

**SURVEY
THE BRAZILIAN CONTEXT**

by

Alcenir Oliveira, M.S.

Interdenominational Theological Center

Atlanta, Georgia

April 30, 2004

Summary

	Page
Introduction	01
The Survey	02
Conclusion	03
Appendix I – Figures of the Survey	04
Appendix II – Reaction of the context	06
Appendix III – Cultural elements	10
Appendix IV – Relation of social segregation with race	13
Appendix V – Popular expressions of racist contents	15
Appendix VI – Self Color	16
Appendix VII – Questionnaire in Portuguese Language	17
Appendix VIII – Answer sheet applied	19
Bibliography	21

Introduction

In the development of contextual theology it is imperative to know the community subject of the project and its values, social problems and beliefs. This essay assesses the attitude of a short group of Brazilians in the USA and may reflect how the majority of the Brazilian (in Brazil) perceives the social questions considered herein. The survey was applied to 11 people of a Brazilian Evangelical Church and 3 others from outside.

Within the frames of the basis of contextual theology it is assumed that Brazil has social problems that are masked by ideologies of segregationist intention played through years - why not centuries? - in such a perfect way that the society, even though suffering the effects of such strategies, accepts it as normal result of the development of stratification within the social system. As Nascimento puts it, the non-whites, evidenced by color of the skin, “*is the target of prejudice and discrimination, which are based on the same ideology of white supremacism that moves other systems of racial exclusion*”¹.

In the reflections about contextualization with Brazil as the subject, it is necessary to understand its social environment in terms of attitudes towards issues of social relevance, as theology has to make sense for the context and in the context, according to Bevans, who says that theologians have been aware of the importance of context in constructing human thought and of the sacredness of context in terms of God’s revelation. He says that context is individual and collective experience that combines several realities: a) that the experience of a person’s life or group’s personal life; b) that personal or communal experience is possible only within the context of culture; c) that context can be spoken of in terms of a person’s or a community’s social location; and d) that the present experience of our location involves the reality of social change².

The particularity of the Latin-American and Brazilian context has been the grounds for the Liberation theologians vis-à-vis the oppressive circumstances generated by ideologies of segregationist intention, be it within the idea of racialism, expressed in

¹ NASCIMENTO, Elisa Larkin. “It is the Blood: Notes of Race Attitudes in Brazil from the Different Perspective”. In “*Beyond Racism: Race and Inequality in Brazil, South Africa, And the United States*”. HAMILTON, Charles V. et al. Boulder, CO: Boulder, 2001. P.511.

² BEVANS, Stephen B. *Models of Contextual Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2003. P.5-6

the mystification of the color of skin or in biological origin, which requires a perception of the need to understand this context, process the – should it be called – “supranatural unwrapping” or understanding of the Gospel’s message and recreate or rewrap it in a construct that includes the reality of the context, so that it can applied in the mission action of raising Faith Community.

The survey intends to raise information that could apply to the development of a tri-dimensional project, as presented by Charles Van Engen and Jude Tiersma (God So Loves the City: 253)³, which comprises the “Biblical Text” that commands to go till the ends of the earth preaching the Gospel, building “Communities of Faith” (churches) that considers the urban context. The first step is a reading of the context, which is the goal of the survey. It is going to raise the characteristics of the context, the society, and will be helpful to generate mission insights (step two), under the rereading of the scriptures (Biblical Text). This will lead to mission action (step three) to establish Faith Community. In short the tri-dimensional mission project comprises a “reading of the context” followed by a “rereading of the scriptures” that generates mission insights which are going to lead to “mission action”.

The Survey

The Survey targeted four aspects: first, the first 3 questions intend to learn the perception of the Brazilian about the reaction of the aimed context with the presence of missionaries or theologians to develop any kind of social or religious work. The questions 4 to 7 try to assess their perceptions in terms of choosing cultural elements, local or imported, to promote some kinds of social or religious work. The questions 8 to 10 are about their perception of how social segregation is related to race. Finally, the questions 11 and 12 raise their positions in relation to some popular racist attitude towards black people (11) and their consciousness about their own categories related to color of the skin.

