

# U.S. Latinos Entertain Strange Political Suitors

By Ray Rodriguez

Much has been made of the fact that Hispanic voters are being avidly courted by both presidential candidates. In states where they represent 10 percent or more of the registered voters, they could provide the swing vote needed to carry the states. Never have Latinos enjoyed such political attention.

This is especially true for Latino voters of Mexican ancestry. They are being extensively wooed by the two leading presidential hopefuls.

No, the candidates are not Al Gore and George Bush. They are Mexico's opposition candidates, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Vicente Fox, who are seeking to break the ruling party's 71-year stranglehold on that country's presidency.

Although Mexican citizens living abroad are not allowed to vote in Mexico's elections, they wield tremendous influence upon how their families in Mexico vote. This influence is due in part to close family ties. However, it is accentuated by the fact that workers in the United States reportedly remit \$6 billion a year to their relatives. As they say in Mexico, "Con dinero baila el perro!" Money talks!

Cárdenas and Fox are seeking to defeat Francisco Labastida, candi-

date of the ruling PRI, the Institutional Revolutionary Party. Cárdenas is the candidate of the PRD, the Democratic Revolution Party; Fox represents PAN, the National Action Party.

The PRI is the traditional, autocratic party that has been in power since it was founded in 1929. The PRD is more liberal in its outlook and goals. PAN is conservative and business-oriented. Obviously, Mexican voters are pre-

sented with a wide span of political choices.

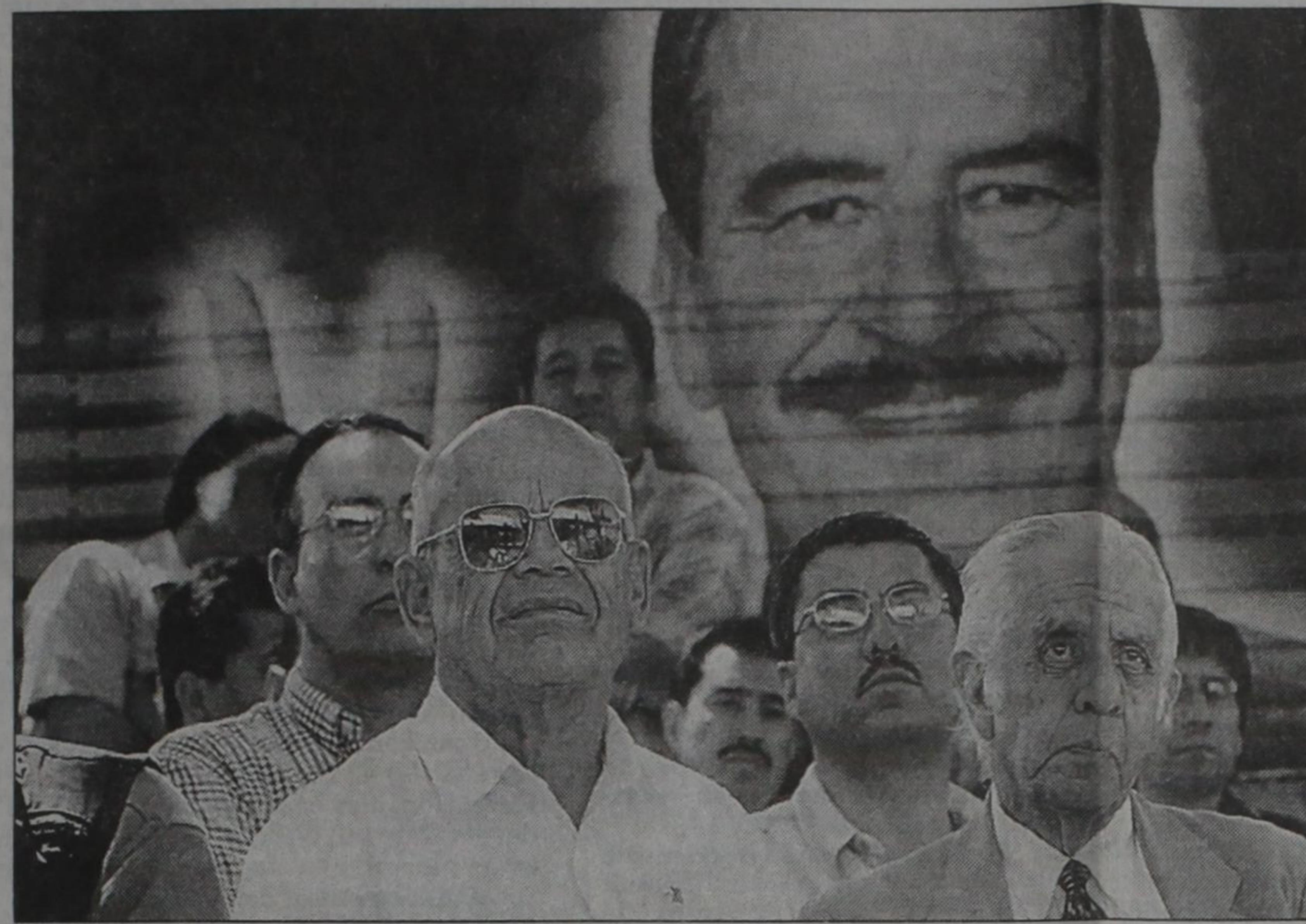
With the presidential election set for July 2, less than two months away, Vicente Fox has the best chance of defeating the PRI's Labastida. In some quarters, the contest is considered, if not dead even, too close to call. Fox hopes that his trip this month to the United States will energize Mexicans to become involved, call home and persuade their relatives to vote for him.

One very shrewd ploy that has gained Fox wide attention and support is his proposal to use the NAFTA agreement to persuade Canada and the United States to open their borders

and allow free passage of workers among the three countries. His message of inclusion, as demonstrated by his personal appeal, is also well received by residents of "México de afuera." Mexicans living abroad have often been viewed as turncoats by those who remain behind.

Fox is not a neophyte politician. He has served in Mexico's congress and as governor of the state of Guanajuato. While U.S. residents often tend to think of the ruling PRI as a monolithic, the

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Comerciantes y empresarios de Ciudad Juárez, Estado de Chihuahua, escuchan al candidato Vicente Fox, de Alianza por México, durante su gira proselitista por distintas ciudades del norte del país.

"El Respeto al Derecho Ajenos La Paz."

"Respect for the Rights of Others Is Peace"

Lic. Benito Juárez

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## EL EDITOR

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Lubbock, Tx,

### Comentarios de Bidal

I got a call recently who is apparently an avid listener to talk radio. He brought up something that has also troubled me in talking about the fact that all Lubbock talk show host are Republicans. "Everyday I listen to all these people talking about Bush being such a great man. Don't they ever read the facts about what Bush has done in Texas?"

I guess they don't. I'm real glad that I subscribe to the Dallas paper to find out about things like Texas being rated just about the worst as compared to other states when it comes to teen pregnancy, uninsured children, children living in poverty, housing for homeless, environment and other issues that matter to some of us.

We can certainly blame Bush for his lack of concern toward these issues and I join with my reader in wondering why Lubbock residents are not told.

\*\*\*\*LULAC\*\*\*

LULAC national is doing a good job in realizing what Republicans are doing. Our Texas Congresspersons Gramm and Hutchens continue to block efforts to name a Chicano to a federal judgeship. It never ends.

\*\*\*\*(More LULAC)\*\*

Lubbock LULAC will be hosting the State Convention on June 3-4 here in Lubbock. Look for more on this in our next edition.

\*\*\*\*Graduation\*\*\*\*\*

Our congratulations to all those that graduated from Texas Tech this week as well as our best wishes to all the area schools. Special congratulations to my daughter Amalia who graduated from South Plain College and Zenaida who graduated from LCU. We will feature graduates next week. We ask all Hispanic students who did not take pictures for there respective annual to bring us their pictures to 1502 Ave. M or call 763-3841.

## Latinos de EEUU Agasajan a Pretendientes Políticos Extraños

Por Ray Rodriguez

Se ha dado mucha importancia al hecho de que los electores hispanos están siendo cortejados ávidamente por ambos candidatos a la presidencia. En los estados donde ellos representan el 10% o más de los electores inscritos, ellos podrían suministrar los votos decisivos necesarios para ganar el estado y las elecciones. Los latinos nunca han disfrutado de una atención política semejante.

