" (Participant 17, missionary).

Summary

In this chapter we have unpacked the results of the Delphi survey conducted among a panel of twenty-two experts. These missionaries, national pastors, and Baptist educators identified and explained the top five impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America. With these impediments in hand, the Delphi support group has developed a strategic plan to overcome these difficulties (appendix 6). The next chapter will make recommendations regarding the implementation of the strategic plan to encourage this pursuit within the independent Baptist community and conclude with a few summary statements on the project as a whole.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to develop a strategic plan that would encourage the pursuit of an accreditation model among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America. Chapter 2 of this project unpacks biblical themes that support an accreditation model of pastoral training. Likewise, literature related to relevant topics was evaluated. Due to confusion on the subject among independent Baptists in Spanish-speaking Latin America, emphasis was placed upon a clear understanding of the history, nature, benefits, and procedures of accreditation. Chapter 3 explains the methodology behind the study. A Delphi survey was conducted of experts in the field of independent pastoral training in Latin America. The purpose of the survey was to identify the five primary impediments that hinder independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America.

Chapter 4 identified and unpacked the significance of the survey's raw data. The five identified impediments were: insufficient academic preparation of professors, excessive government restrictions, poor economic situation in country, lack of interest/lack of knowledge of benefits, and low academic level of students. With this list in hand, the Delphi support team crafted a strategic plan for the EBI ministry team that will allow them to promote an accreditation model among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions. The details of the strategic plan can be found in appendix 6.

This final chapter draws conclusions about the project as a whole. First of all, recommendations which have risen to the surface as a result of this project will be offered. Second, the project will conclude with a summary of the project, including proposals for further research.

Recommendations

Specific recommendations regarding the pursuit of an accreditation model and the

implementation of the strategic plan will be given to independent Baptist churches and pastoral

training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America will now be examined.

Independent Baptists Must Pursue a More Robust
Academic Model of Pastoral Training

While this project has focused attention upon the pursuit of an accreditation model, the

purpose behind this pursuit is the strengthening of academics in independent Baptist pastoral

training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America. In chapter 2, we acknowledged that

independent Baptists are notoriously weak in this area. I repeat here the assessment of historian

George Dollar. He writes about Fundamentalism as a whole of which independent Baptists

make up a significant part.

> Since Fundamentalists have taken their place outside the denominational structures, they
> have separated themselves from the time-honored schools of higher learning and been
> forced to erect their own .... In too many cases, almost any kind of academics has been
> defended on the ground of the Christian character of the teachers. Their gifts in the
> classroom and their broad exposure to the masters of their fields have been limited, while
> mature judgments based on proper research and graduate disciplines have, in too many
> cases, been non-existent. The picture at this point is extremely blurred. Bible institutes
> have resorted to rote memory as a sole classroom exercise and many graduating from
> such backgrounds have assumed they had a respectable education .... Inferior standards
> prevail on a national scale, while unsuspecting pastors and parents believe they are
> supporting and paying for a first-class education. (Dollar 1973, 269)

If this statement is true of Stateside independent Baptists[1], then it is much more so of

independent Baptists in Spanish-speaking Latin America. Sadly, the diffidence found in

previous generations is still rampant among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions on

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[1]Since the writing of Dollar's book, significant academic progress has been made among
certain groups of Stateside independent Baptists. Many of their Stateside pastoral training
programs are now accredited by both ICETE and regional secular accrediting bodies.

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the mission field. While the strategic plan developed within this project (see appendix 6) lays

out specific steps to this pursuit, two general but important recommendations can be made here.

First, independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin

America must strengthen their academic programs. This will require a conscientious effort on

the part of the national Church to focus upon academics and not just clerical training. Up until

now, the rapid and exponential growth of the Hispanic Church has outpaced the training of

national leaders. As the introduction to this study pointed out, the evangelical population in

Latin America has ballooned to more than sixty million with evident growth in every country.

Rapid church-planting movements throughout the region have emphasized the swift expansion of

the gospel and the rapid establishment of local churches. David Garrison writes,

> Intimate house churches are at the heart of every Church Planting Movement ... the
> approach of pouring more and more resources into the harvest is actually contrary to what
> we see God doing in Church Planting Movements. In Church Planting Movements, the
> role of the missionary outsider is heaviest at the beginning. Once the people group
> begins responding, it is vitally important for the outsiders (i.e., missionaries) to become
> less and less dominant while new believers themselves become the primary harvesters
> and leaders of the movement. (Garrison 2004, 25)

While we applaud the movement toward an indigenous model, the intentional, rapid, and

conscientious withdraw of missionaries greatly hinders the development of pastoral training

ministries and the resultant theological leaders. While independent Baptists have not overlooked

the need for pastoral training, they have fostered a truncated pastoral training model that does not

rise to accepted academic standards. Perhaps it would be more generous to say that independent

Baptists in Latin America, like their counterparts in the early days of theological education in the

United States, have employed an informal academic structure that was consistent with the times.

However, as times change, so must the academic structure. Although writing about the

nineteenth and twentieth century movement toward a professional model of theological

education, the application of Daniel O. Aleshire's article "The Emerging Mode if Formational

Theological Education" is strikingly relevant to the situation in Latin America today.

> The modern age had brought complexity, specialization, urbanization, and other fundamental shifts in culture, the church, and higher education. Ministry needed to accommodate these changes, and the professional model was right for the times. It provided the education needed for ministers to assume their roles among other professionals who functioned in an ever more complicated and sophisticated culture. (Aleshire 2018, 31)

So, pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America must strengthen their

exegetical, theological, and ministerial instruction. This should incorporate instruction in the

biblical languages, biblical and systematic theology, and church history. The goal should be the

development of national theologians who can provide theological leadership on the local,

national, and international levels. Admittedly, this will be a challenge.

Missionaries with Hispanic brethren who understand the importance of the new paradigm

in missions must lead the way. Churches must be instructed, and an intentional movement

toward advanced theological training must begin.

Second, stateside independent Baptist churches must see academically robust pastoral

training as an important component in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. The biblical

basis for this inclusion was demonstrated in chapter 2 under the sections: A Consistent Biblical

Pattern of Ministry Training, The Church is a Pillar and Ground of Truth, and Need for

Academic Rigor. However, in spite of the abundance of biblical teaching on the subject, most

independent Baptist churches still place primary missionary emphasis upon the pioneering

ministries of evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. Certainly, these are biblical and

foundational ministries, however, the new paradigm in missions requires greater emphasis upon

pastoral trainers, especially those with advanced academic training and degrees necessary to the

pursuit of a robust academic model. Jeffrey P. Greenman and Gene L. Green write on this need

in their article, "The Priority of Leadership Training in Global Mission": "Within the whole of Spanish-speaking Latin America, there are just a few handfuls of Latino/a scholars with a doctorate in theology. By comparison, at Wheaton College where we teach, every advertised position in theology will yield one hundred applicants" (Greenman and Green 2014, 46).

Missionaries and mission agencies must issue an urgent call to local churches, Bible colleges, and seminaries for theological educators and pastoral trainers. Local churches must include pastoral trainers in their missionary budgets and mission agencies must make every effort to provide the necessary resources.

> In our day, what the Church worldwide desperately needs is for God to raise up and send out a new generation of people with the spiritual and intellectual gifts for a "watering" ministry of teaching and mentoring, like the one exercised by Apollos. Given the crucial need for better equipped and more biblically grounded pastors around the world, our plea is that individual Christians and churches give priority to using their resources to support efforts of leadership development at seminaries serving the Majority World Church. (Greenman and Green 2014, 45, 46)

This call for missionary theological educators is a major component of the attached strategic plan. It includes instruction to local churches and Stateside pastoral training institutions on the new paradigm in missions as well as a proactive attempt to recruit qualified candidates for both adjunct and full-time roles in Latin American institutions.

Independent Baptists Must Work Together

Independent Baptists are notoriously independent. While the nomenclature *independent* historically identifies a conviction against any hierarchy structure that would minimize the autonomy of the local church, it also well describes the practice of separatism that results from a naïve realist epistemology, a strong denominationalism, and militant fundamentalism. For many independent Baptists, there are few *safe* options for fellowship and cooperation. The result is an isolationism that eschews collaboration with others who are not identical in the minutiae of

doctrine and practice. Earlier I summarized that most independent Baptists are naïve idealists in regard to their epistemology. Hiebert writes, "idealists require agreement as the basis for harmony. Consequently, they tend to be conversionist and polemical in their approach to those holding other theological positions. They break with and attack those who refuse to accept their positions" (Hiebert 1994, 33).