In the first approach, very surprisingly the answers to the first two questions led to the idea that the success of a mission within a context is more suitable to who

³ ENGEN, Charles Van & TIERSMA, Jude, ed. God so Loves the City: Constructing a Theology of Mission for the City. Marc Publications.

has more knowledge, personal characteristic similar to the locals and experience with that context. But in the third question they demonstrate that the difficulties, if any, will not be significant. In the second approach, concerning the cultural elements of the context, it is definitely necessary to take into consideration the local cultural elements in the development of missionary services. The result of the third approach, which deals with social segregation related to race origin or color of the skin, shows a common sense those of dark skin are in prejudice. The result of the two last assessments show that the hidden racism in some popular behavior talked about by Nascimento (*it is in the blood*) is very much condemned by 85% of the interviewed, but, even in a short universe as the one assessed by this survey, two people think that it is true, what means about 15%. The question 12 revealed that color in Brazil is something subjective, because the people don't know exactly what their color is and what it means.

Conclusion

This survey shows not only how important it is to do context theology, but also how cultural experience is relevant in any religious or social work. The language is not only that one translated in signs we call alphabet, but also a group of elements that results from the personal and communal experience. These elements are values and beliefs, fears and stereotypes. The hidden tools of oppression, manifested in social problems are variables that can influence the language of a Gospel of mercy, of liberation, of redemption.

The survey provides data sufficient to make a good reading of the Urban Context (C), over which a rereading of the scriptures (A) will certainly generate new mission insights for the embryo of a Faith Community (B)⁴.

As for the data raised from the survey, the most appropriate model of theology to be applied for the Brazilian context is the "Praxis Model"⁵. This suggestion is based on three elements: first is the context (basically good and trustworthy but can be distorted; should be approached with some suspicion); second is the method that has got to be

⁴ Ib.Id. Methodological components of a biblical theology of mission for the city. Figure 6.

⁵ BEVANS, Stephen B. *Models of Contextual Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2003. P.78.

“practice/reflection/practice – in an unending spiral” and, finally, the analogy (garden needs to be continuously weeded).

APPENDIX I

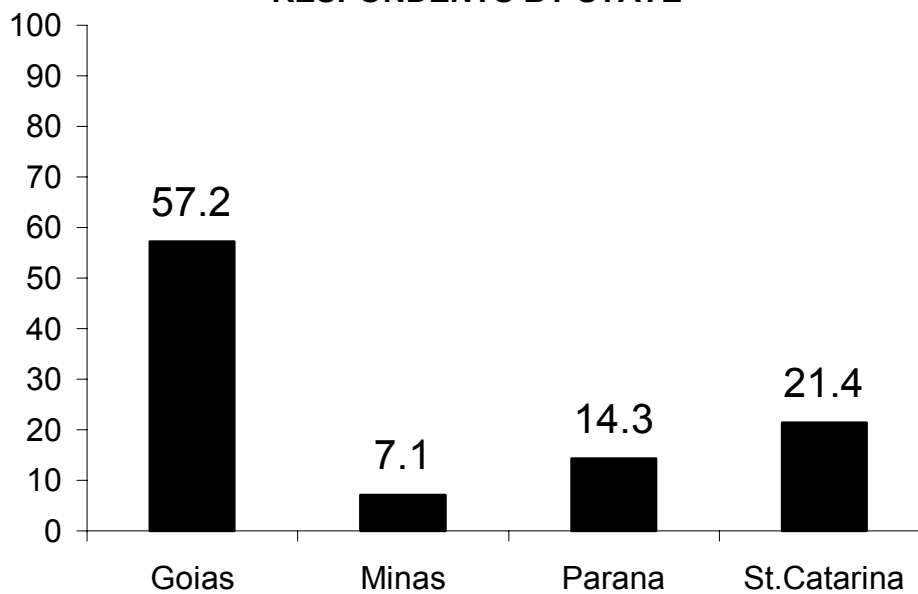
FIGURES RAISED IN THE SURVEY - DEMOGRAPHICS

RESPONDENTS' DEMOGRAPHICS

RESPONDENTS BY STATE

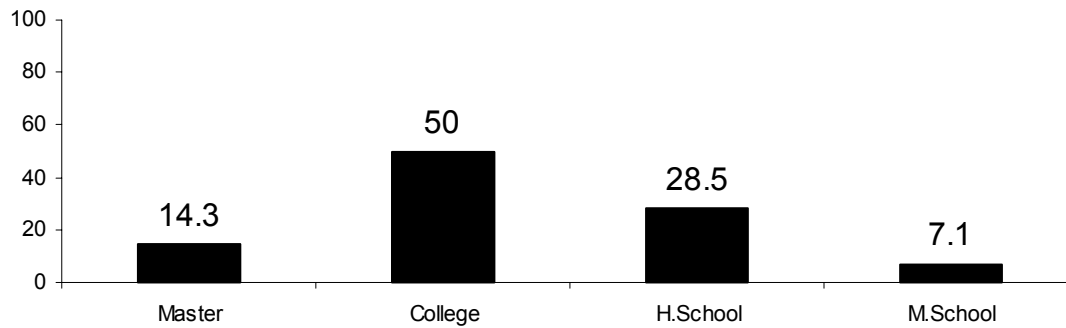
Goias	8
Parana	2
Santa Catarina	3
Minas Gerais	1