Esto resulta especialmente cierto para los electores latinos de origen mexicano. Ellos están siendo cortejados extensamente por dos aspirantes presidenciales.

No, los candidatos no son Al Gore y George Bush. Son los candidatos de la oposición de México, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas y Vicente Fox, que están procurando romper el dominio absoluto de 71 años del partido gobernante sobre la presidencia de aquel país.

Aunque los ciudadanos mexicanos que viven en el extranjero no pueden votar en las elecciones de México, sí tienen una influencia tremenda sobre el modo de votar de sus familias en México. Esta influencia se debe parcialmente a los vínculos familiares próximos. Sin embargo, resulta acentuada por el hecho de que se estima que los trabajadores en los Estados Unidos envían \$6,000 millones al año a sus familiares. Como dicen en México: "Por dinero baila el perro!" ¡El dinero habla!

Cárdenas y Fox están tratando de derrotar a Francisco Labastida, candidato del PRI gobernante, el Partido Revolucionario Institucional. Cárdenas es el candidato del PRD, el Partido de la Revolución Democrática, y Fox representa al PAN, el Partido de Acción Nacional. El PRI es el partido tradicional autocrático que ha estado en el poder desde que fue fundado en 1929. El PRD es más liberal en su perspectiva y objetivo. El PAN es conservador y orientado hacia los negocios.

Evidentemente, a los electores mexicanos se les presenta una amplia variedad de selecciones políticas.

Con las elecciones presidenciales señaladas para el 2 de julio, a menos de 2 meses fecha, Vicente Fox tiene la mejor oportunidad de derrotar a Labastida del PRI. En algunos círculos se estima que la contienda, si no está pareja, está demasiado próxima como para hacer un pronóstico. Fox espera que su viaje a los Estados Unidos en este mes incitará a los mexicanos a estar involucrados, llamar a sus familias y persuadir a sus parientes a que voten por él.

Una maniobra muy astuta que le ha ganado a Fox atención y apoyo amplios, es su propuesta de utilizar al acuerdo de NAFTA a fin de persuadir a Canadá y los Estados Unidos para que abran sus

fronteras y permitan el libre tránsito de trabajadores entre los tres países. Su mensaje de inclusión, como lo demuestra su atractivo personal, es bien recibido también por los residentes del "México de afuera." Los mexicanos que viven en el extranjero han sido vistos a menudo como "cambios-casacas" por aquéllos que permanecen en México.

Fox no es un político neófito. El ha prestado servicios en el Congreso de México y como Gobernador del Estado de Guanajuato. Aunque los residentes de los Estados Unidos tienden con frecuencia a pensar en el PRI gobernante como un monolito, los gobiernos de 11 de los 32 estados de México son controlados por los partidos de la oposición, así como casi la mitad de todos los gobiernos municipales. Está claro que la época del cambio político ha llegado a México.

Fox está tratando de convencer a los electores mexicanos de que realmente es hora para un cambio. A fin de situarse a sí mismo como la voz del nuevo México, él se ha apartado del formato tradicional de la campaña presidencial. Su enfoque y atracción se asemejan mucho a los de los políticos estadounidenses. El ha atravesado reiteradamente la nación y ha hecho campañas en caseríos y aldeas pasadas por alto de costumbre por los candidatos anteriores. Como ocurre con los electores de todas partes, a los mexicanos no les gusta que los pasen por alto; a ellos les gusta pensar que sus votos significan una diferencia.

Advertiendo el ascenso meteórico de Fox, la oposición ha tratado de desacreditarlo en varios puntos: Uno es que él es un ranchero rico que no comprende realmente, o a quien no le importan las dificultades de la gente pobre, que su clase acomodada ha perpetuado para su propio beneficio. Otra acusación es que él es un gobernante autocrático y egocéntrico, que como gobernador de Guanajuato descartó a menudo los deseos de su propio partido. Se hace un esfuerzo por presentarlo como "un cañón sin amarras."

Su relación estrecha con los intereses comerciales de los Estados Unidos también se hace sospechosa. Fox trabajó para la Coca-Cola durante 15 años, ascendiendo hasta ser jefe de operaciones para México y la América Central.

Sin embargo, la acusación más dañina -- que podría descartar su candidatura -- es su apellido y ancestro anglo-sajón. Aunque el padre de Fox nació en México, su abuelo era ciudadano de los Estados Unidos. Sus oponentes gustan de poner en tela de juicio su mexicanismo y les gustaría convertir eso en un asunto de campaña. Es sorprendente que esa acusación haya dejado de surtir influencia o de obtener verosimilitud en los electores mexicanos. ¿Hay ahí una lección para nosotros?

### Congressman Rodriguez Hosts Capitol Hill Hispanic Investment Banker Forum

(WASHINGTON, DC) Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez, citing the need to promote opportunities for the nation's few Hispanic-owned investment banking firms, chaired a forum in Washington, DC on exploring possible ways to expand access to capital markets. The event, which brought together Hispanic investment bankers, representatives from the White House, and organizations selling

government-backed securities, was designed as a springboard for future activities for Hispanic elected officials and investment bankers to create a dialogue with Wall Street firms and other government regulators on how to enhance opportunities.

"Across the country, there are over 5,000 brokers and dealers licensed to sell publicly traded securities, but only 5 are

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## News Briefs

### Fight Brews Over Sanctions Against Cuba

By Jim Lobe

Washington, - A major storm is brewing in Congress, especially within the Republic Party, over the future of the 40ade embargo against Cuba.

Defying predictions, a key committee in the House of Representatives voted by a substantial margin this week to lift sanctions against the sale of food and medicine against countries on the State Department's terrorism list, including Cuba. The measure is part of a larger agricultural bill.

The House Appropriations Committee voted 35-24 to defeat an amendment backed by Republican Whip Tom DeLay of Texas that would have stripped from the 2001 agricultural appropriations bill, the provision on lifting the sanctions.

Now DeLay, who formally ranks second in the House Republican leadership but whom many people consider the most powerful Republican lawmaker in the lower chamber, is expected to try to prevent the same provision from being voted on by the entire House next week.

Veterans of Cuba policy were stunned by the result. One year ago, the same provision was defeated in the Appropriations Committee.

"Frankly, we didn't expect this margin," said one farm lobbyist who favors the measure.

"This shows we're gaining ground on the anti-sanctions argument in general, and the Cuba argument in particular, and that the Cuban-American hard-liners are losing ground," said Geoffrey Thale of the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), a human rights group which also supports lifting sanctions against Havana.

Thale attributed the result in major part to the recent controversy over Elian Gonzalez, the six-year-old shipwrecked Cuban boy, who remains a cause célèbre for hard-line Cuban-Americans opposed to his return to the custody of his father, Juan Miguel Gonzalez, who lives in Cuba.

Elian, whose asylum case was heard by a federal appeals court in Atlanta Thursday, was taken forcibly by immigration agents last month from Miami relatives who had refused to obey a federal order to surrender him to authorities so he could be reunited with his father who had flown to the United States to reclaim his son.

Father and son are currently living with other Cuban friends and family at an isolated conference center on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay outside Washington. They are waiting for a court to decide whether Elian has the right to submit an asylum petition made out on the child's behalf by the great-uncle in Miami.

The Elian case and his subsequent seizure by federal authorities, which dominated media news coverage for weeks, resulted in some violent demonstrations against the Justice Department in Miami, despite the fact that some two-thirds of the US public as a whole supported Washington's decision to reunite the boy with his father. Roughly the same percentage of the public favors his return to Cuba with his father, according to recent polls.

"The size of this vote shows that people are less afraid than they used to be to oppose the hard-line Cuban-Americans. That's the main result of Elian so far," said Thale. "People saw in a very graphic way both the ineffectiveness of the Cuban-Americans and their extremism, and they were tired of being held hostage to that."

The United States has maintained a more or less comprehensive trade embargo against Cuba since shortly after its revolution. Right-wingers in Congress have even tried, with limited success, to extend the embargo to third-party nations.