When this independent and idealist mindset is applied to pastoral training in a missionary context, multiple institutions from the diverse groups of independent Baptists often are established in close proximity. The resultant multiplicity of independent Baptist institutions increases the measure of necessary resources--more teachers, more libraries, additional facilities, more funds, etc., that must be drawn from a limited pool. While it did not make the top five, the independent spirit of independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America was listed within the top ten impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model.

The pursuit of an accreditation model is demanding. Accrediting organizations impose stringent requirements to ensure quality assessment, promote institutional advancement, and meet established academic standards. Each of these requirements, in turn, command a significant investment of time, finances, and personnel.

Independent Baptists may well complain about the demanding nature of certain academic and institutional requirements within the accreditation process, but the truth is, these requirements would be more attainable if independent Baptists would collaborate with each other and with others of like faith and practice. The strategic plan that was developed for this project lays out a plan to promote such collaboration. We mention a few of the ideas here.

The Merging of Institutions

Let's face it, each independent Baptist mission board does not need their own pastoral training institution in every metropolitan area or even in every country. The amount of resources needed to establish, house and equip, and man this multiplicity of pastoral training institutions is more than the independent Baptist movement can bear. Many of these institutions could be merged for greater effectiveness and a better stewardship of God's resources.

The Seminario Bautista International (SBI) in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, is a positive example of the merger of two similar institutions. The Seminario Bautista International was founded in La Romana in 2007. It was a four-year Bible institute level program with two main teachers and sixteen to eighteen students. The program included four hours of teaching on Saturdays from their lone campus in La Romana. During the years 2007-2017, ten students had graduated from the program.

In 2004, the Iglesia Bautista Cristiana in Santo Domingo opened the Seminario Universitario Bautista. This was a full-blown undergraduate-level program under an articulation agreement with Northland International University in Dunbar, Wisconsin. The school operated from its one campus in Santo Domingo. There were just three professors associated with the program that taught classes two days a week. During the years 2004-2017, eight students had graduated from the program.

Under the direction of BMM missionary Jeremie Roy, the two institutions merged in 2017 to form the SBI. The school offers university-level, unaccredited training at five locations with a mixed media program. There is an instructor on each campus and unified classes are offered for all online. SBI is staffed with nine part-time professors, all of whom possess their

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master's degree or above. Currently the school enrolls twenty-five students. Jeremie writes about the merger,

> The benefits of the merger are incredible. The wealth of experience the Seminario Universitario Bautista brings to the table is very stabilizing. Administration is more difficult in Latino countries, in general, than in the USA, so having their experience has helped incredibly. The other teachers from the association are all freshly minted Masters graduates. On top of administration, one other obvious benefit is their experience in teaching. Talking about the sheer merger perspective, it does not make sense to try to have many little schools if one is of like faith and practice. Teaching is very taxing. Pastors cannot, unless they have significant resources, muster the muscle to have a quality school by themselves. That is not to say one can or should subvert local church discipleship. However, it just makes a lot of sense to work together. With this merger we go from six to nine teachers, and that makes a huge difference in our capacity to offer classes. It is even more important to have more teachers since most of our teachers work a full-time job on top of being professors in our seminary. (Jeremie Roy, May 23, 2018, email message to author.)

Resource Sharing

Resource sharing is another possible means of cooperation. Modern technology, the digital world, and international travel make this method of partnership a viable alternative even for institutions from countries as distant as Mexico and Argentina. Potential shared resources include: professors for modular instruction, course notes, institutional documents, policies and experiences, as well as facilities and equipment. Several examples will illustrate the potential value of resource sharing.

In 2005, after having served for ten years in Mexico City, health reasons compelled us to return to the States. During our tenure in Mexico we wore many ministry hats. I was the lead church planter, team leader for our growing ministry team, director of the pastoral training program, all the while serving as a professor for multiple courses in varied disciplines each semester. These numerous responsibilities minimized my ability to develop quality, academically-profound, and educationally-creative course materials. Upon our return to the

States, I was invited to develop a Spanish theological curriculum that could be offered to Bible institutes, colleges, and seminaries.

The EBI Theological Curriculum includes detailed professor's teaching notes that are tied to well-known and theologically conservative textbooks. Potential Spanish language textbooks are cited with specific sections being highlighted throughout the notes for student interaction. Student notes are also available with spaces to be filled out during the lectures. Classroom and homework assignments are already prepared as are tests, projects, and a PowerPoint presentation. In short, all that is needed is available for the professor to teach the course. Dr. Dave Shumate who has used the materials writes,

> I have taught the Old Testament Introduction at both the seminary and the undergraduate level, and I found EBI's course to compare very favorably with university level materials. The package was put together in a helpful manner and the visuals were a great aid to instruction. The teacher may have to pick and choose what material to cover, since the course is both extensive and intensive. Nevertheless, the process of culling should not be difficult, since the materials are in easy to edit formats. (Dave Shumate, August 30, 2014, e-mail message to author)

Multiple courses are currently available. They can be purchased through the EBI website (www.ebi-bmm.org) and used without restriction.

Horizon Education Network is another independent Baptist resource sharing option. Horizon was initiated under the umbrella of the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE). While Horizon has spun off on its own, they retain the same doctrinal and missional distinctives. The Horizon Education Network is a "biblically based, culturally relevant curricula, made accessible through the medium of distance learning" (Horizon Education Network 2018, accessed August 2018) Horizon is not an academic institution but is a resource provider for pastoral training institutions, or what they call educational partners. To accomplish this Horizon:

- Facilitates the implementation of a tool to help the Educational Partners evaluate and periodically review its purpose, mission, and vision, develop and implement its curriculum, and determine appropriate educational and administrative models
- Helps Educational Partners integrate online educational tools throughout their educational programs
- Offers to assist Educational Partners in the development of online, theological education programs in their language and culture that meet locally recognized standards
- Assists in the development of local programs of study that help leaders cultivate a global missional vision, resulting in church multiplication and missionary outreach
- Provides faculty and administrative training for Educational Partners
- Provides distance-learning, hybrid, and technology-enhanced models that take theological education to the student already in ministry or to the Christian leader who has difficulty accessing traditional training programs due to constraints of time, distance, security, lack of resources, or ministry context. (Horizon Education Network 2018, accessed August 2018)

Horizon currently has three courses available in Spanish and a few of their educational partners have produced courses which are also available through Horizon. They are recognized and work closely with the Distance Education Accreditation Council (DEAC) as well as providing counsel regarding online education to AETAL.

Other independent Baptist pastoral training ministries provide external teaching modules. The Universidad Cristiana de las Americas (http://ucla-mexico.org/) in Monterrey, Mexico, offers degrees in eight academic disciplines, each one being accredited by the Secretary of Education of Nuevo Leon, Mexico. To meet the growing educational need in the Hispanic world, they offer several distance education options. Block classes are available in which a teacher travels to a location for three days and gives sixteen hours of classes. He will return to the location about six weeks later to give another three days, sixteen hours of classes. They also offer many of the university's theology classes online so that pastors and Christian workers around the Spanish-speaking world can receive the same level of training.

Dan Wokaty, in conjunction with Instituto Práctico Ebenezer, runs the Latin American Mobile Seminary. This ministry

> assists pastors in Spanish-speaking Latin America who wish to train their own people. The plan will help national pastors accomplish the training of their countrymen without the need of multiple resident full-time missionaries, and without limiting the training to nationals who travel to the U.S. to acquire their training. The program is also called TEAM to signify the following key components: Train the trainer, Equip the coordinator, Access the available instructional medium, and Manage the necessary resources. (Dan Wokaty, May 25, 2018, email message to author)

Dialogue and Conferences

Since 1949, the Evangelical Theological Society has provided a platform for dialogue between evangelical scholars, teachers, pastors, and students. Their annual meeting is a valuable conclave in which relevant themes are discussed and dialogue is promoted. Likewise, the *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* has been published since 1958. A parallel society and Hispanic theological journal would be invaluable for Spanish-language independent Baptist pastoral training institutions and for Hispanic evangelicalism world-wide.

The Hispanic Theological Initiative is a consortium of Hispanic Evangelical Scholars (http://hti.ptsem.edu/). Their mission is to cultivate "Latino PhDs for leadership positions in the academy, the church, and the world" (Hispanic Theological Initiative 2018, accessed August 2018). Currently there are twenty-four affiliated institutions, all within the United States of America. Being more liberal in doctrine, mission, and goals, this initiative would find little appeal among independent Baptists in Latin America.