RESPONDENTS BY STATE

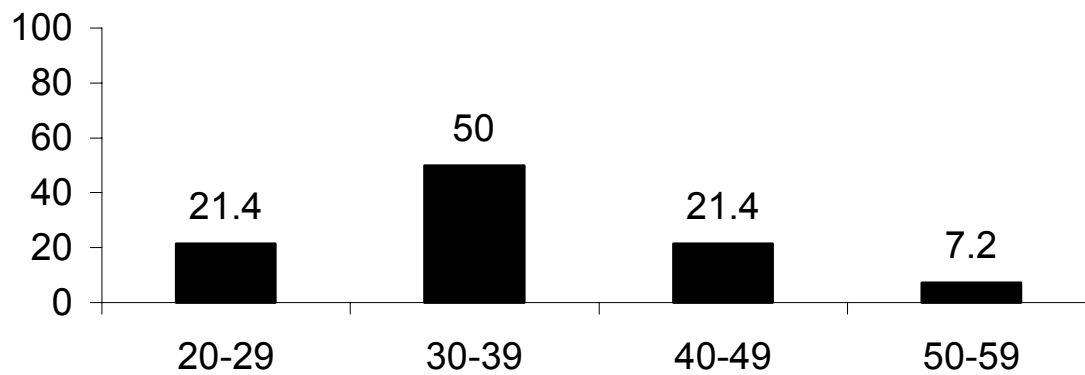


RESPONDENTS BY LITERACY

Master	2
College	7
High School	4
Middle School	1

RESPONDENTS BY LITERACY**RESPONDENTS BY AGE**

20-29	3
30-39	7
40-49	3
50-59	1

RESPONDENTS BY AGE

APPENDIX II

FIGURES RAISED IN THE SURVEY – REACTION OF THE CONTEXT

Questions numbers 1, 2 and 3

	A	B	C	D
1	14.3	28.6	57.1	0
2	7.1	71.5	14.3	7.1
3	14.3	0	28.6	57.1

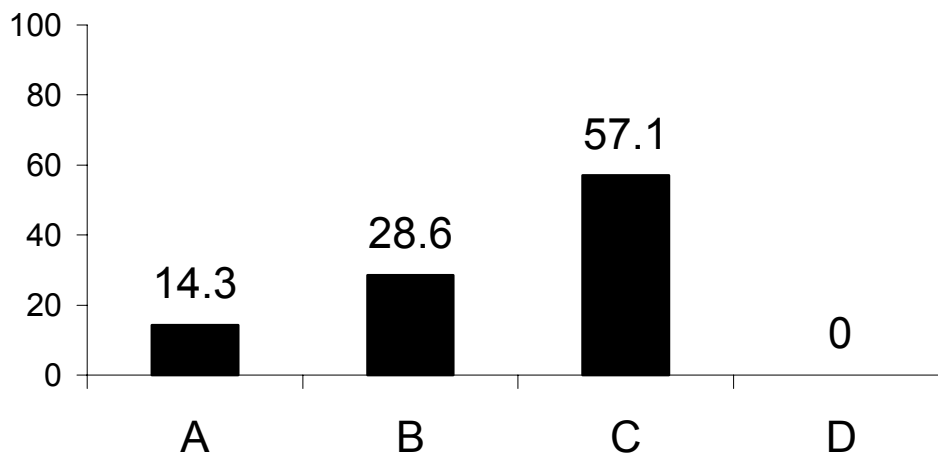
Question number one - An American church is going to send one person to start a large centre to help children at the “Favela da Rocinha” in Rio de Janeiro. He is going to be trained before leaving. There are three candidates who is counting on your vote to decide the contest. Choose one among:

A - Jeff Hughes. White American. Graduated from a seminary with specialization in Children Assistance. He has never been in other country. Do not speak other language than English.