The embargo, however, has come under increasing attack in recent years, and especially after the 1998 visit to Cuba by Pope John Paul II who condemned it.

A loose coalition of various interests - including the Catholic bishops and other church groups; some human rights and solidarity groups; and some business organizations opposed to sanctions in general and toward Cuba in particular - have come together over the past two years and lobbied effectively for exempting food and medicine from the embargo.

Most important has been the influential farm lobby, which hopes to sell millions of dollars in agricultural products to Havana, seeing the country of more than 11 million people as a potentially promising market.

Last year, the Senate voted 78-22 to exempt food and medicine from the embargo. In the House, however, DeLay and influential Cuban-American lawmakers from the Miami area defeated a similar provision in the 2000 agricultural appropriations bill.

As a result, the two versions of the bill had to be reconciled in a conference committee. DeLay, respectfully called "The Hammer" for his lobbying techniques, successfully deleted the controversial provision from the bill, despite the fact that a majority of Republican conferees on the committee favored the measure.

Using his power and influence over House Speaker Dennis Hastert, DeLay could very well delete the measure in this year's bill before it gets to the floor of the House, and indeed, Hastert reportedly told the provision's chief sponsor, Washington Rep. George Nethercutt, that he may go along with permitting all the other "terrorist" states - which include Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Syria - to gain the exemption, if Cuba is excluded.

However, such a move will be more controversial now that the appropriations committee has voted by such a convincing margin to retain the measure and rebuff DeLay.

"At a certain point, parliamentary maneuvering of the kind DeLay would have to resort to kill it, would quite clearly be undemocratic," said one Congressional aide.

### Protests Over Renewed Vieques Bombing Echo in New York

By Cody Ellerd

New York, - New York's extensive Puerto Rican population has been up in arms over renewed bombing exercises on Puerto Rico's Vieques Island by the US Navy, ending a year's moratorium on the controversial practice.

In addition to demonstrations in Times Square, eight protesters interrupted a Yankees baseball game when they ran onto the field waving Puerto Rican flags.

Organizations such as the New York-based International Action Center, the Vieques Support Campaign, and Todo NY for Vieques are also gearing up for what they expect to be a massive turnout on June 11, Puerto Rico Day.

Puerto Ricans comprise some 37 percent of New York's total Hispanic population. According to city statistics, there were 800,000 Puerto Ricans living here in 1998 - almost double the population of the Puerto Rican capital of San Juan.

Puerto Rico is a commonwealth territory of the United States.

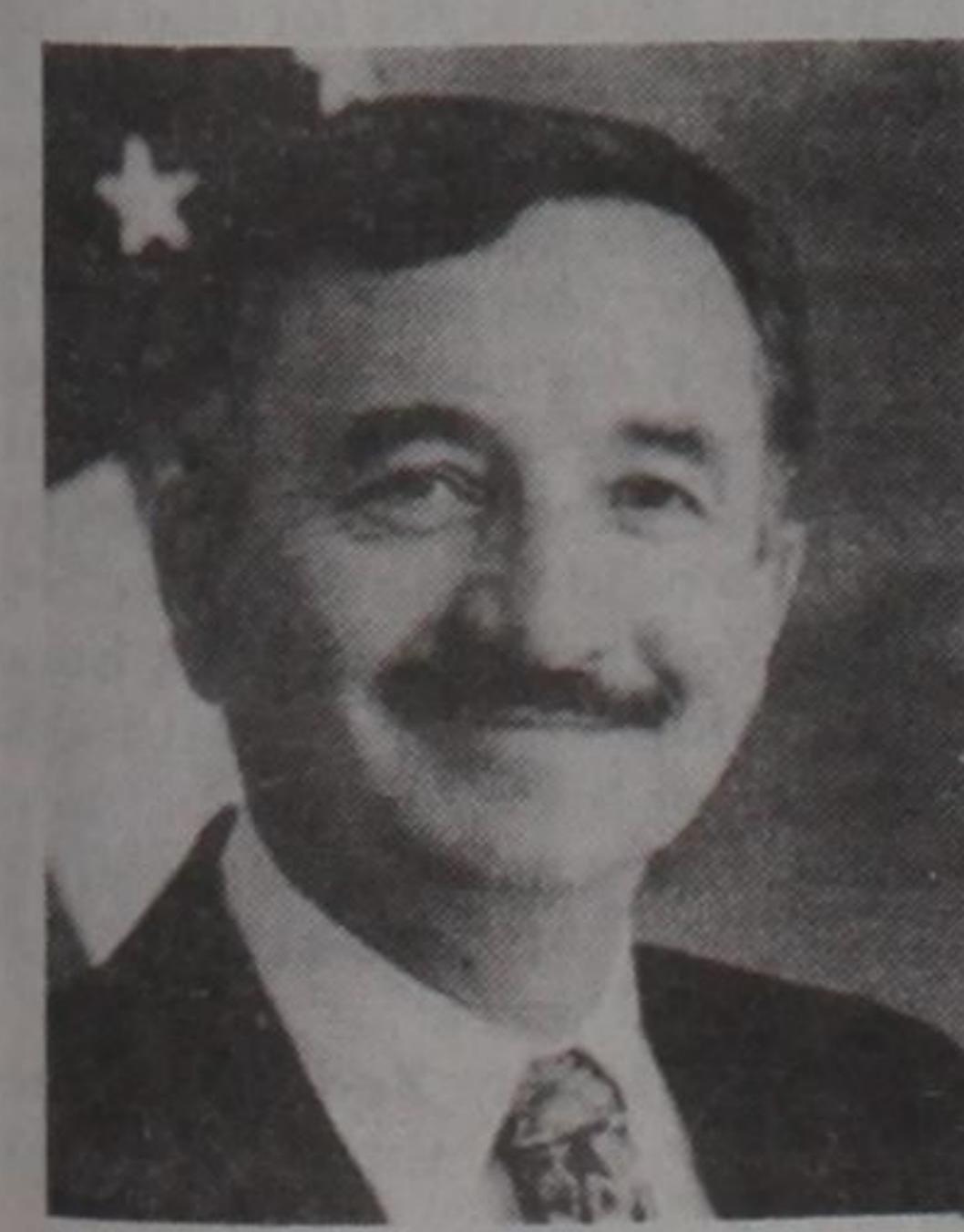
The month's protests come in response to the removal of more than 200 protesters from the military grounds on the Caribbean island on May 4 and the resumption of bombing practices there despite widespread opposition from the population of both Vieques and nearby Puerto Rico.

Protesters, including residents of Vieques (who are also US citizens), US lawmakers and clergy, oppose the use of Vieques because they say decades of bombing have harmed the physical and mental health of the islanders, the environment, and the economy.

The Navy says that Vieques, which it bought two-thirds of in 1940, is the only place where simultaneous air, land, and sea operations with live munitions can be carried out. These training exercises, says US Attorney-General Janet Reno, "are critical to ensuring the readiness of our armed services."

Demonstrators have occupied Camp Garcia, the Navy's live firing range, and suspended military training since April 1999 when a bombing accident killed one civilian security guard and wounded four others. On Jan. 31, however, Puerto Rican Governor Pedro Rosello accepted a proposal by the Bill Clinton administration to resume limited training for at least three years using "dummy" bombs that are not radioactive.

In exchange, President Clinton has agreed to a referendum



# Bilingualism Becoming a Skill You Can Take to the Bank

By Kate Woodsome

Fluency in Spanish and English is rapidly being identified in the U.S. marketplace -- particularly in the more professional job ranks -- as a skill both worthy and demanding of extra economic rewards.

Experts in fields ranging from education, media, marketing and international trade are nearly unanimous in acknowledging the need. And while some employers are still hesitant to pay extra for useful language skills and cultural knowledge, a trend is developing.

Signs are most evident in states with large Hispanic populations, including California, Texas, New Jersey, New York and Florida.

Hispanics in Miami-Dade who are proficient in English and Spanish earn an average of \$7,000 more than monolingual workers who perform similar tasks, according to "Creating Florida's Multilingual Global Work Force," a study by researchers at the University of Florida and the University of Central America.