Recently the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE) hosted a Summit of International Theological Educators at their headquarters in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. This was a profitable time of interaction and training, but even as its intent was international, the dialogue and instruction was only offered in English, thus, only a few from the Hispanic world attended.

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Such a gathering would be very beneficial for Spanish-speaking pastoral training institutions. The attached strategic plan calls for the development of such a conference in the Hispanic world.

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Independent Baptists Should Be Honest About the
Academic Degrees Offered

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Throughout the Bible, believers are called to live out their faith in a manner that is consistent with the gospel. For example, the Apostle Paul writes in Philippians 1, "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27). Similarly, in Ephesians 4, he implores believers to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called" (Eph. 4:1). Certainly, this command to gospel-worthy living implies a commitment to integrity and truthfulness in all of our dealings. In Proverbs 20, God promises divine blessing to those who practice truth, "Loyalty and truth preserve the king: and he upholds his throne by righteousness" (Prov. 20:28). Again, Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4, "but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestations of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscious in the sight of God" (2 Cor. 4:2).

Pastoral training institutions are equally responsible to conduct themselves in an upright and truthful manner. This certainly means that great care should be taken to ensure that all instruction is faithful to God's Word, finding its basis in accurate exegesis of the text and a consistent theology. However, truthfulness also must be applied to the institution's practices and procedures. Integrity and truthfulness must characterize every aspect of the institution's administration and marketing.

The lack of standardization in Hispanic theological education has muddied the waters regarding academic nomenclature. Throughout Latin America pastoral training institutions

employ a variety of titles to describe their ministry--instituto bíblico, universidad, or seminario. These terms are used without much distinction between individual programs. Likewise, the nomenclature for the degrees offered is confusing--certificado, diplomado, bachillerato, y licenciatura. Pastoral training institutions often employ these terms and grant such degrees indiscriminately.

These degree names, however, do carry meanings. The educational departments of each government have defined these terms. In fact, in some countries worldwide, academic degree names have been copyrighted by the government in order to protect and standardize the degree nomenclature. In regard to religious instruction and pastoral training, AETAL has precisely described the program requirements for admission, the duration and extent of the academic programs, and the requirements for graduation, as well as relevant institutional requirements for each degree (see table 2. A comparative table of programs and academic levels).

Independent Baptist pastoral training institutions must respect these degree names, as well as the pertinent program and institutional requirements. While elevated titles are attractive and provide a level of credibility to the institution and its graduates, this credibility is meaningless if the accepted academic standards are not met. Will Frieson, provost of Judson University, is quoted in Morgan Lee's article "Should Unaccredited Bible Colleges Be Allowed to Grant Degrees?"

> For Bible colleges to say that they're doing the same thing with their degrees as liberal arts schools is troubling. We expect that doctors and nurses have had the right exams and that they keep up with their fields. Higher education has the same standardization, and to have one portion do something nonstandard and call it a degree is suspicious. (Lee 2015, 18)

Improper nomenclature for earned degrees undermines the integrity of the institution, it misinforms churches, ministries, and other academic institutions in their evaluation of

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candidates, and it deceives students and their families, promising them a product which the

institution is not able to deliver.

Accreditation is Hard, So What?

No discussion about accreditation lasts long before the complexity of the process is

addressed. This refrain was repeated over and over again by the Delphi panel of experts:

> It can be difficult to gain approval for opening a school. Facilities, budgets, teachers with
> formal, recognized degrees, etc. The requirements go far beyond what most churches or
> ministries in Mexico or other countries can provide. Growing up in Spain and having
> visited multiple other mission fields, I think this is true in many countries. As far as
> getting each major approved, in Mexico we have to turn in paperwork that amounts to
> three three-inch binders as part of the approval process. Just prepping that material is a
> daunting task. (Participant 7, Missionary)

> In most Latin countries, the legal and educational "red tape" is extensive, intrusive, and
> expensive. In some countries, they must reach the standards of the national accrediting
> agency (like Brazil's Ministry of Education), which makes it a major hurdle to overcome
> (bureaucratically more than academically), especially when most Bible schools and
> seminaries began without giving much thought to such organization and standards.
> Going back and correcting will be daunting when compounded with other considerations
> below. (Participant 21, Missionary)

"Accredited education is expensive. Overhead costs including salaries, facilities,

libraries, soft/hardware, accreditation visits, etc., are more costly than non-accredited programs.

Preparing for team visits from the accrediting body is both costly and time-consuming"

(Participant 13, Missionary).

"The Latin American Independent Baptist movement has limited funds and manpower.

Money is required for staffing, libraries, facilities, etc. Time is taken up with basic functions;

little is left for the administrative burden of achieving and maintaining accreditation" (Participant

9, Educator).

> Many teachers and administrators in theological training institutions are very pressed for
> time. They often have significant leadership and ministry responsibilities in their local
> churches, and they often teach numbers of different courses. The lack of personnel often

means that teachers do not have the ability to concentrate on a set of classes but have to teach many different classes. Some of them also need to work additional jobs in order to get by. They often lack the time necessary to develop and compare curriculum. (Participant 15, Missionary)

"If acquiring a model involves a significant amount of finances or manpower, the pursuit to acquire an accreditation model will not happen" (Participant 18, Missionary).

Of course, Hispanic missionaries and national leaders are not the only ones to lament the difficulty of the process. In the article "Are the Inmates Running the Asylum?" a policy paper from the Center for College Affordability and Productivity, significant challenges in the accreditation process including unnecessary costs, lower teacher loads, required credentials, excessive planning, and specialized accreditors are outlined (Gillen, Bennett, and Vedder 2010, 23-25). Previously I mentioned Robertson's comments on accreditation, but they bear repeating here. He writes that the accreditation process was a "pain in the neck that we at the Atlantic School of Theology could well do without" (Robertson 1978, 56, 57). There was so much to do just to keep the school running from day to day that they were more concerned about these other more pressing matters. He further writes that while accreditation was attractive, "it seemed to us to be an appendage that was hardly necessary to our ongoing efforts on behalf of those we served" (Robertson 1978, 56, 57).

Certainly, no one discounts the significant challenges associated with accreditation. It is an extensive, laborious, expensive, and exhausting process, and once completed, an institution enters what AETAL calls the *maintenance phase* that includes annual dues to the Association, as well as the delivery of annual reports that document the institutional progress. These reports demonstrate the institution's continued compliance with accreditation standards, as well as the institution's persistent pursuit of excellence. And then seven years later, accreditation certification must be renewed. Accreditation is purposefully challenging and difficult.

However, I would quickly ask, So what? Since when do the challenges of ministry preclude faithful service and the completion of required necessary tasks?

In Luke 9:23, Christ calls his followers to "deny" themselves and "to take up their cross and to follow him." Certainly, this speaks broadly to the issue of discipleship and not specifically to pastoral training; however, the application is valid. As followers of Christ, we are called to difficulty, to sacrifice, and to service. We must be willing to lose our lives for the sake of the gospel. This is exactly what the early believers practiced, as many were "tortured, refusing to accept release .... Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in tow, they were killed with the sword" (Heb. 11:35-37). Likewise, early missionaries of the modern era suffered greatly for the cause of Christ. The book *Burning Wicks: The Story of Baptist Mid-Missions* documents efforts of early BMM missionaries as they penetrated mid-Africa with the Gospel. William Haas was the founder of BMM. The book recounts their many perils and victories.

> The stress of Africa had left marks on the Haas family. Young William was very ill. Genevieve, already weakened, had survived the trip home only through the kindly care of the ship's doctor. Bouts of fever and fatigue had left William gaunt and aged. He had grown a rather long red beard to protect his face from the high grasses and insistent mosquitos of the African bush.
> But the Haases' spirits were vibrant. They had carried light to darkest heathendom and talked with thousands hungering for the gospel. While touching others, their own lives had been touched. Their trust in God had never been betrayed. In the barest moments of life, when there seemed nowhere to turn, they had found Him faithful. The flame of their zeal, burning even stronger than before, challenged others. (Strong 1984, 45)

I believe that contemporary independent Baptist missionaries and Hispanic pastors understand and obey these commands like their predecessors. Many today are suffering great hardship for their service to Christ. They have left family, security, and homeland to proclaim the gospel to the nations. Their willingness to lose their life for the gospel is a continual

testimony to the grace of God. Therefore, a hesitancy to embrace the challenges of accreditation reveals that independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America do not believe that the benefits associated with accreditation are worth the effort required to obtain it. Certainly, if they did, they would move heaven and earth in their pursuit of it. The Delphi survey of a panel of experts revealed this to be true. Lack of knowledge of accreditation benefits was ranked within the top five impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model. Participant 7 said it this way: "Some within the Latin American independent Baptist movement likely don't appreciate the value of accreditation. They may think it unnecessary because they are generally not geared toward academics. Or they may think it is inappropriate to have outsiders evaluating theological education" (Participant 7, missionary). Participant 21 wrote, "[I]nstitutions ask, 'if there is no demand for an accredited degree, then why go through the processes?' ... In other words, 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it'" (Participant 21, educator).