B – William Arnold (Bill). Black American. Graduated from a seminary with specialization in Homeless Assistance. Was a missionary in Zimbabwe, Africa, to work with street kids.

C – João Smith. Son of a white American missionary married to a Brazilian “Mulata”, has the same color of his mother and curl hair. He is graduated from a seminary. He lived in Rio de Janeiro untill he was 15, and went to the fellowship of his church at the “Favela da Rocinha” many times.

QUESTION NUMBER ONE



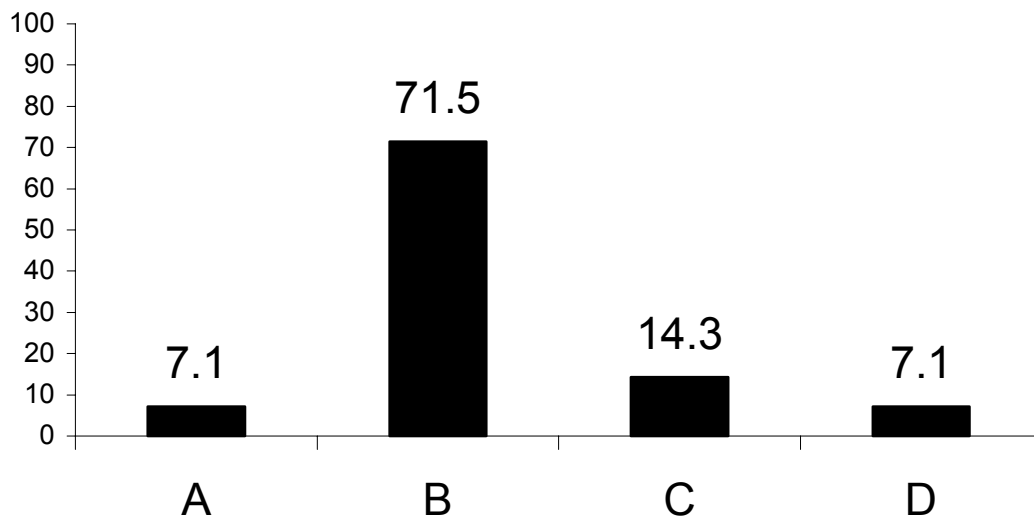
Question number two - An American Church wants to start a project in Samambaia, Brasilia, a place that is poorer than many shantytowns in Brazil, where 70% of the population is from the Northeast. They are going to avail health care, education, assistance to the infant and teenager (street kids) in every aspects, and to try a holist development of the family (including education, health, psycho-social assistance and professional habilitation), as though as Church 24 hours. There are three candidates waiting your vote to decide who is going to be chosen:

A – Pastor Brian Turner. White American. Never left the USA. Has a Master degree in Social Assistance, with specialization in Brazilian Culture and Contemporary Worship. Worked as in homeless ministry at the “Blood’n’Fire” in Atlanta. Do not speak Portuguese.

B – Pastor Zé Carlos – A Brazilian citizen from the Northeast, of color “moreno” (mestizzo), lived in Samambaia for 10 years, where he’s been a pastor of a small church for two years before coming to the USA, where he graduated in a seminary in a Master degree program with specialization in social assistance. Speak English fluently. He decided to stay in the USA to pastor a small Brazilian church of about 30 members.

C – Pastor George Johnson. Black American. Never left the USA. He is graduated in a Master degree program with in social assistance, with specialization in Brazilian culture and Contemporary Worship. Worked as assistant to infant and teenagers in Atlanta. He learned the Portuguese language at school.

QUESTION NUMBER TWO



Project “Christ Is at the Door – CID”

There is a project called “Christ is at the Door – CID”, for big Brazilian cities (to be established in the favelas), where it is intended to evangelize and give integral assistance: education until college, preventive and healing health care, sexual education and psychological-Christian assistance to infant and teenagers, family planning and support to families of very poor children. Big groups of missionaries and specialists will be sent to the CIDs:

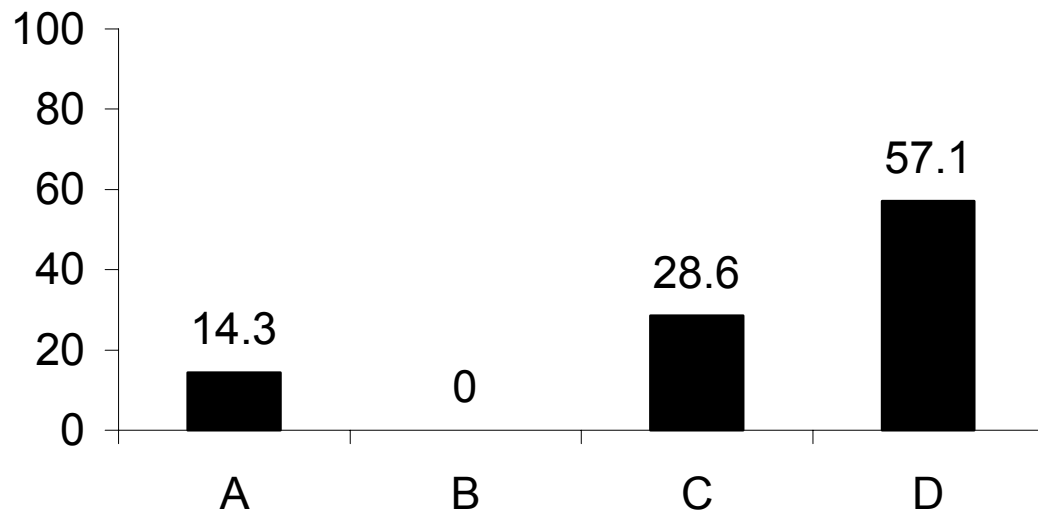
Question number three - Who would have less difficulty of integration with the people in the CIDs?

A – African American Missionaries and specialists.

B – Anglo American Missionaries and specialists.

C – Groups 50% of each.

D – Nobody would have difficulty.

QUESTION NUMER THREE

APPEDIX III

FIGURES RAISED IN THE SURVEY – CULTURAL ELEMENTS

Questions Numbers 4 to 7

Question	A	B	C	D
4	7.1	14.3	78.6	0
5	0	57.1	42.9	0
6	7.1	64.3	7.1	21.5
7	35.7	64.3	0	0

Question number 4 - The CIDs will have big contemporary worship rooms, aiming education and integration, with activities 24/7, in the middle of the favelas, with bands that play in the worships that take place three times a day (morning, afternoon and evening) to gather infant and teenagers with free time. Your suggestion is:

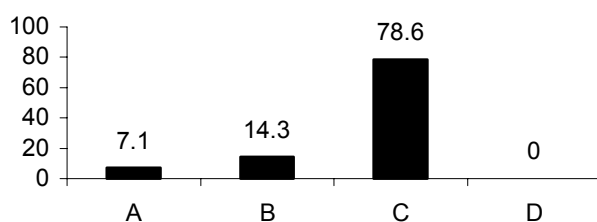
A – To have a modern band, not much popular because it is for the church;

B – To have a traditional band, with no exaggeration.

C – To have a band with the face of Brazil (instruments very easy to play and Brazilian rhythms like pagode, samba, forró – everything with no exaggeration.

D – To have a band to play rhythms like forró, baião, sertanejo and others.

QUESTION NUMBER FOUR



Question number 5 - The community Cafeteria of the CID might have in the menu:

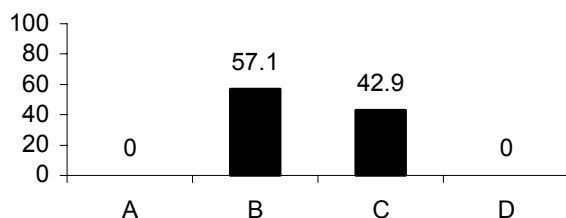
A – American Food, because it is easier to do and everybody like it.

B – Brazilian Food.

C – Doesn't matter what is in the menu.

D – I don't know

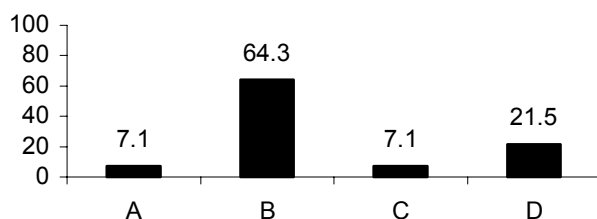
QUESTION NUMBER FIVE



Question number 6 - To attract and motivate the students of the music school, the CID may teach:

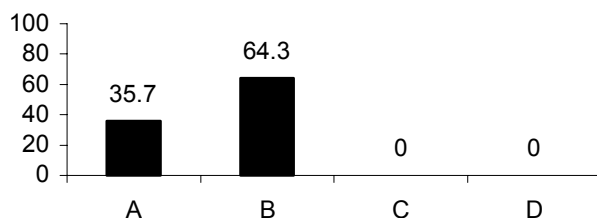
- A – American Music and its complex instruments to organize a more serious band.
- B – Brazilian Music and simple instruments to organize bands in a short while after.
- C – Classic Music.
- D – I don't know

QUESTION NUMBER SIX



Question number 7 - The sector of sports of the CID has two choices to teach and practice. What do you indicate:

- A – Basketball, Volleyball and Tennis
- B – Field Soccer, Indoor Soccer, Sand Soccer, Society Soccer.
- C – Any kind of sports
- D – No sports

QUESTION NUMBER SEVEN**APPENDIX IV****FIGURES RAISED IN THE SURVEY – RELATION OF SOCIAL SEGREGATION WITH RACE****Questions Numbers 8, 9 and 10**

	A	B	C	D
8	0	14.3	78.6	7.1
9	0	78.6	21.4	0
10	78.6	7.1	14.3	0

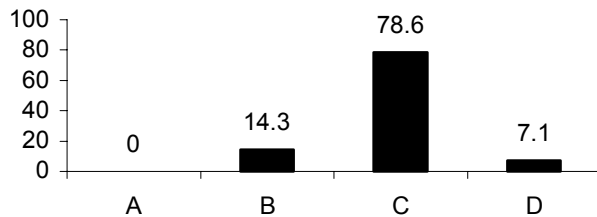
Question number eight - Most of the Street Kids of Brazil are:

A – Whites

B – Blacks

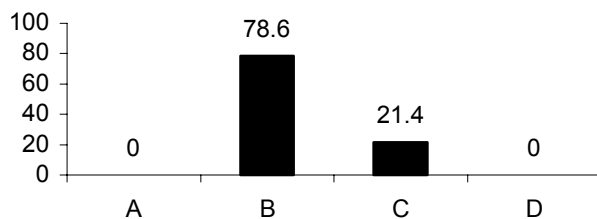
C – Pardos (mestizos: morenos, mulatos, caboclos, cafusos)

D – I don't know.

QUESTION NUMBER EIGHT

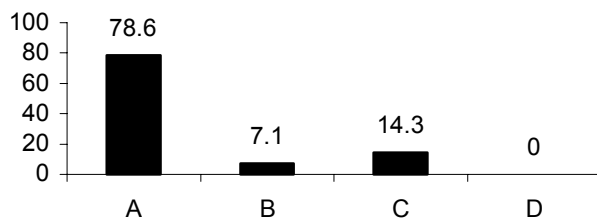
Question number nine - There are more poor whites than poor blacks and pardos in Brazil. The affirmative is:

- A – True
- B – Not true
- C – I don't know
- D – No answer

QUESTION NUMBER NINE

Question number ten - There are more rich whites than rich blacks and pardos in Brazil. The affirmative is:

- A – True
- B – Not true
- C – I don't know.
- D – No answer

QUESTION NUMBER TEN

APPENDIX V
POPULAR EXPRESSIONS OF RACIST CONTENTS

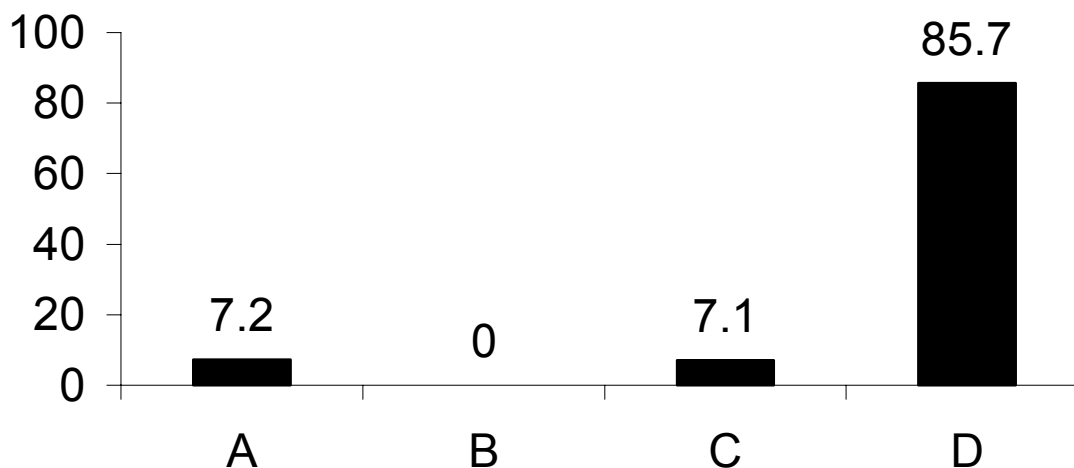
Questions Number 11

Question number 11 - The Brazilian popular expression “Do a White’s Job” or “Don’t do a Black’s Job” means to ask someone to do a better job.⁶ This expression:

- A – Makes sense, because black people do not work well. It is in the blood.
- B – Makes sense, because white people work better. It is in the blood.
- C – Makes sense and is funny;
- D – Don’t make sense and is not funny.

	A	B	C	D
11	7.2	0	7.1	85.7

QUESTION NUMBER ELEVEN



⁶ Based on the popular expression and the argument of the following reference:
NASCIMENTO, Elisa Larkin. “It is in the Blood: Notes of Race Attitudes in Brazil from a Different Perspective”. In “HAMILTON, Charles V. et al. Beyond Racism: Race and Inequality in Brazil, South Africa and the United States. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001. P.515/516.

APPENDIX VI

FIGURES RAISED IN THE SURVEY – SELF COLOR Question Number 12

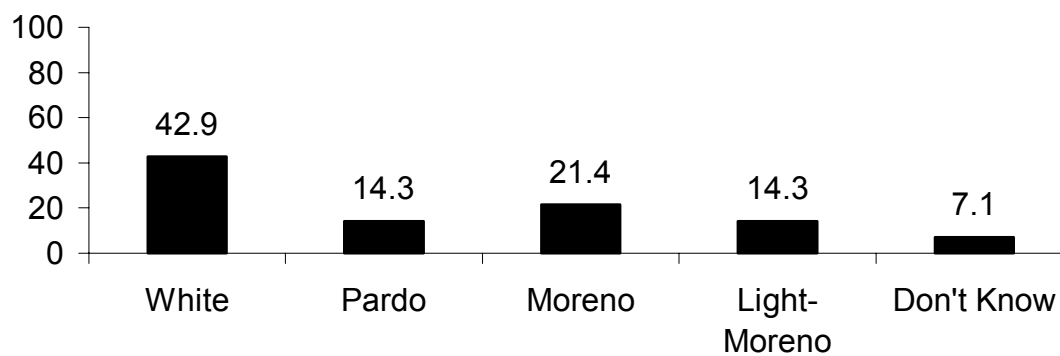
Question number 12 – what is your color?

Question Number Twelve – What is your color?

RESPONDENTS BY COLOR

Branco (White)	6
Pardo (Mestizzo)	2
Moreno (Mestizzo)	3
Moreno claro (Light Mestizzo)	2
Doesn't Know	1

RESPONDING ABOUT SELF COLOR



APPENDIX VII

The Survey Interview in Portuguese Language

IDADE:

CIDADE:

ESCOLARIDADE:

1. Uma igreja americana vai mandar uma pessoa para criar um grande centro de atendimento à criança na favela da Rocinha no rio de Janeiro. Ele vai passar por treinamento antes de viajar. Há três candidatos que contam com o seu voto para desempatar a concorrência. Escolha um entre:

A - Jeff Hughes. Americano branco. Fez seminário com especialização em assistência à criança. Nunca esteve em outro país. Não fala senão o Inglês.

B – William Arnold (Bill). Americano Negro. Fez seminário com especialização em assistência aos desabrigados. Foi missionário no Zimbábue, África, trabalhando com crianças de rua.

C – João Smith. Filho de missionário americano branco casado com mulher mulata brasileira, tem a cor da mãe e cabelo crespo. Fez seminário. Viveu no Rio até os 15 anos, tendo ido muitas vezes ao culto na congregação de sua Igreja na Rocinha.

2. Uma igreja americana quer implantar um projeto em Samambaia, Brasília, lugar mais pobre do que muitas favelas no Brasil, onde 70% são de origem nordestina. Vão prestar: assistência à saúde, educação, assistência à criança e adolescente (meninos de rua) em todos os aspectos, experimentar um desenvolvimento holístico da família (educação, saúde, assistência psico-social e habilitação profissional), e igreja 24 horas. Há três candidatos que contam com o seu voto para desempatar a concorrência. Escolha um entre:

A – Pastor Brian Turner. Americano branco. Nunca saiu dos EUA. Fez mestrado em assistência social, especialização em cultura brasileira e culto contemporâneo. Trabalhou com assistência a “homeless” no “Blood’n’Fire” de Atlanta. Não fala Português.