"Companies missing bilingual workers can quantify the cost in lost opportunity more than dollars," says Jeff Sparshott, communications director of the Washington, D.C.-based U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce.

The language study found that in Miami, Latino workers with bilingual fluency earn an annual average of \$18,105, as opposed to \$11,261 for their monolingual English-speaking counterparts.

In San Antonio and Jersey City, Hispanic bilingual workers also earn more than their monolingual peers, the study showed. However, it found salaries of monolingual-English workers in such cities as Houston, New York and Los Angeles higher than those who also speak

With a continuing demand for bilingual teachers nationally, several school districts now offer hiring bonuses or other incentives. The Los Angeles Unified School District pays bilingual teachers a bonus of up to \$5,000 annually. Once again, the marketplace demands it.

If one employer doesn't recognize, use and offer compensation for an employee's second-language skill, there's a growing risk that the employee will find someone else who does. And now that employee need look no further than the computer sitting on his or her desk. The Internet is becoming an easy way for bilingual workers to display their skills in the marketplace.

LatPro.com, a Web-based site linking Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking workers with compa-

nies in need of those language skills, has a growing list of successful connections, according to its founder, Eric Shannon.

Started in 1997, LatPro.com received some 160,000 hits in March, up from 80,000 in August of last year. The company lists positions paying an average of \$57,000.

"If someone who's earning \$65,000 is the right person, the perfect fit, that individual may be worth \$85,000 to another employer," Shannon says.

California-based Diverse Staffing Solutions (DSS) is another job-seeker resource that introduces highly skilled professional Latinos to corporate positions.

Although the company started six months ago, it already has initiated contracts with Disney Co., Nestle Corp. and GE Capital. All are searching for Latino and, most preferably, bilingual personnel.

Says DSS president Fred Flores, "In the media industry, for example, there is a tremendous need for bilingual people because of the amount of money that can be generated in those (bilingual) markets. In industries with large numbers of Spanish-speaking employees, bilingualism has become an essential value."

(Kate Woodsome is a reporter with the national newsmagazine Hispanic Link Weekly Report, based in Washington, D.C. Reporter Oswaldo Zavala assisted her in researching this column.)

menos que comprendan el idioma y la cultura de sus posibles clientes.

"Las empresas que pasan por alto a los trabajadores bilingües pueden cuantificar el costo en términos de oportunidades perdidas más que en dólares," dice Jeff Sparshott, director de comunicaciones de la Cámara de Comercio Estadounidense-Mexicana, radicada en Washington, D.C.

Casi 900 millas más cerca de 16 ciudades importantes de la América Latina que Nueva York, la Florida controla el 50 por ciento de todo el comercio estadounidense con el Caribe y la América Central.

El estudio halló que en Miami, los trabajadores latinos con fluidez bilingüe ganan un promedio anual de \$18,105, en contraste con \$11,261 para sus colegas monolingües en inglés. En San Antonio y Jersey City, los trabajadores hispanos bilingües también ganan más que sus colegas monolingües, según mostró el estudio. Sin embargo, el citado estudio halló que los sueldos de los trabajadores monolingües en inglés, en ciudades tales como Houston, Nueva York y Los Angeles, eran mayores que los de aquéllos que hablan español también con diversos niveles de conocimiento.

En Los Angeles, los empleados municipales en plazas designadas como bilingües reciben una bonificación de 2.75 por ciento en sus sueldos por servicios de traducción. Otros reciben una bonificación de 5.5 por ciento por usar sus habilidades para interpretar y escribir. Algunas otras ciudades de California ofrecen compensaciones semejantes.

"Siempre que las actividades se sobrepongan con el sector público, habrá necesidad de alguien que tenga esas habilidades," dice Gail Thomas, jefe auxiliar de la División de Empleos de Seguridad Pública de Los Angeles, que certifica la elegibilidad de los trabajadores para recibir el sobresuelo.

Debido a la demanda continua de maestros bilingües en todo el país, varios distritos escolares ofrecen ahora bonificaciones de contratación a otros estímulos. El Distrito Escolar Unificado de Los Angeles paga a los maestros bilingües una bonificación de hasta \$5,000 anualmente. El mercado lo exige así.

Si un empleador no reconoce, usa y ofrece compensación por la habilidad de un(a) empleado(a) en un segundo idioma, hay un riesgo cada vez mayor de que el (la) empleado(a) hallará algún otro que sí lo haga.

Y ahora ese(a) empleado(a) no necesita mirar más allá que a la computadora situada sobre su escritorio. La Internet está convirtiéndose en el lugar donde los trabajadores bilingües pueden exhibir sus habilidades en el mercado.

LatPro.com, un "lugar" de la Red que comunica a los trabajadores que hablan español y portugués con empresas que necesitan esas habilidades idiomáticas, tiene una lista cada vez mayor de conexiones exitosas, según dice su fundador, Eric Shannon.

LatPro.com, fundada en 1997, recibió cerca de 160,000 "visitas" en marzo, un aumento desde 80,000 en agosto del año pasado. La compañía relaciona plazas que pagan un promedio de \$57,000 anuales.

"Si alguien que está ganando \$65,000 es la persona adecuada, la persona idónea, esa persona puede valer \$85,000 para otro empleador," dice Shannon. Diverse Staffing Solutions (DSS), radicada en California, es otro recurso para la búsqueda de empleo que lleva a latinos profesionales con habilidades elevadas a plazas empresariales.

Aunque la compañía empezó hace seis meses, ya ha iniciado contratos con la empresa Disney, Nestlé Corp. y GE Capital. Todas éstas se hallan buscando latinos, y más preferiblemente personal bilingüe.

"En las industrias con gran cantidad de empleados de habla hispana, el bilingüismo ha llegado a ser un valor indispensable," dice el presidente de DSS, Fred Flores. "En la industria de los medios informativos, por ejemplo, hay una necesidad tremenda de personas bilingües debida a la cantidad de dinero que se puede producir en esos mercados bilingües."

(Kate Woodsome es reportera del semanario nacional Hispanic Link Weekly Report, radicado en Washington, D.C. El reportero Oswaldo Zavala le ayudó en la investigación para esta columna.)

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## Bilingüismos Convirtiéndose en Habilidad Que Se Puede Llevar al Banco

Por Kate Woodsome

La fluidez en español e inglés se está identificando rápidamente en el mercado de los Estados Unidos -- especialmente en las filas de los empleos más profesionales -- como una habilidad que es tanto valiosa como merecedora de recompensas económicas adicionales.

Los expertos en los terrenos que van desde la enseñanza, y los medios informativos hasta el mercadeo y el comercio internacional son casi unánimes en reconocer la necesidad. Y aunque algunos empleadores vacilan aún para pagar adicionalmente por las habilidades idiomáticas útiles y el conocimiento cultural, está desarrollándose una tendencia.

Las señales son especialmente evidentes en los estados que tienen grandes núcleos de población hispana, incluyendo a California, Texas, Nueva Jersey, Nueva York y la Florida.

Los hispanos de Miami-Dade que dominan tanto el inglés como el español ganan un promedio de \$7,000 más que los trabajadores monolingües que realizan trabajos semejantes, según dice un estudio titulado "Creando una Fuerza de Trabajo Global Multilingüe de la Florida," preparado por la Universidad de la Florida y la Universidad de Miami.

Los expertos en empleos y eficiencia ofrecen muchas razones por las cuales los administradores bilingües vienen llegando a ser cada vez más críticos para la "línea de base" de una compañía o dependencia del gobierno, a medida que los inmigrantes con dominio limitado del inglés continúan extendiéndose por todo el país.

En las comunidades que tienen una mezcla de personas monolingües en inglés y monolingües en español, el dejar de cubrir adecuadamente las plazas de comunicación con el público con personal bilingüe puede costar espacios grandes de valioso tiempo del personal. En las industrias de servicios y los oficios de la construcción, una orden de un capataz mal comprendida puede costar dinero o, lo que es peor, lesiones graves.

Y a medida que las empresas estadounidenses se esfuerzan para ampliar sus mercados a la América Latina, no tienen probabilidades de ser muy competitivas a

En Los Angeles, los empleados municipales en plazas designadas como bilingües reciben una bonificación de 2.75 por ciento en sus sueldos por servicios de traducción. Otros reciben una bonificación de 5.5 por ciento por usar sus habilidades para interpretar y escribir. Algunas otras ciudades de California ofrecen compensaciones semejantes.