The attached strategic plan (appendix 6) strongly addresses this misunderstanding by promoting instruction on the new paradigm of missions and the benefits of an accreditation model. Throughout this project, the multiple advantages of the pursuit of an accreditation model have been presented. Now is an appropriate moment to clearly delineate these benefits and to unpack their significance for independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America.

Benefits of Accreditation

First, accreditation will help promote a robust model of academic training. In chapter 2, we examined the strong biblical evidence for pastoral training and for the need of academic rigor in the preservation and proclamation of scriptural truth. Contrary to the thinking of some, biblical scholarship and independent Baptist doctrine are not antithetical; rather, the high view of

Scripture and the emphasis upon sound doctrine among independent Baptists should propel us to the forefront of biblical scholarship. The accreditation process is a valuable tool that will help independent Baptist pastoral training institutions to strengthen their academic model and to train theologians with the necessary exegetical, theological, and practical skills for ministry. As Marvin Taylor argued, "accreditation is the primary means by which the improvement of theological education is accomplished" (Taylor 1978, 50).

Secondly, accreditation provides precise standards for the distinct levels of academic instruction. Throughout this project, we have lamented the lack of standardization within independent Baptist pastoral training institutions. While independent Baptists have opened many pastoral training schools throughout the region, they have fostered a truncated pastoral training model that does not rise to accepted academic standards. All too frequently Latin American pastoral training institutions have developed and continue to operate under institutionally derived standards of academic achievement that are not consistent with accepted standards of governmental accreditation or those of ABHE, ATS, or AETAL. However, accrediting organizations already have done the hard work of defining commonly accepted universal norms for all facets of the educational institution, including the value of credit hours, general studies requirements, degree standards, requirements for professorship, resource needs, etc. These standards are clearly documented and readily available. Likewise, the accreditation processes and the involvement of academic peers provide needed guidance and encouragement.

Third, accreditation aids the pastoral training institution in its pursuit of institutional excellence. Excellence is a characteristic unique to God. Only he is perfect. However, Scripture clearly calls believers to excellence in life and ministry. In Colossians 4, Paul challenges the Colossian believers to "work heartily, as for the Lord" in whatever they do (Col. 4:23). In Phil.

4:8, believers are commanded to reflect on whatever is excellent. In Titus 3:8, Timothy is to encourage Ephesian believers to devote themselves to "good works," which things are "excellent and profitable." Second Corinthians 8 calls the believers to "excel" in giving as they already have excelled "in everything" (2 Cor. 8:7). And in 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul appeals to his brothers that, as they have walked to please God, they would "do so more and more" (1 Thess. 4:1). Most challenging are the words of Christ in Matt. 5:48, "You therefore must be perfect, as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect."

This includes not only personal excellence, but ministry excellence as well. God calls local churches, para-church ministries, and even pastoral training institutions to continually strive toward excellence. It is argued by many that "accreditation is the primary means" by which the improvement of theological education is accomplished (Taylor 1978, 50). Calian argues that "The difference between excellence and mediocrity reduces itself ultimately to the common resolve in each institution to be a committed, disciplined, and truthful community" (Calian 2001, 24). Commitment to the education process, discipline to address areas of weakness, and honesty regarding the status of our institutions should encourage independent Baptists to consider the value of the accreditation process.

Fourth, accreditation provides opportunity for quality assessment. John F. VerBerkmoes' chapter "Understanding and Fostering a Culture of Assessment" in Billman and Birch's book *C(H)AOS Theory: Reflections of Chief Academic Officers in Theological Education* argues that institutions should energetically promote well thought-out systems of institutional and programmatic assessment. The implication is that institutional change and the pursuit of excellence does not occur without a conscientious program of assessment.

> Without credible systems of assessment, the strategies and curricula employed to foster student learning and ministerial formation will go unchanged. They will tend to reflect

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faculty research interests and academy values more than the needs of students and the requirements of ministerial leadership roles. Such situations reflect unintended compromises in systems and institutional integrity. In contrast, well-crafted systems of assessment enable the institution to function with greater integrity in regard to the fulfillment of its promises and mission…This objective view then provides a basis for decision making about quality improvement. (VerBerkmoes 2011, 348-49)

Accreditation strategically guides an institution through the processes of internal assessment (the periodic review of institutional achievement as related to the pre-defined purpose, goals, methods) and external assessment (peer review to ensure that achievement is verifiable and consistent with industry standards).

Fifth, accreditation assures the community to whom an institution is responsible that its purposes are being met and that students (as well as the parents and churches who financially underwrite the students' education) are receiving what the institution has promised. Bernhard Ott, in his chapter "La Acreditaión: Importancia y beneficios para la institución" (Accreditation: The Importance and Benefits for the Institution) asks some important questions and makes important points regarding this responsibility.

How do I know that I will receive a quality education? What is hidden behind the promising declarations on an institution's website? What will ensure that the institution will complete what they promise? Parents, church, and friends will invest a lot of money in the theological formation of the student. They want to know that this education is good and that it will open doors to ministry and future employment. (Ott 2017, 299)

As was documented in the literature review section on accreditation in chapter 2, accreditation requires each institution to identify and to articulate their individual purposes, goals, and methods. Regularly scheduled periods of assessment then ensure that these purposes are being met. Such oversight would promote institutional confidence throughout the independent Baptist community.

Sixth, accreditation certifies the academic viability of the degrees granted by the institution. Previously, we have bewailed the confusion surrounding the academic meaning of

degrees and degree nomenclature within independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America. Since the completion of degree requirements within an accreditation structure are based upon universally accepted academic standards, degrees have meaning. Thus, when a pastoral candidate would say that he holds a licenciatura, there would be a clear understanding as to what that degree means.

Seventh, accreditation would permit graduates to pursue advanced degrees in other institutions. The SWOT analysis conducted by the Delphi support team identified a growing desire among Hispanic leaders for advanced pastoral training and a growing pressure for additional theological education. However, the road to advanced theological training and ministry related studies is often closed to graduates from independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America. Their non-accredited degree is not accepted by most seminaries and graduate schools, likewise, the *Bible institute* level education that many have received hampers their ability to study at more advanced levels. This reality has been demonstrated frequently in our participation with Piedmont International University and their accredited online Hispanic MABS. Frequently, unaccredited students have applied for enrollment, but they lack the necessary accreditation and documentation. Additionally, of the few students without accredited degrees who have graciously been allowed entrance into the program (the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools by whom they are accredited allows for the acceptance of a small percentage of students with unaccredited undergraduate degrees), most have not fared well academically.

The Delphi survey conducted as part of this project has identified insufficient academic preparation of professors as the number one impediment to an accreditation model. This becomes a vicious cycle as insufficiently prepared professors teach students who are not

sufficiently prepared to pursue graduate level studies at other seminaries and graduate schools. These unaccredited graduates then form the pool from which potential professors are chosen. While this impediment must be addressed for accreditation to be obtained (appendix 6), graduates from schools with accredited status would be free to pursue advanced theological education including the completion of terminal degrees in theologically related fields.

Eighth, accreditation would produce Hispanic independent Baptist theologians who possess the necessary training and credentials to effectively represent independent Baptist beliefs before the larger hermeneutical community. In chapter 2 I unpacked the benefits of global theologies and the importance of dialogue within the broader hermeneutical community. I also identified the lack of well-trained and credentialed Hispanic independent Baptist theologians as one of the two factors that precluded independent Baptist participation in this dialogue. I believe that the beliefs distinct to independent Baptist have exegetical and doctrinal validity. They are not the result of theological whims, rather they reflect years of exegetical, theological, and ministerial reflection. These beliefs offer valid and consistent theological constructs that well served Baptist churches for centuries. These beliefs should be presented, defended, and promoted within the community of faith. Such participation would involve dialogue, as well as the publication of both popular and scholarly works on Baptist belief. An accreditation model would encourage the rise of theological leadership among Hispanic independent Baptists.