B – Pastor Zé Carlos – Nordestino moreno, viveu 10 anos em Samambaia, onde foi pastor de uma igreja por dois anos até vir para os EUA, onde fez mestrado em seminário com especialização em assistência social. Fala inglês fluentemente. Resolveu ficar nos EUA para pastorear uma igreja Brasileira de uns 30 membros.

C – Pastor George Johnson. Americano Negro. Nunca saiu dos EUA. Fez mestrado em assistência social, especialização em cultura brasileira e culto contemporâneo. Trabalhou com assistência à criança e adolescentes em Atlanta. Aprendeu Português na escola.

Em um projeto “Cristo Está à Porta – CEP”, para cidades grandes brasileiras (com base em favelas), onde vai evangelizar e prestar assistência integral: educação até a universidade, assistência preventiva e curativa à saúde, educação sexual e psicológico-cristã à criança e adolescente, planejamento familiar e apoio às famílias de crianças carentes. Grandes equipes de missionários e especialistas seriam enviados aos CEPs:

3. Nos CEPs quem teria menos dificuldade de entrosamento com o povo:
- A – Missionários e especialistas Afro-Americanos (negros);
 - B – Missionários e especialistas Anglo-Americanos (brancos);
 - C – Mesma quantidade de Afro e Anglo-Americanos;
 - D – Ninguém teria dificuldade.
4. Os CEPs, com amplos salões de culto contemporâneo, de característica educativa e integrativa, com atividades 24 horas, no centro da favela, com bandas que tocam cultos que acontecem em média três vezes todos os dias (manhã, tarde e noite) para envolver crianças e adolescentes com muito tempo livre. Sua sugestão será:
- A – Uma banda moderna comum, não muito popularesca porque é para Igreja;
 - B – Uma banda um pouco mais conservadora, sem exageros;
 - C – Uma banda com a cara do Brasil (instrumentos super fáceis de tocar e ritmos brasileiros incluindo até pagode, samba, forró – tudo sem exageros).
 - D – Uma banda mais tipo forró, baião, sertanejo e outros;
5. O restaurante comunitário do CEP deverá ter no cardápio:
- A – Comida americana que é mais fácil de fazer e todo mundo gosta;
 - B – Comida brasileira;
 - C – Não importa o estilo.
6. Para atrair e motivar os estudantes a escola de música do CEP deve ensinar:
- A – Música americana e seus instrumentos complexos para formar bandas mais sérias;
 - B – Música brasileira e instrumentos simples para formar bandinhas com poucas aulas;
 - C – Música clássica
 - D – Nenhuma das opções
7. O setor de esportes do CEP tem duas opções para ensinar e praticar. Qual sua sugestão:
- A – Basquete, Volei, Tênis
 - B – Futebol de Campo, Futebol de Salão, Futebol de Areia, Futebol soçaite.
8. A maioria dos meninos de Rua do Brasil são:
- A – Brancos B – Negros C – Pardos (morenos, mulatos, caboclos, cafusos) D – não sei.
9. No Brasil há mais brancos pobres do que negros e pardos. Esta afirmação é:
- A – Verdadeira B – Falsa C – Não sei
10. No Brasil há mais brancos ricos do que negros e pardos. Esta afirmação é:
- A – Verdadeira B – Falsa C – Não sei
11. As expressões “faça serviço de branco” ou “não faça serviço de preto” significa pedir para fazer bem feito. Essa expressão::
- A – Faz sentido, pois os negros trabalham mal. É como se estivesse no sangue.
 - B – Faz sentido, pois os brancos trabalham bem. É como se estivesse no sangue.

Bibliography

- BEVANS, Stephen B. *Models of Contextual Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2003.
- NASCIMENTO, Elisa Larkin. "It is the Blood: Notes of Race Attitudes in Brazil from the Different Perspective". In *Beyond Racism: Race and Inequality in Brazil, South Africa, And the United States*". HAMILTON, Charles V. et al. Boulder, CO: Boulder, 2001
- ENGEL, Charles Van & TIERSMA, Jude, ed. *God so Loves the City: Constructing a Theology of Mission for the City*. Marc Publications.