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## Upswing Despite Elections and Rising Poverty

By Diego Cevallos

MEXICO CITY - In the final phase of Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo's term in office the economy is running at full throttle, but, paradoxically, social inequalities are on the rise.

The Mexican economy grew 7.9 percent in this year's first quarter, the highest rate for the period previous to presidential elections, and also the highest quarterly growth reported since 1981, reported the Ministry of Finance this week.

Economic growth hit its maximum point since the economy took off in the first quarter of 1996, when the economy turned around after a continued decline, said financial experts Wednesday.

In 1995, following the crisis of late 1994, when Zedillo took office, the economy topped 6.2 percent, marking its worst performance in 50 years.

Since 1996, growth has been steady, but some observers warn it could stall or even backslide due to potential internal economic tensions arising from July's presidential elections and the inauguration in December.

The brokerage firm Salomon Smith Barney of New York said last week that the Mexican markets will face a period of "extreme volatility" in July as a result of the elections.

Though the economy is currently taking solid steps forward, in the areas of poverty and income distribution, the outlook remains bleak.

In the last two years, the wealthiest 10 percent of Mexico's 100 million people earned nine times more than the average income of 60 percent of the population, reported the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Data Processing (INEGI) last month.

According to INEGI, the wealthiest sector of the Mexican population increased its participation in the gross domestic product (GDP) 1.5 percent while the poor's contribution fell 1.4 percent. More than half of all Mexicans are poor, with a quarter living in abject poverty.

For every 100 Mexican pesos in circulation here, 55 are in the hands of 20 percent of the population, while 45 are distributed

among the remaining 80 percent.

If the country is to reverse the trend of social deterioration, it must maintain annual growth at two percent for 40 to 60 years, said the Inter-American Development Bank in a report last year.

From 1996 to 1999, the Mexican economy grew an average of 5.1 percent, which, according to the Zedillo government, proves that the country is solidly on its way to reducing poverty.

In the election campaign underway, each of the six candidates seeking to succeed president Zedillo has promised to maintain annual economic growth higher than current rates.

With the positive report on growth released this week, Francisco Labastida, candidate for the governing Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), could receive a boost in his quest for the presidency, but it will not necessarily win the elections for him, said Alfredo Coutiño, an analyst for the Ciemex-Wefra brokerage firm.

The latest public opinion polls show that opposition candidate Vicente Fox, of the conservative National Action Party (PAN), continues to gain ground and could be the first to beat the PRI in the race for the presidency in 70 years.

Fox is a staunch supporter of economic liberalisation, and if he wins the long-term outlook will be promising, but the short term could see some financial nervousness because of the changes his victory would mean for Mexico, according to Salomon Smith Barney.

The Zedillo government has stated that any candidate who wins the presidential seat would take over the reins with the financial books in order and an economy on the upswing.

Authorities reject the idea that there is any danger of a crisis like those that have occurred since the 1970s at the end of every presidential term.

Shortly before Zedillo succeeded president Carlos Salinas in December 1994, authorities had affirmed, like they are now, that

Continued Page 6

## The Miami Myth Machine

By RODOLFO F. ACUNA

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APRIL 16, 2000

Almost every Mexican American, it seems, has a grandparent or a great-grandparent who rode with Pancho Villa. Few know or admit having ancestors who opposed the Mexican Revolution and supported the dictator Porfirio Diaz. The events surrounding Elian Gonzalez remind me of this tragic page in Mexican American history.

Like the Miami Cuban Americans, the Mexican exiles arriving after the 1911 overthrow of Mexican dictator Porfirio Diaz actively pressured the U.S. government to intervene in Mexican affairs and overthrow the revolutionaries who had taken away their land and privileges. Those exiliados dreamed of the day that they would return to Mexico and resume the old ways. Time and the truth about Diaz and his dictatorship changed the reality of those exiliados, for as imperfect as the Mexican revolution was, it at least gave most Mexicans another vision of themselves.

Although the Cuban revolution took place over forty years ago, the Cuban exiles' fervor and dreams of returning to their land and privilege still burns hot. Few Cuban Americans remember that Fulgencio Batista y Saldivar came to power as the result of a 1952 coup and that it was Batista's political legitimacy that made the rise of Castro possible. In the process they seem to forget that it was Batista and other dictators who turned the island into a mafia fiefdom that allowed Cuba to be monopolized by international land companies like the United Fruit Company. More important, they forget that many of their leaders supported these oligarchies.

Unable or unwilling to create a revolution from within, they continue to pressure Americans to fight a war that they themselves wage. Cubans living in Miami, because of the Cold War and their alliance with the most reactionary sectors of our society, have been much more effective in controlling American foreign policy than Mexican exiles were in the first part of the 20th century. Certainly more enduring.

The appeal of Jorge Mas Canosa and groups such as the Cuban American National Foundation lies in the perception that they can control, or at least influence, American foreign policy toward Cuba. Therefore, it is not surprising that they see the Elian Gonzalez controversy as a test of this power. So they desperately fall back on their habit of myth making, blaming their every calamity on the bearded one, angrily blaming Castro for the abolishment of democracy in Cuba, as if it ever existed.

U.S. Cuban exiles spin myths such as that Cuba was democratic before Castro, and that God has destined them to free Cuba. The reality is that these people are not part of the modern Cuba. Anyone who has been to Cuba or had relations with the Cuban community in the United States would be dense if they did not notice the contrasts between the two societies just in terms of race.

I remember a Cuban American neighbor telling my wife that she had married well because I was lighter than she was and thus our children would be born of a lighter hue. She would emphasize that although working class that she was a gallega (Galician), not an African Cuban. She frequently called blacks, los morenos, as apart and less than white Cubans.

When in Cuba last July, I witnessed a racially mixed society, with over two-thirds of the island black or mulatto. Almost every African-Cuban intellectual I met repeated that he or she would not have become a professor if it had not been for the revolution. In watching the talk shows from Miami on television or the crowds in front of Elian's distant relative, Lazaro Gonzalez's home, over 95 percent of the Cuban-Americans in the audiences or the mobs are obviously white Hispanics.

I make this point because Cuba of the exiliados does not exist. The integration of the races in Cuba contrasts with the reality of Miami where intermarriage between white and black Cubans has been more an aberration than the rule. If they ever return to Cuba, the wanna-be Cubans will find a society with different memories and values than their own.

Out of historical curiosity, we should perhaps ask how and why the Mexican exiles' fervor burned out while Cuban American community remains trapped in a cesspool of intransigent nationalism. Because of the success of extremist groups such as the Cuban American National Foundation, natural immigration and contact with the island, has been prevented. Unlike the Puerto Rican or the Mexican American, its island has not continuously nurtured and regenerated the Cuban American. Like the Truman show they find themselves trapped in time. In turn, Mexican and Puerto Ricans in the US have become more racially mixed.

The 2000 census will make clear the growing differences between Cuban Americans and other Latino American groups. Many Latinos are indeed questioning whether Cuban Americans as a group have suffered a history of discrimination in the United States similar to that of Mexicans or Puerto Ricans. Cuban Americans have become a minority through the stretch of the "Hispanic label," which has allowed them entitlements previously reserved for Americans who suffered a history of discrimination.

Census 2000 will also count some 32 million Latinos, 21 million of whom are of Mexican origin. Cuban Americans will number a tiny fraction of this total--about 1.4 million, contrasted to about three million Puerto Ricans and three million Central Americans. The Census will also underscore these differences between Cuban Americans and the others, for example, the median age of Mexicans in the U.S. is 24.3 whereas among Cubans it is 40.8 years (versus 26.5 for all Hispanics and 38.2 for white Americans). The age gap will make the disparity in income between Mexicans and white Americans even more glaring. The income of the Cuban American exceeds that of white Americans, while Mexican and Central Americans earn about two-thirds the income of white Americans.