It is suggested that when pastoral institutions have a better understanding of the benefits of accreditation the difficulties associated with its implementation will be mitigated. Again, I refer to what Dr. Robertson wrote after the Atlantic School of Theology had completed the accreditation process, "The accreditation process is truly an aid to the improvement of theological education. It is not a pain in the neck, but it does involve pain--growing pain. That

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kind of pain that we all need." (Robertson 1978, 57). While accreditation is not perfect (see Gillen, Bennett, and Vedder 2010), it is the best current option to provide the necessary accountability and to ensure the best outcomes.

The Best of an Accreditation Model Can be
Incorporated Right Now

While the process to obtain accreditation is long and hard, that does not mean that independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America cannot begin incorporating necessary changes right now. As the writer of Hebrews says, "let us set aside every weight ... and let us run with endurance" (Heb. 12:1). Similarly, the Chinese philosopher Laozi has said, "a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step" (Lao Tzu Quotes n. d., accessed August 2018). Even the smallest of pastoral training institutions can take initial steps toward an accreditation model. As I have documented above, the biblical mandate is clear, and the needs are great. Let's accept the challenge of a standardized, quality, peer reviewed, and robust pastoral training program. Let's remove the impediments identified through this project and let's begin to move our respective pastoral training institutions to academic maturity.

The following steps can be incorporated immediately to initiate certain benefits associated with the accreditation model:

1. Familiarize yourself with the accreditation requirements for the desired levels of instruction. This information can be obtained through any of the accrediting agencies websites (AETAL, ATS, CHEA, DEAC, or ICETE); however, it would be best to obtain the relevant information through the specific agency that accredits institutions like yours. Various documents should be available for evaluation. Most pertinent will be the

agency's accreditation handbook which will document processes and procedures, accreditation standards, and the necessary fees. The Horizon Education Network offers an Educational Partners Assessment Form (Horizon Education Network 2018, accessed August 2018) that is an excellent tool to assess the institution's current status and to evaluate its progress. This thirty-three page form does not appear on their website but is available upon request.

2.   Solicit a verbal and emotional commitment from each of those involved in the process. This would include the institution's administration, faculty, and support base, including local churches in the association and those mission agencies with whom the institution partners. In his chapter, "Understanding and Fostering a Culture of Assessment," John F. VerBerkmoes writes, "For the work of assessment to yield its full potential and be sustainable, it must be more than a task to be achieved. Rather, it must become a core value of the institution, a core value for both faculty and administration. This means it must become a part of the cultural fabric and institutional rhythm" (VerBerkmoes 2011, 355).

Above all, this culture must include a passion for institutional advancement. Just as individuals grow in their walk with Christ and as churches are built up, "until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13), so pastoral training institutions should strive to grow, to mature, and to improve the quality of their education.

3.   Inaugurate the process of standardization and quality assessment. Again, each accrediting agency's accreditation handbook provides the necessary information by which your program and institution will be evaluated.

The process toward accreditation begins with your foundational documents, including the institutional mission statement and institutional goals and objectives. Do not rush through this step. Think through your immediate and long-term goals. Key to the accreditation process is a demonstration that the institution is capable of attaining the mission, goals, and objectives. Likewise, you will be called to evaluate your governance, education goals and objectives, curriculum, delivery methods, assessment procedures, facilities, faculty and staff, admissions, etc.

Anticipate that the evaluation will be a painful process. It is more than likely that you will fall short in most institutional and programmatic categories, but do not be discouraged. The important point at this step is to identify the nonstandard areas and to develop a plan of attack.

The process of programmatic and institutional standardization can begin immediately by developing a plan to redesign curriculum so that it satisfies the minimum requirements for general and specialized studies, courses that meet minimum guidelines for class hours, instruction, homework, and assignments. An emphasis can be placed upon the recruitment of professors who meet the necessary spiritual, academic, and practical standards, while all current professors can be encouraged to continue their education. Admittedly, these are significant steps which will take years to complete, but there is nothing hindering an institution from beginning the process. The attached strategic plan (appendix 6) provides some guidance on how these steps can be addressed.

4.   Initiate procedures of external evaluation. In the section under Biblical Themes Relevant to Accreditation in chapter 2, the need for humility was discussed. This biblical quality of humility was applied to pastoral institutions--what is needed is a good dose of individual and institutional humility. National leaders and missionary educators working

together in a spirit of Christ-likeness should acknowledge their insufficiency and voluntarily submit themselves to the process of peer review and external evaluation. Within accreditation circles external evaluation is called peer review.

> By the term "peer review," we refer to a practice of calling upon persons from similar institutions to review, or examine, the qualifications of another institution being considered for initial membership in or for continuation as a member of the Association. Peer review differs from a process that employs a special corps of experts outside of the membership of the evaluating association to make judgments about the quality of an institution or program. (Semrow et al. 1992, 159)

While peer review by the accrediting agency typically is not initiated until later in the process, there is nothing that prevents any institution from initiating this procedure independently. In fact, such evaluation would be beneficial for any institution no matter where there are in the process or what are their thoughts on accreditation.

Summary

This project has confirmed many of my concerns about the state of independent Baptist pastoral training in the Hispanic context, as well as the urgent need for an accreditation model. The study of related biblical themes and the relevant literature in chapter 2 strengthened my understanding of pastoral training, especially the process of accreditation. Furthermore, it increased my passion to promote advanced higher education of the pastoral training process within the Hispanic world. The Delphi survey was a valuable tool that put me in closer contact with many independent Baptists who are involved in pastoral training. Their participation has provided me with new ministry partners and some good friends. Additionally, their input through the Delphi survey has clarified the major impediments to accreditation among Hispanic independent Baptist ministries and their additional comments have shed greater light on the educational conditions within their individual countries and ministries.

The attached strategic plan and resultant recommendations provide definitive, but not conclusive, steps to jump start a movement toward an indigenous model among pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America. The steps are introductory, and I pray that they will bring forth fruit, but several concerns remain.

First, the outworking of the strategic plan is dependent upon approval by BMM and the EBI Ministry Team. While the project proposal was approved by BMM, the assignment of the strategic plan, as described within the plan under *6. Administrative Detail*, must be formally ratified by both entities. As the Spanish literature ministry of BMM, EBI provides doctrinally-sound, Christ-centered, and theologically-profound materials to independent Baptist ministries all over the world. Likewise, EBI already partners with PIU to offer accredited graduate-level online theological education; however, the additional responsibilities articulated within the strategic plan are not inconsistent with EBI's purpose and practice. Our prayer is that EBI could leverage their position of trust to effectively promote the pursuit of an accreditation model.

Second, the independent nature of independent Baptists complicates broad communication and partnerships. As I wrote in the introduction, like the churches that they serve, independent Baptist pastoral training institutions are purposefully independent. They are not part of a denomination and they submit to no external governing body for academic compliance. There are no associations of independent Baptist scholars and little dialogue between institutions. They provide instruction in pastoral training as each individual institution sees fit. Even independent Baptist mission agencies are reticent to provide stringent academic oversight to pastoral training institutions under their purview. Therefore, any movement toward an accreditation model will not be imposed externally but will be internal to the institution.

Application of the strategic plan to the distinct groups within the independent Baptist movement will take time and patience. If the strategic plan is to be a success, it will require substantive partnerships between various independent Baptist groups. I have confidence that some will respond positively, as they already have begun movement in the direction of a more robust pastoral training program. However, others will be more reticent. As per the strategic plan, the development and distribution of quality literature on the subject and an active conference schedule to address the biblical and practical issues surrounding pastoral training are vital components. This is where EBI, Lord willing, will be able to leverage its position of confidence within the independent Baptist movement. By God's providence, we have an unfettered opportunity to publish materials on this subject and to distribute them throughout our network of contacts.

Third, additional qualitative data would provide a more detailed explanation of the five impediments identified by the Delphi panel. While opportunity was given to each panel participant to make comments during the three rounds of the survey, most of the comments submitted by the panel were generic descriptions or simple illustrations of the impediment. In retrospect, I relied too heavily upon the quantitative data compiled through the survey. Follow-up questions, perhaps through another round of correspondence, could have provided valuable clarifications and anecdotal information. Better yet, personal phone calls could allow for specific questions to individual responses, thus allowing each participant a better opportunity to explain their responses and to provide specific examples of the impediment within their particular context.

Fourth, more study is needed on the effective outworking of the accreditation model within Spanish-speaking Latin America. Recent conversations with AETAL have revealed that

although there are some 176 AETAL affiliated institutions within Latin America (110 of these are in Portuguese-speaking Brazil), less than five of the affiliated institutions have reached accreditation status (Paul Branch, May 23, 2018, email message to author). This means that the impediments discovered during the Delphi survey of this project may not be limited to independent Baptists but may reflect significant obstacles to the broader evangelical movement as a whole. Further discussion with AETAL could enhance our understanding of the process and improve the chances of success among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions.

