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**An Inter-disciplinary Approach to Theological
Contextualisation with special reference to Hispanic
Americans**

PhD, Daniel Sanchez

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to develop a conceptual framework for theological contextualisation with special reference to the Hispanic American sociocultural context. This thesis begins with a critical analysis of the concept, of key issues and of current models of theological contextualisation in Roman Catholic, Ecumenical Protestant, and Evangelical Protestant circles. In this analysis two issues emerge as being vital to the contextualisation process: (1) the methodology employed in an analysis of a sociocultural context and (2) the treatment of the biblical text.

The examination of the first issue reveals that some contextual models (e.g., Liberation) employ conflict theories while others (e.g., Adaptive) employ order (function) theories of social structure in their analyses of sociocultural contexts. Concluding that each of these theories addresses only one aspect of social reality, this thesis develops a theoretical framework (a dialectical interaction approach) which focuses on both elements of conflict and of order in its analysis of a culturally pluralistic context.

This theoretical framework is then utilised in a critical analysis of the sociohistorical experience of Hispanic Americans in the Southwestern United States vis-a-vis the predominant (Anglo American) society. As a result of this analysis (which includes power relationships, goal orientations, and types of adaptation) key themes reflecting the existential concerns of this group are isolated. Central among these is the Hispanic American search for identity.

Attention is then given in this thesis to the second issue: the treatment of the biblical text in the contextualisation process. This analysis reveals that some approaches consider the biblical text while others the sociocultural context to be normative in the contextualisation process. Utilizing key concepts from the modern hermeneutical debate and from the social sciences this thesis develops a model (an ethnohermeneutic) which seeks to do justice to the biblical text while achieving a fundamental engagement with the sociocultural context.

This model informs theological reflection in the final chapter. Following a critical analysis of key themes and proposed biblical analogies this thesis posits a new analogy (i.e., Hellenistic Christians) for theological reflection on the Hispanic American search for identity.