Relations between Cuban American leaders and other Latino groups have always been tenuous. Privately, many Latino leaders resent the appeal of Cuban Congressional Representatives Lincoln Diaz-Balart and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen to the memory of the civil rights movement, remembering that in the 1960s Cuban Americans to advance their interventionist policies crawled in bed with almost every reactionary group and leader, working and supporting the Republican party against the best interests of other Latinos. It has always been their way or no way, with the two mentioned congressional representatives resigning from the Hispanic Congressional Caucus because Mexican American Congressman Xavier Becerra was elected its chair. Becerra committed the sin of visiting Cuba without their permission.

Thus, it is not too surprising that other Latino groups do not see the Elian Gonzalez case through the same prism as the Miami zealots. Unlike the Cuban American community, the continuing immigration from Mexico and Central America has restructured and changed most Latino communities. The Cuban American community in turn has become an intellectually incestuous, unable to regenerate itself, obsessed with preserving a

## News Briefs

within the next year allowing residents of Vieques to vote on whether or not the Navy will remain on the island. Compensation for continued military presence until 2003 comes in the form of 40 million US dollars; if Viequians vote to let the Navy stay, they are promised another 50 million dollars.

60+ years of lies Puerto Ricans, however, are skeptical that the bombing will ever stop since Puerto Rico lacks the power to enforce such promise by the United States. They are further jaded by 60 years of lies and broken promises by the US Navy which have led them to view anything the US government says with distrust, says Amilcar Barreto, a political science professor at Boston-based Northeastern University who is writing a book on Vieques.

Indeed, a timeline by the Associated Press of the history of the Vieques controversy reveals a strong foundation for distrust.

Roberto Ramirez, a New York state legislator, was among the protesters arrested on Vieques on May 4. "There is a 60-year history of lying and deceit coming from the United States Navy," said Ramirez. "[On Vieques] you can find people that have been abused and humiliated - treated as if they were third-class citizens."

Despite previous denials, the Navy admitted in 1999 to using napalm on the island, as well as firing uranium-tipped shells. Residents are convinced that this is to blame for the population's astonishingly high rate of cancer.

In response to allegations of environmental degradation, the Navy conducted a study in April 1999, which found no evidence of soil or groundwater contamination.

However, Professor Barreto thinks the study should be taken with a grain of salt.

"One must be suspicious," he says, "of the fox guarding the hen house."

Professor Barreto also says that one does not need a study in order to see the environmental affects. From the sky, the island looks like a moonscape. Walls of family homes are cracked from the constant shaking of the earth when the bombs strike. The noise pollutes their ears, and the fishing industry is dying. And Viequians lament the drain of tourism and the agricultural land usurped by the Navy base.

Activist groups such as the International Action Center see the renewed bombing as "a flagrant disregard for the will of the Puerto Rican people" and "an act of brazen colonial brutality."

Governor Rosello's compliance with the Clinton administration is deeply disappointing to many Puerto Ricans. It surprises them as well, since only a couple of weeks earlier Rosello had issued a report stating that his government was in favor of evicting the Navy from the island.

Professor Barreto thinks the about-face has more to do with avoiding prosecution than a political change of heart. Earlier this year, the governor was reported by El Nuevo Dia, Puerto Rico's largest newspaper, to have been under investigation by the FBI for corruption relating to an AIDS hospital whose funds may have been used for fancy dinners and other fringe benefits.

According to Barreto, Rosello's compliance with the US government may see a simultaneous easing up of the FBI investigation. An added incentive may also come from a possible seat in Gore's administration, if the vice president is elected in November.

Congressman Ramirez, however, supports Pedro Rosello's decision. "I believe that he believes he negotiated the best agreement possible under the circumstances, and I respect the governor's decision," Ramirez told IPS.

Agreement or no, most experts believe that the issue of Vieques is straining an already tense history of relations between the United States and its Spanish-speaking commonwealth, and could possibly re-ignite controversy in Puerto Rico about nationalism and independence.

Meanwhile, groups such as the International Action Center are looking toward the coming referendum, and will continue to rally support among Puerto Ricans, who they say have shown unprecedented unity in demanding an end to Navy occupation of Vieques.

### When a Census Taker Knocks On Your Door

If you still haven't sent in your Census 2000 form, get ready for a Census Taker to knock on your door in the next few weeks.

Beginning this Thursday, April 27, approximately 500,000 Census Takers will hit the streets nationwide, going door to door to fill out both the 7-question short-form and the 53-question long-form. Their work will continue until July 7. It is the most massive, labor intensive enterprise undertaken by the U.S. government apart from military warfare.

It's also an operation that puzzles or worries some people. To demystify Census Taking at least a little bit, the following points are offered to help you understand what to expect when the Census Taker comes knocking.

(A) Census Takers are not your stereotypical "Government G-Men." Instead, a Census Taker is likely to be your neighbor from down the street? someone who decided to do part-time census work because it benefits the community, the work is interesting, and the pay is a healthy \$9 to \$14 per hour.

(B) The Census Taker is likely to come to your door in the evening or on weekends? precisely because that's the time you're most likely to be at home. But they visit during weekdays, too.

(C) There is a basic routine Census Takers use to introduce themselves. When you answer your door, the Census Taker should always do the following:

(1) Introduce themselves by name and as a Census Bureau representative.

(2) Show you their Census ID badge, which is red/white/blue and features the Department of Commerce seal and the name of the Census Taker.

(3) Confirm the correct address of your residence.

(4) State the purpose of their visit and estimate the length of time that will be required to complete the census form.

(5) Hand you a Privacy Act Notice (Dept. of Commerce Form D-31), give you time to read it carefully, and answer basic questions you might have about the

Privacy Act. The Privacy Act guarantees that your information is kept confidential by the Census Bureau.

(D) The Census Taker usually will remain at your front door

to fill-out the

form, which is for your safety and the Census Taker's as well. There is little reason to come inside your home, although the Census Taker may do so if you wish.

(E) If you have doubts as to the authenticity of the Census

Taker, you could ask to see the Census Taker's personal picture ID (such as their driver's license) or you could call the Local Census Office (LCO).

The Census Taker should be able to provide you with the LCO phone number.



Cada entrevistador del Censo 2000 porta una identificación visible.

ness and highlighted their specific programs for minority-owned securities brokers and dealers to sell its investment products. GSEs are publicly traded companies which do not receive government funding. Rather, they sell government-backed securities through a network of brokers, dealers and private investors across the globe.

Following the presentations, the participants held a lively roundtable discussion with members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus to answer questions and raise issues about relevant avenues to pursue. "I learned a great deal from the presentations about the role of these private-sector firms in our mortgage and loan business," said Congressman Rodriguez. "With the added understanding of how this segment of our capital markets works, I plan to pursue the matter with other firms from Main Street to Wall Street. I want to see how the Hispanic market can benefit from access to the GSEs' services. Capital - the money we use for investment in infrastructure, for example - is the key to our financial success in the future. We must participate fully and create new opportunities for growth and success."

governorships of 11 of Mexico's 32 states are held by the opposition parties, as are nearly half of all city governments. Clearly, the era of political change has come to Mexico.

Fox is trying to convince Mexican voters that it is time for a change. To position himself as the voice of the new Mexico, he has broken with the traditional presidential campaign format. His approach and appeal closely resemble that of U.S. politicians. He has crossed and crisscrossed the nation and campaigned in hamlets and villages usually ignored by candidates in the past. Like voters everywhere, Mexicans don't like being ignored; they like to think that their votes make a difference.

Noting Fox's meteoric rise, the opposition has tried to discredit him on several counts. One is that he is a wealthy rancher who doesn't really understand or care about the plight of the poor people, a plight his wealthy class has perpetuated for its own benefit. Another charge is that he is an autocratic, self-centered ruler who, as governor of Guanajuato, often ignored the wishes of his own party. An attempt is made to portray him as a loose cannon.

His close association with U.S. business interests is also suspect. Fox worked for Coca-Cola for 15 years, rising to chief of operations for Mexico and Central America.

However, the most damning aspects of his candidacy -- ones that could derail it -- are his Anglo-Saxon name and background. Although Fox's father was born in Mexico, his grandfather was a U.S. citizen. Opponents like to question his mexicanismo and would like to make it a campaign issue. Surprisingly, the charge has failed to influence or gain credence with Mexican voters. Is there a lesson there for us?