Finally, I am reminded that Christ is the Head of the Church (Eph. 1:22, 23) and that he calls, saves, sanctifies, and equips (Matt. 9:38; Rom. 8:29, 30; 1 Tim. 1:12) his servants for Great Commission ministry. We consciously look to him and cry out for his help in the fulfillment of this strategic plan. "To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen" (1 Pet. 3:18).

APPENDIX 1

INVITATION TO SERVE ON THE DELPHI SUPPORT TEAM

Dear [name],

I am writing to invite you to serve on a Delphi support team as part of a Delphi survey of theological educators involved in pastoral training. The purpose of the survey is to identify the impediments toward the pursuit of an accreditation model in independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America. These impediments will be addressed in the formation of a strategic plan to encourage independent Baptist institutions toward this pursuit. The research is part of my major project in the Doctor of Ministry Program at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

Specifically, I am writing to request that you serve on a five-man support team that nominates the expert panel, reviews the results of the surveys, and proposes solutions to the identified impediments. I will be employing the Delphi survey method to ask a panel of eighteen experts on theological education in Spanish-speaking Latin America three rounds of questionnaires. The Delphi method is an excellent tool to reach a consensus on matters of professional judgment when face-to-face meetings are not possible. I am attaching a copy of the first questionnaire and a proposed sample of the second and third questionnaires. The goal of the survey is to identify the five greatest impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model. Those results along with pertinent biblical and literature studies will be provided to you. This information will inform the committee and serve as the basis for the session to identify solutions.

As part of the Delphi support team you will be asked to:

1. Help select a panel of experts to participate in the Delphi survey.
2. Review and approve a second-round Delphi questionnaire that summarizes the responses from the first-round questionnaire. This will be accomplished via videoconference.
2. Review and approve a third-round Delphi questionnaire that summarizes the responses from the second-round responses. This will be accomplished via videoconference.
3. Review and approve a final survey report that identifies the five greatest impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model among independent Baptists pastoral training institutions. This will be accomplished via videoconference.
4. Participate in a day-long meeting in Sebring, Florida, to propose solutions to overcome the identified impediments and to encourage the pursuit of an accreditation model.

Please understand that your participation will not be revealed to the participants of the Delphi survey, to Trinity Evangelical Divinity School or Baptist Mid-Missions.

Prior to the day-long meeting I will send you a packet of information that will include the final report of the Delphi survey along with other theological and practical information pertinent to our intended discussion. I will cover your travel expenses to and from the meeting in Sebring, Florida.

I will call you in a week to answer any questions or concerns that you may have. You may also contact me by email (brburk@yahoo.com) or by phone (863) 835-0200. If you desire to participate in the survey, please return within ten days the attached Informed Consent Letter.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Serving Christ joyfully,

Bruce Burkholder

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

The research in which you have been asked to participate is designed to investigate the impediments to an accreditation model among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America. This research is being conducted by Bruce Burkholder as part of a Doctor of Ministry major project at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. In this research you will be asked to participate as a support team to help oversee a Delphi survey of theological educators. Please understand that your participation will be held in strict confidence. At no time will your name be reported along with your responses.

While I intend to participate fully in the study, I understand that my participation in this research is totally voluntary and that I am free to withdrawal at any time. I acknowledge that I have been informed of and understand the nature of this study and I freely consent to participate.

Name:

Signed: Date:

APPENDIX 2

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A DELPHI SURVEY OF

PASTORAL TRAINING LEADERS FOR LATIN

AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS

Dear [name],

I am writing to invite you to take part in a survey of theological educators involved in pastoral training. The purpose of the survey is to identify the impediments toward the pursuit of an accreditation model in independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America. These impediments will be addressed in the formation of a strategic plan to encourage independent Baptist institutions toward this pursuit. The research is part of my major project in the Doctor of Ministry Program at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

The survey will employ the Delphi survey method that allows for multiple iterations of a questionnaire that pursues a consensus of opinion among a panel of experts in the field when face-to-face meeting is not possible. If you agree to participate, you will electronically receive three individual questionnaires three to four weeks apart. You will be asked to return each survey within seven days of its receipt. Please understand that your participation will be held in strict confidence. At no time will your name be reported along with your responses.

- First questionnaire: You will be asked to identify three to five of the greatest impediments toward the pursuit of an accreditation model for independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America.

- Second questionnaire: This questionnaire will include a synthesis of the submitted impediments from the entire panel. All responses will be anonymous. You will be asked to rank the greatest impediments and provide any comments that you think appropriate.

- Third questionnaire: This questionnaire will contain a consensus of the ten greatest impediments and you will be asked to rank the five greatest impediments and provide any comment or propose any solution to these impediments that you would deem appropriate.

If you desire to participate in the survey, please return within ten days the attached Informed Consent Letter. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. You may contact me by email (brburk@yahoo.com) or by phone (863) 835-0200.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Serving Christ joyfully,

Bruce Burkholder

Informed Consent Letter

The research in which you have been asked to participate is designed to investigate the impediments to an accreditation model among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America. This research is being conducted by Bruce Burkholder as part of a Doctor of Ministry major project at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. In this research you will be asked to participate in a Delphi survey of theological educators. Please understand that your participation will be held in strict confidence. At no time will your name be reported along with your responses.

While I intend to participate fully in the study, I understand that my participation in this research is totally voluntary and that I am free to withdrawal at any time. I acknowledge that I have been informed of, and understand the nature of this study and I freely consent to participate.

Name:

Email Address:

Signed: Date:

❑   I prefer to interact with an English copy of the three questionnaires.

❑   I prefer to interact with a Spanish copy of the three questionnaires.

APPENDIX 3

FIRST ROUND DELPHI QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear [name],

  Once again, let me thank you for your willingness to participate in this survey to identify the greatest impediments toward the pursuit of an accreditation model among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America.

  This survey employs the Delphi method that will take place in three rounds of questionnaires. All of the responses to this first questionnaire will be categorized to form the basis for the second questionnaire. The process will be repeated for the third questionnaire. I repeat that your responses will be kept confidential. Surveys are coded numerically so as to preserve anonymity. If you have changed your mind since your agreement to participate, please let me know immediately so that another can be nominated to fill your slot.

  This is the first questionnaire. Please return this questionnaire by [date].

  Again, thank you for your participation. Your input is invaluable to the completion of this project.

Serving Christ joyfully,

Bruce Burkholder
(863) 835-0200
brburk@yahoo.com

Questionnaire 1

Participant: 01

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. It is part of a Doctor of Ministry Project at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, and an important component in the development of a strategic plan to encourage the pursuit of an accreditation model among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America.

Please list at least three (3) and no more than five (5) distinct responses and provide explanatory comments that would help to understand the impediment. Please give the question careful thought. Our purpose is to understand the situation as clearly as possible. Your careful and concise responses are greatly appreciated. Please return your completed questionnaire by [date] to:

Bruce Burkholder
brburk@yahoo.com

What, in your opinion, are the greatest impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America?

1. Impediment

   Comment

2. Impediment

   Comment

3. Impediment

   Comment

4. Impediment

   Comment

5. Impediment

   Comment

APPENDIX 4

SECOND-ROUND DELPHI QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. It is part of a Doctor of Ministry Project at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, and an important component in the development of a strategic plan to encourage the pursuit of an accreditation model among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America.

The first questionnaire of this study asked, What, in your opinion, are the greatest impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish speaking Latin America? Your responses, along with those of the entire Delphi panel, have been summarized in the list below.

Please consider all of the responses and select the ten (10) that you consider to be the greatest impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model. Mark the ten statements using the scale of 1-10, with 1 being the greatest impediment and 10 being the smallest impediment of those ranked. Please, use each number only once. Make any clarifying statements necessary to clarify your ranking.

Rank: (1 = greatest impediment; 10 = smallest impediment)

_____ Impediment

Comments:

_____ Impediment

Comments:

_____ Impediment

Comments:

_____ Impediment

Comments:

_____ Impediment

Comments:

_____ Impediment

Comments:

_____   Impediment

        Comments:

_____   Impediment

        Comments:

_____   Impediment

        Comments:

_____   Impediment

        Comments:

Please review your responses and make sure of the following:
- Did you rank ten impediments?

- Did you rank them so that 1 is the greatest impediment and 10 is the smallest of those ranked?

