

An autobiographical note

My name is Carlos F. Cardoza Orlandi. My father is a Presbyterian elder and leader. My mother is an elder and Sunday School teacher in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Puerto Rico. Both of them are good theologians. I have a younger sister who is caring and dedicated to our family. They taught me to love God, love my neighbor, and seek justice. I am an *evangélico*, *caribeño* and a *latino* Christian. I am a son, a brother, a husband, a father, and a friend. I love being with my family, sharing and walking with my wife, watching my eldest and youngest boys play sports, and my second son excel in everything he does. I love laughing with my sister, and having a great time with my friends from near and far. I am grateful to God for life shared. . . “*jipura vida!!*”

Before Perkins, I was at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. I taught for 16 years and held the World Christianity position. Columbia provided me a space for vocational maturity. Colleagues, staff, and students modeled for me a vocation for theological formation. I am grateful for these years of service and growth.

I have a Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary in Mission, Ecumenics, and the History of Religions. I had two wonderful doctoral mentors—the late Alan Neely and Charles Ryerson. I am a Puerto Rican and an ordained minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Puerto Rico, the USA, and Canada. I actively participate in my local Christian community as well as in other Christian and non-Christian communities.

My areas of research and writing include the history of the movement of the Christian religion, including the impact of colonialism and immigration in Christianity's movement; trends, movements and theologies of the Christian religion in the global south; ecumenics and global Pentecostals; mission practices and theologies with focus in the global south, particularly Latin America & the Caribbean; and Afro-Caribbean and Amerindian religious encounters with Latin American and Caribbean Christianities.

I am also actively involved in inter-cultural and inter-religious activities in the United States and Canada, the Caribbean, and Latin America. I contribute to the Hispanic/Latino theological endeavors as a faculty and Chair of the Board of the Hispanic Summer Program, a member of the board of the Center for the Study of Latino/a Christianity and Religions at Perkins/SMU, a member of the editorial

board member for the journal *Apuntes* (supported by the Mexican-American Program at Perkins/SMU), and a mentor for the Hispanic Theological Initiative.

My teaching, research, and writing are framed under the following premises: (1) Based on bell hooks' book, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, good theory is a “processes of self-discovery,” and “of collective liberation.” I also seek “no gap [] between theory and practice.” I pursue “the bond between the two—that ultimately reciprocal process wherein one enables the other” (p.61). (2) I seek to do scholarly work that is to “be shared in everyday conversation,” because if not, then it “cannot be used to educate the public” (p. 64). (3) Regarding the history of the movement of the Christian religion, I focus on the historical, cultural, religious, and theological dynamics of the transmission, mediation, appropriation, reception, and remediation of the Christian religion. As a mission studies scholar, I am always in the in-between place studying the history of the movement of the Christian religion as it takes hold with peoples' realities and analyzing the multiple ways in which communities appropriate, embrace, and live the Christian faith. On the one hand, as Lamin Sanneh describes world Christianity, I am a scholar of “Christianity's discovery of indigenous people,” and, on the other, of “peoples' discovery of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” As a post-colonial scholar, I am intrigued by these agencies' complex interactions, both missiological, different in process and results, yet frequently interrelated.

I manage this interdisciplinary endeavor by exploring a theoretical framework to grapple with questions of identity/hybridity, theology, power, and communication. In my work, I explore and study crucial questions (and answers) asked by Christian communities in particular times and contexts, and compare them with (a) questions (and answers) raised by other Christian and non-Christian communities in those same times and contexts and/or (b) questions (and answers) asked by Christian and non-Christian communities in resembling contexts in different time periods. I also consider social, gender, and historical studies on one hand, and theology and religious studies on the other.

As a global Christianities and mission studies scholar, I analyze the matrix of interactions among faiths, cultures, global economic, and social dynamics, and congregational practices. Out of this matrix of interactions, mission theologies and practices emerge. I seek to critically assess and construct missional theologies and practices that will help Christian communities discover their mission agency as both transmitters and receptors of a gospel that generates liberation and reconciliation.

My academic convictions and commitments embrace multiple contexts. Global Christianities and mission studies must center around the demographic transformation of the Christian religion—its shift from the North to the South and East—and the movement and “collisions” of new immigrant Christian communities with the different mainline, evangelical, and Pentecostal Christian expressions in the Western Hemisphere. This redirection—postcolonial and contextual—in the discipline creates a laboratory to develop new mission theologies and practices. The North American religious landscape is changing as a result of a vitality of the Christian faith that comes from the “outside”—a vitality that animates people of other faiths and from non-dominant cultures. With this vitality comes a renewal and diffusion of the faith—a workshop for academic, theological, and missiological reflection in our immediate context.

All of these interconnections with history, mission studies, and people of other faiths are at the center of my scholarly passion and ministerial commitment. I am grateful to God for allowing me to deeply love my vocation as a theological educator. I love what God has called me to do and be!

Also, my academic work, as stated above, is tied to grass-roots and community work. In 2007 I was honored to receive the *Building Bridges Award* given by the Islamic Speakers Bureau of Atlanta.

I have a wonderful family and a great group of friends who constantly support my vocation as a theological educator. Let me just mention four very important people in my life: I love my high school sweetheart whom I married 26+ years ago, Aida Lizzette Oquendo Graulau, and we have three wonderful sons, Carlos Andrés, Juan, and Esteban.

Thanks to God for the blessings and challenges of my vocation!