(Ray Rodriguez of Long Beach, Calif., is a retired university professor and weekly columnist on Hispanic issues for the Long Beach Press-

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**Joe Adam Riojas**  
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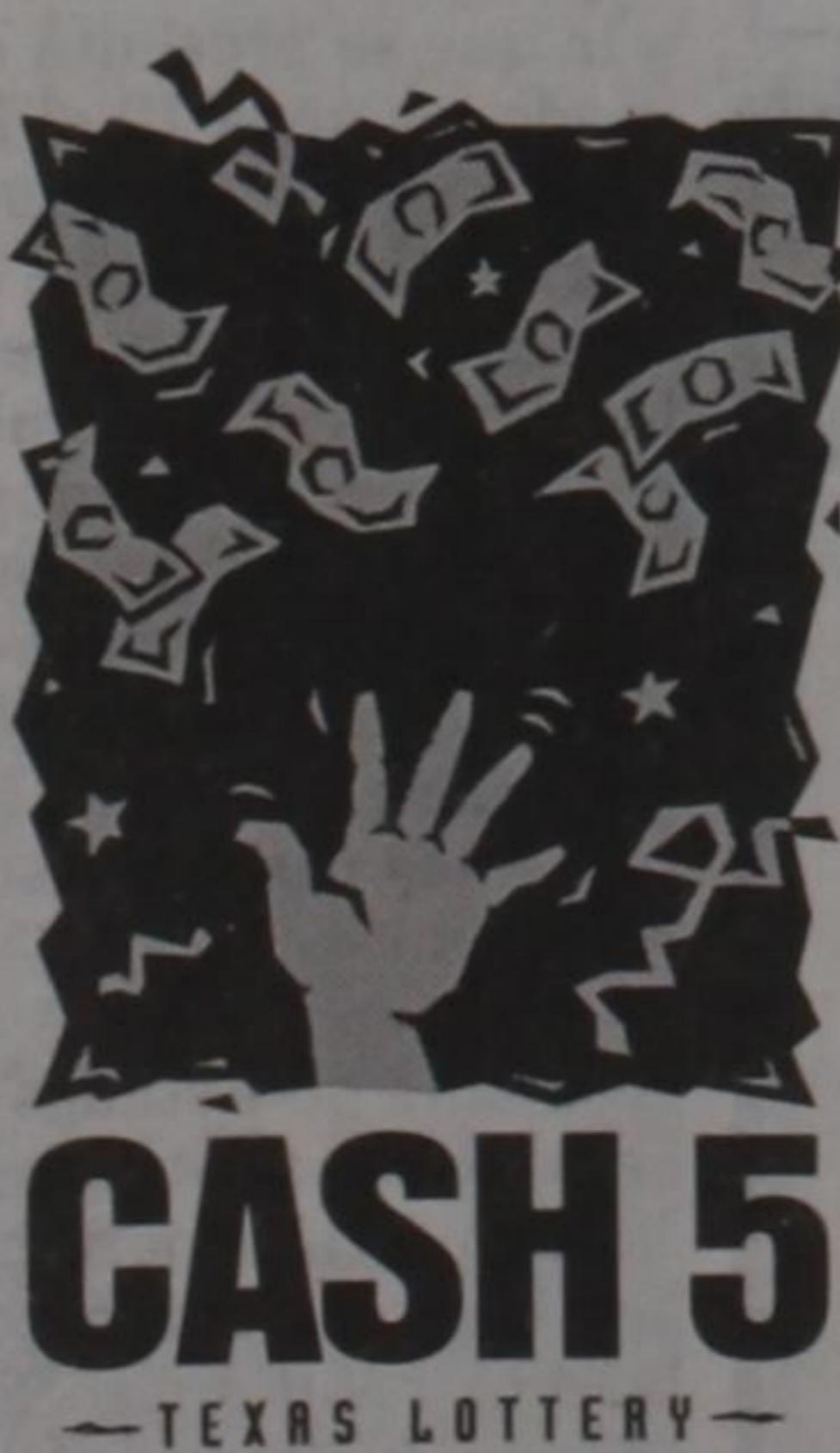
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Americanos: la vida de los latinos en Estados Unidos.

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5 de mayo a las 5:30 p.m. El programa se vuelve a transmitir el 11 (10:00 a.m. y 7:00 p.m.), el 14 (2:30 p.m.), el 16 (1:00 p.m.) y el 22 de mayo (7:00 p.m.).

El video documental "Americanos: la vida de los latinos en Estados Unidos" que forma parte de un proyecto multimedia más amplio coordinado por el actor, productor y activista Edward James Olmos se transmite el 5 de mayo a través del canal por cable HBO.

"Americanos" destaca un perfil positivo de personas de origen latino que

habitan Estados Unidos, coconcentrándose principalmente en las comunidades mexicanas, puertorriqueñas y cubanas.

A través del video, de cerca de dos horas de duración, se presentan comentarios y testimonios de un diverso grupo de personas que como elemento unificador poseen raíces latinas. Así, vemos un exitoso grupo de estudiantes del Este de Los Ángeles, los populares "low-riders" de Illinois, la poeta neoyorquina de origen puertorriqueño Mariposa, el cantante conocido como El Véz (El Elvis Presley Latino), el multigalardonado Carlos Santana, entre otras figuras célebres y no tan célebres de nuestra multiétnica y multicultural comunidad.

Es justamente esto en lo que se enfoca "Americanos": en demostrar lo rica y diversa que es la comunidad latina de Estados Unidos, con diferentes orígenes, culturas y tradiciones.

Dirigida por un equipo compuesto por Andy Young y Susan Tood (quienes han sido nominados al premio Oscar) y concebida y producida por Olmos, el video está grabado en Los Ángeles, San Diego, Nuevo México, Illinois, Miami y Nueva York.

Además del documental, este proyecto incluye un comentado libro de fotografías con el trabajo de más de 30 fotógrafos de origen hispano, un disco y una exhibición itinerante que se espera que llegue a Chicago para el verano de este año ■

## HBO transmite "Americanos"

la vida de los latinos en EE.UU."

### From Page 2

the economy was stronger than ever. But one month later, one of the worst economic crises in Mexican history erupted.

The healthy economy of the United States, Mexico's principal trade partner, has played an important role in the positive results the Zedillo administration is reporting today. If the US economy was suffering a downward trend, the story here would be different and Mexicans would have reason to worry, commented analyst Enrique Quintana.

Guillermo Ortiz, director of the Banco de Mexico - the nation's central bank, says that only extraordinary circumstances, beyond the electoral process, could reverse the economy's upward trend.

To prevent the economy from overheating - manifest as excessive demand that would push up inflation and create a larger trade deficit and devaluation problems - the government implemented measures Tuesday to pull cash out of circulation

### Congresspersons Gutierrez, Velazquez Lend Support

Philadelphia, - Protesters are bracing for the imminent arrests by federal agents as two members of the U.S. Congress arrive in Vieques in support of their cause.

Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-ILL), one of two voting Congressmen of Puerto Rican descent, spoke to protesters early this morning. Gutierrez, who is for the independence of Puerto Rico, assured them that they will "win peace" for the island municipality.

Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-NY), the only Puerto Rican U.S. Congresswoman, also is scheduled to arrive sometime this afternoon. Velazquez, born in Puerto Rico and a supporter of a continued Commonwealth status with the United States, also supports the protesters' position. Other lawmakers from states like New York and New Jersey have visited or are currently in Vieques in support of its residents.

On Tuesday, protesters waited anxiously as news spread that the Pentagon confirmed the FBI-led operation to arrest them and that it could happen today. However, nothing happened yesterday and the would-be arrests have yet to happen Wednesday. Despite suppositions that some may run further in the bombing range to endanger the federal agents, protesters vow a peaceful reaction to the arrests.

Also on Tuesday, Pentagon spokesman Rear Adm. Craig Quigley reiterated the U.S. military's position that Vieques is a prime training ground that does not have an equal.

"Today, there's only one Vieques," claimed Quigley to AP.

Deep water, uninhabited land and free airspace are the three main ingredients that make the small island of about 9,000 residents a unique and essential training area.