Please return your completed questionnaire by [date] to brburk@yahoo.com.

<div align="center">Thank you!</div>

APPENDIX 5

THIRD-ROUND DELPHI QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. It is part of a Doctor of Ministry Project at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, and an important component in the development of a strategic plan to encourage the pursuit of an accreditation model among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America.

The first questionnaire of this study asked, What, in your opinion, are the greatest impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish speaking Latin America? Your responses, along with those of the entire Delphi panel, were then summarized. In the second questionnaire you were asked to rank what you considered to be the ten greatest impediments.

This third questionnaire summarizes the responses of the entire panel and identifies the ten greatest impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model.

Please consider the ten responses and select the five (5) that you consider to be the greatest impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model. Mark the five statements using the scale of 1-5, with 1 being the greatest impediment and 5 being the smallest impediment of those ranked. Please, use each number only once. Make any clarifying statements necessary to clarify your ranking.

Rank: (1 = greatest impediment; 5 = smallest impediment)

_____   Impediment

        Comments:

_____   Impediment

        Comments:

_____   Impediment

        Comments:

_____   Impediment

        Comments:

_____   Impediment

        Comments:

Proposed solutions to the identified impediments:

Please review your responses and make sure of the following:

- Did you rank five impediments?

- Did you rank them so that 1 is the greatest impediment and 5 is the smallest of those ranked?

Please return your completed questionnaire by [date] to brburk@yahoo.com.

Thank you!

APPENDIX 6

THE STRATEGIC PLAN/EL PROXIMO PASO

A Strategic Plan to Encourage the Pursuit of an
Accreditation Model Among Independent
Baptist Pastoral Training Institutions in
Spanish-Speaking Latin America

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Since the middle of the twentieth century the gospel of Christ has spread exponentially throughout Latin America. As late as the 1970s, the evangelical population in the region was below 20 million; today that number has ballooned to more than 60 million with evident growth in every Latin American country. Thousands of independent Baptist churches have been planted throughout the region and dozens of independent Baptist pastoral training institutions have been established. As a result of this investment national leaders are assuming positions of responsibility. Thousands of Hispanic men now serve as local church pastors, Hispanic missionaries are being sent out from their congregations to the ends of the earth, and Hispanic professors are teaching and directing many Spanish-speaking Bible institutes and seminaries throughout the Hispanic world.

We praise the Lord for this amazing growth. God is at work! However, the task is not finished. As the national church matures, so must its institutions of higher learning. A growing consensus among those involved in Latin American ministries is that well-trained national leadership is the greatest need in the region today. We suggest that this is the next step in Latin American missions.

Institutional advancement is the term that frequently is used to denote the administration and academic development of institutions of higher learning. As institutions mature, they typically strengthen their academic programs, often in conjunction with accreditation agencies. While accreditation, a voluntary activity in which institutions agree on standards of educational quality and then hold themselves mutually accountable to those standards, is now an accepted practice among most independent Baptist Bible colleges and seminaries the United States, it is not yet seen as a necessary standard for independent Baptist training institutions in Latin America. Admittedly, this is a big step that will take years to realize; however, by God's grace it is attainable.

EBI has faithfully served the independent Baptist Spanish-speaking community for more than fifty-eight years through the publication of doctrinally-sound literature and the promotion of effective models of leadership training. The proposal to promote institutional advancement through the promotion of an accreditation model as presented in this strategic plan is consistent with EBI's purpose and history. May God allow us to faithfully serve in this next step of missionary service.

Executive Summary

EBI exists to serve the Hispanic Church in the fulfillment of the Great Commission through the creation, publication, distribution, and training in effective use of materials that are Christ-centered, doctrinally-sound, and theologically profound. For more than fifty-eight years, EBI has been dedicated to the fulfillment of this mission.

As the national church matures, EBI must also mature to meet the ever-changing needs. Throughout the years, EBI has promoted pastoral training through a variety of pastoral training models. A dedication to encourage and support the institutional advancement of independent Baptist pastoral training institutions through the pursuit of an accreditation model is consistent with our history and purpose.

The title of this strategic plan is El Próximo Paso. This name reflects both EBI's appreciation for the work previously accomplished by independent Baptist ministries, as well as the acknowledgement that the task is not finished. Well-trained national leaders remain the greatest need in Spanish-speaking Latin America. EBI is committed to aiding pastoral training institutions with institutional advancement through the promotion of an accreditation model.

EBI commits to the following strategic objectives in this plan:

- Recruit adjunct Spanish-speaking professors with advanced degrees in related academic disciplines.
- Recruit missionaries with advanced degrees in related academic disciplines.
- Promote advanced theological education among Hispanic pastors and instructors.
- Encourage the continuing education of Hispanic theological educators.
- Demonstrate the viability of governmental accreditation where it is legally possible.
- Promote religious accreditation options as a viable alternative.
- Communicate a persuasive apologetic for accreditation.
- Inform pastoral institutions of benefits and responsibilities of accreditation model.
- Encourage national churches to accept financial responsibility for pastoral training institutions.
- Encourage American churches to financially partner with pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America.
- Identify educational and resource options that minimize costs.
- Encourage scholarship within local churches.
- Pursue standardization between independent Baptist pastoral training institutions.
- Stress entrance requirements for Bible colleges.
- Obtain necessary authorizations to administer the plan.
- Establish administrative structure and assign necessary resources.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission--EBI commits itself to the encouragement of institutional advancement in independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America by the promotion of an accreditation model.

Vision--The enthusiastic pursuit of an accreditation model by independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America.

Values

Respect: being Baptists by conviction and commitment, EBI will respect the autonomy of each institution and promote strategic objectives that are consistent with Baptist doctrine and practice.

Service: appreciating the complexities inherent in the pursuit of an accreditation model, EBI seeks to serve pastoral training institutions, by both providing access to pertinent information and procedures as well as in providing hands on assistance when requested.

Partnerships: believing that God created his people and churches to work together for mutual benefit, EBI promotes the development of academic and professional partnerships.

Excellence: assured that the Church is called to do all for the glory of God, EBI will seek to conduct itself by and encourage the pursuit of excellence among independent Baptist pastoral training institutions.

Scholarship: understanding that God calls his people to theological profundity and believing that the distinct doctrinal distinctives of independent Baptists have a place at the table of the hermeneutical community, EBI promotes the rise of credentialed Hispanic theological leaders.

Humility: acknowledging the limitations of our ability to understand, categorize, and communicate truth, EBI will evidence humility.

Impetus for this Strategic Plan

Since its inception EBI has been involved in various levels of leadership training. This has included the publication of pastoral training materials (TEE courses and EBI's Theological Curriculum), the establishment of pastoral training programs in Spanish-speaking Latin America, the teaching of classes within these institutions, and the training of professors and administrators for long-term leadership.

Over the years, BMM and EBI have grown increasingly concerned about the academic stagnation within independent Baptist institutions. This is not to imply that all institutions are equally stagnated. Some have made significant strides to strengthen their programs and to offer advanced theological degrees. However, after almost one hundred years of missionary service in the Spanish world, most independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America have not moved beyond the Bible institution level. There are only a few accredited independent Baptist institutions, and most have no concrete plans for institutional advancement. Additionally, there is no agreed upon academic standard for pastoral training among independent Baptists and the academic process of peer review is rarely if ever practiced.

In 2017-2018, Bruce Burkholder proposed this strategic plan as partial fulfillment of the final project for completion of the requirements for a DMin from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Chicago, Illinois. The proposal was agreed upon by Rev. V. W. Peters, BMM Latin American field administrator. A Delphi survey was conducted among a panel of experts associated with independent Baptist pastoral training institutions.

Delphi is essentially a series of questionnaires. The first questionnaire asks individuals to respond to a broad question .... Each subsequent questionnaire is built upon responses to the preceding questionnaire. The process stops when consensus has been approached by the participants or when sufficient information exchange has been obtained. (Delbecq and Van De Ven 1975, 83)

The survey sought to identify the five greatest impediments to the pursuit of an accreditation model. These five impediments became the basis of the strategic plan El Próximo Paso.

Goals, Strategic Objectives, and Action Steps

1.   First Impediment: Insufficient Academic Preparation of Professors

General Goal: That independent Baptist pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin American be staffed with professors who hold an accredited master's degree or above.