The U.S. military has used this area for training for about 60 years, with Vieques residents say, no permission and little monetary compensation from the U.S. However, President Bill Clinton, in collaboration with Puerto Rico's Governor Pedro Rosello, offered this year a total of \$90 million in aid to Vieques if they choose to allow the U.S. Navy to continue maneuvers past the year 2003.

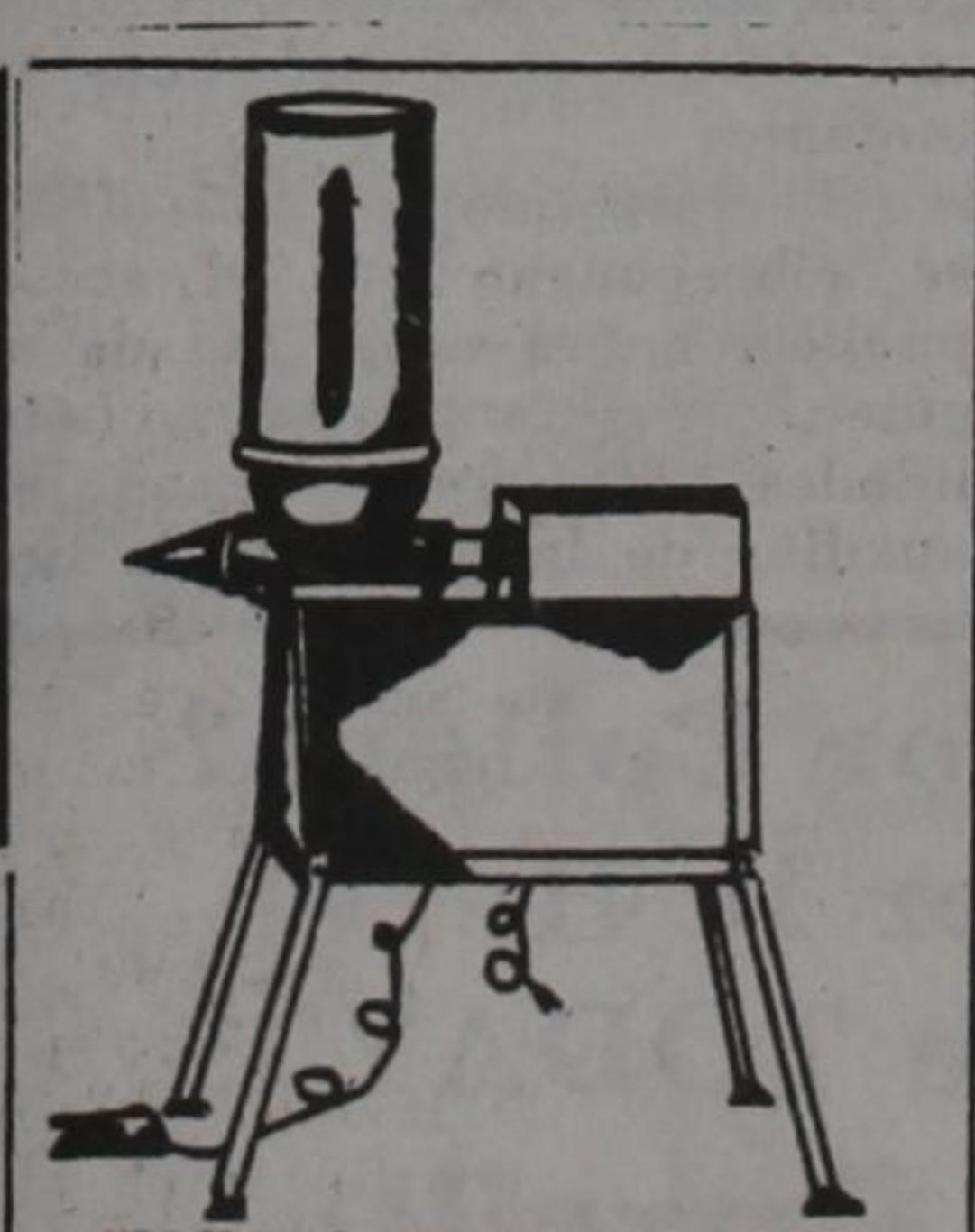
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**LA PARABULA DEL SEMBRADOR**  
"Y le habló muchas cosas por parabolas, diciendo: he aquí, el que sembraba salió a sembrar." Mateo 13:3.

La parábola del sembrador es susceptible de una aplicación muy amplia. Que constantemente se está cumpliendo a nuestra vista, pues describe lo que acontece por lo común en todas las congregaciones. He aquí las principales verdades que nos enseña.

Que la terea del predicador es análoga o similar a la del sembrador. Que a semejanza del sembrador, el ministro del Evangelio debe sembrar buena semilla si deseas cosechar frutos; debe sembrar la pura PALABRA DE DIOS, no dólares, y no las tradiciones de la iglesia, o las doctrinas humanas. De lo contrario, por mucho que diga o mucho que haga, sus trabajos serán estériles. A semejanza del sembrador, el ministro debe ser diligente, es decir no ha de ahorrar esfuerzos de ninguna clase ni desperdiciar ningún medio lícito para promover el progreso de su causa. Y es preciso que siempre en diversos lugares y siempre con esperanza, y que no se arredre ante ninguna dificultad, ante ningún obstáculo. "Al que al viento mira, nunca sembrará" dice la Escritura. Certo es que el buen éxito no depende de todo de su diligencia y esfuerzos, pero sin diligencia y sin esfuerzos rara vez se logra éxito alguno. El ministro, como el sembrador, es incapaz de dar vida. Puede esparcir la semilla mas no puede hacerla germinar con el poder de su palabra. Infundir el principio vivificante es una prerrogativa que pertenece exclusivamente a Dios. Pues "El Espíritu es el que da vida." Dios es quien da el crecimiento. Jn.6:63 Y 1Co.3:7 nos dice: "Así que, ni el que planta es algo, ni el que riega; sino Dios que da el crecimiento"

En segundo lugar. Que de varios modos puede oírse la palabra de Dios sin recibir provecho alguno. Porque algunos oyen predicar con descuido desatención e indiferencia. Que aunque se les presente el hecho sublime de la pasión y muerte del Redentor, lo oyen todo con la mayor frialdad como asunto que carece para ellos de interés. Pues las palabras penetran con rapidez en sus oídos pero el Diablo parece arrebatarlas. Y por desgracia los oyentes de esa clase son muy numerosos. De ellos puede decirse como de los ídolos de la antigüedad, que tienen ojos, pero no ven y oídos; pero no oyen. Sal.135:16,17. Y otros oyen predicar con verdadero placer, mas la impresión que en sus pechos hacen las palabras son de corta duración. Sus corazones, a semejanza del terreno pedregoso producen tal vez una cosecha copiosa de deseos vehementes y nobles resoluciones; mas ni unos ni otros tienen sus raíces en lo más profundo del alma, y que se marchitan tan luego como sobre ellos sopla el huracán de la persecución o de la tentación. Esa clase de oyentes también es muy numerosa. Otros oyen predicar y aprueban todo lo que el orador sagrado dice, pero no reciben provecho alguno, a causa de hallarse engolfados en los cuidados del mundo. Quizás les agrade el Evangelio y deseen obedecerlo, mas no lo dejan producir fruto, porque otras cosas atraen sus afectos e insensiblemente les llenan el corazón. Conocen bien la verdad y tienen esperanza de algún día ser cristianos decididos; mas nunca llegan al punto de dejarlo todo por amor a Cristo. Pues no se resuelven a buscar primariamente el reino de Dios. Pero solo hay un hecho que prueba que se ha oído la palabra de Dios con provecho. Y ese hecho es el de dar fruto. Pues menester es que esa palabra nos transforme exteriormente y se manifieste en nuestros actos externos. Si esos frutos no existen en nosotros nuestra religión es vana, por mucho que sea lo que profesamos creer o hacer. Con frecuencia debieramos repetir las siguientes palabras de Santiago: "Sed hacedores de la palabra, y no tan solamente oidores, engañándonos a nosotros mismos." Por lo que oramos: Ayúdanos Dios

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