A.   Strategic Objective 1: Recruit adjunct Spanish-speaking professors with advanced degrees in related academic disciplines

Action Steps:

1)   Promote opportunities for Latin American adjunct pastoral training assignments among qualified, credentialed, Spanish-speaking pastors, teachers, and missionaries
a.   Develop promotional videos, pamphlets and other resources that communicate the changing paradigm in missions
b.   Present opportunities through BMM and EBI contacts
c.   Equip BMM regional representatives to communicate opportunities
d.   Write relevant articles for Baptist magazines and publications

2)   Compile and maintain a registry of willing, qualified, and credentialed instructors

3)   Facilitate communication between institutions with professorial needs and registry of available instructors
a.   Catalog relevant information from institutions and available instructors
b.   Lead exploratory trips for interested instructors to potential institutions

B.   Strategic Objective 2: Recruit missionaries with advanced degrees in related academic disciplines

Action Steps:

1) Promote opportunities for Latin American pastoral training assignments in churches, Bible colleges, seminaries, and graduate schools
   a. Develop promotional videos, pamphlets, seminars, and other resources that communicate the changing paradigm in missions
   b. Visit Bible colleges, seminaries, and graduate schools to recruit potential missionary candidates
   c. Work with BMM department of church relations and BMM regional representatives to communicate opportunities
   d. Write relevant articles for theological journals

2) Work with missionary candidates and local churches to expedite the raising of necessary support

C. Strategic Objective 3: Promote advanced theological education among Hispanic pastors and instructors

Action Steps:

1) Develop promotional videos, pamphlets, seminars, and other resources that communicate the need for recognized Hispanic theologians
   a. Address epistemological concerns within independent Baptist movement
   b. Articulate a theology of academic rigor, humility, and interdependence
   c. Encourage need for Baptist theologians, authors, and professors within the hermeneutical community of Hispanic evangelicalism

2) Publish relevant materials through EBI

3) Catalog information on Spanish graduate-level educational opportunities and make available to the national Church
   a. Highlight ongoing Hispanic online MABS program through PIU
   b. Actively promote PIU program and recruit potential students in pastoral conferences throughout Latin America

4) Obtain funding for academic scholarships

5) Develop a fraternity of theologians and pastoral educators to encourage dialogue, cooperation, and academic advancement

D. Strategic Objective 4: Encourage the continuing education of Hispanic theological educators

Action Steps:

1) Create an environment of lifelong learning. Demonstrate the importance of epistemological foundations

2) Develop a fraternity of theologians and pastoral educators to promote dialogue, cooperation, and academic advancement

3) Highlight quality literature for continual study through EBI

2. Second Impediment: Excessive Government Restrictions

General Goal: That government restrictions not be perceived as an insurmountable obstacle to an accreditation model.

A. Strategic Objective 1: Demonstrate the viability of governmental accreditation where it is legally possible

Action Steps:

1) Compile and catalog country-by-country information on laws, restrictions, and requirements regarding the accreditation of pastoral training institutions in Latin America. Make this information accessible to pastoral training institutions

2) Promote a spirit of civic responsibility--evangelical believers can rightfully influence government

3) Publish resources that encourage institutions in their pursuit of secular accreditation
   a. Exalt God's sovereignty over all things and his power to effect change--with God all things are possible
   b. Communicate the difference between governmental prohibitions and prerequisites--difficult does not mean impossible
   c. Document the positive examples of pastoral training institutions that have obtained governmental recognition

B. Strategic Objective 2: Promote religious accreditation options as a viable alternative

Action Steps:

1) Compile, catalog, and make available relevant documentation regarding religious accreditation options (AETAL, articulation agreements, etc.)

2)   Educate on benefits of religious accreditation model

3)   Convince institutions that accreditation is worth the effort

3.   Third Impediment: Lack of Interest in an Accreditation Model for Independent Baptist Pastoral Training Institutions in Spanish-Speaking Latin America/Lack of Knowledge of Benefits of an Accreditation Model for Independent Baptist Pastoral Training Institutions in Spanish-Speaking Latin America

General Goal: That the Hispanic church understand the needs and benefits of an accreditation model leading to greater interest in accredited pastoral training.

A.   Strategic Objective 1: Communicate a persuasive apologetic for accreditation

Action Steps:

1)   Articulate a theology of academic rigor, epistemological humility, and interdependence

2)   Address popular concerns and misconceptions regarding accreditation

3)   Humbly critique current accreditation-free models of independent Baptist pastoral training in Spanish-speaking Latin America

4)   Develop promotional videos, pamphlets, messages, seminars, and other resources that effectively promote accreditation
      a.   Pursue creative means of communication
      b.   Publish and disseminate resources

5)   Develop a fraternity of Latin American independent Baptist theologians and educators that will, among other benefits, promote an accreditation model

6)   Promote the pursuit of accreditation ideals such as standardization of curriculum, quality assessment of institution and program, and peer review. (See Horizon Education Network's Educational Partner Assessment Form)

B.   Strategic Objective 2: Inform pastoral institutions of benefits and responsibilities of accreditation model

Action Steps:

1)   Populate a list with explanation of the benefits of an accreditation model for independent Baptist pastoral training institutions

2)   Develop promotional videos, pamphlets, messages, seminars, and other resources that effectively communicate these benefits

3)   Provide links to religious accreditation options on EBI website that document benefits, procedures, and responsibilities

4)   Offer institutional consultation on accreditation options
   a.   Build relationship with accrediting agencies to better understand their procedures and to promote dialogue with independent Baptist pastoral training institutions
   b.   Establish EBI as a *go to* source for accreditation help

4.   Fourth Impediment: Poor Economic Situation in Spanish-Speaking Latin America Countries

General Goal: That poor economic conditions would not be perceived as an insurmountable obstacle to an accreditation model.

A.   Strategic Objective 1: Encourage national churches to accept financial responsibility for pastoral training institutions

Action Steps:

1)   Develop teaching and literature on biblical stewardship

2)   Articulate a theology of the role of the local church in theological education

3)   Encourage greater financial accountability and communication between pastoral institutions and local churches

B.   Strategic Objective 2: Encourage American churches to financially partner with pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America

Action Steps:

1)   Develop promotional videos, pamphlets and other resources that communicate the changing paradigm in missions

2)   Visit local churches and pastoral conferences to encourage support of pastoral training institutions in Spanish-speaking Latin America. Work with BMM department of church relations to communicate needs
   a.   Present financial needs of pastoral training institutions
   b.   Facilitate dialogue between American churches and institutions
   c.   Promote monthly institutional support
   d.   Communicate needs for special projects

        3)   Establish viable pathways of financial contribution through BMM
            a.   Work with BMM to open institutional accounts
            b.   Develop a system of expenditure verification

C.   Strategic Object 3: Identify educational and resource options that minimize costs

      Action Steps:

      1)   Explore and communicate cost-saving measures from other accredited pastoral training institutions

      2)   Promote institutional library scholarships through EBI
            a.   Update library content to titles that meet accreditation standards
            b.   Communicate library needs to Stateside churches

      3)   Pursue digital textbook options through EBI
            a.   Pursue DRM technology
            b.   Identify viable titles for DRM
            c.   Negotiate necessary contracts for digital rights

      4)   Encourage professor sharing between pastoral training institutions

      5)   Share other cost saving measures through dialogue and fraternity of Hispanic theologians and pastoral educators

5.   Fifth Impediment: Low Academic Level of Students

      General Goal: Increase academic ability of incoming students

A.   Strategic Objective 1: Encourage scholarship within local churches

      Action Steps:

      1)   Promote religious reading

      2)   Publish quality titles of interest for lay-level training

B.   Strategic Objective 2: Pursue standardization between independent Baptist pastoral training institutions

      Action Steps:

      1)   Develop a fraternity of Latin American independent Baptist theologians and educators that will, among other benefits, promote an accreditation model

2)   Determine uniform standards for academic levels--institute, bachelor's, and master's degrees
      a.   Study and follow accreditation models
      b.   Encourage incorporation of General study courses for comprehensive learning and growth

C.   Strategic Objective 3: Stress entrance requirements for Bible colleges

6.   Administrative Details

General Goal: Prepare EBI to effectively execute the above-mentioned strategic objectives.

A.   Strategic Objective 1: Obtain necessary authorizations to administer the plan.

Action Steps:

1)   Present strategic plan to EBI Ministry Team for approval

2)   Present strategic plan to BMM for administrative approval

B.   Strategic Objective 2: Establish administrative structure and assign necessary resources

Action Steps:

1)   Determine the appropriate EBI department under which the strategic plan will be administered

2)   Assign specific responsibilities and program anticipated completion dates

3)   Allocate necessary resources to accomplish plan
      a.   Identify resources needed for completion
      b.   Obtain Ministry Team approval for designated resources

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