

# **The Rise and Face Of Neopentecostalism**

**A Descriptive and Comparative Assessment  
of New Independent Charismatic/Pentecostal  
Churches in Latin America**

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## Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and constitutes the results of my research in the subject. All quotations have been distinguished by quotation marks or by indentation in the main text of the thesis, and the sources of information specifically acknowledged by means of footnotes.

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Miguel A. Palomino

## Abstract

Much of the religious fervour found in Latin America today shows itself in the rapid and explosive growth of the neopentecostal churches. This demands an understanding of both the changes that are taking place in the socio-economic life of the region—especially those linked to technological development, mass media and globalisation—and the allegedly ecclesiological shift—a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit known as a “Third Wave”—that is sweeping the continent in the form of “signs and wonders”, “prophetism” and “power-encounters”. This thesis is a descriptive and comparative assessment of this relatively new religious movement, focusing primarily on Peru where it started blooming in the early 1980s.

This research centres on three main areas. Firstly, there is an analysis of the theories proposed by Fernando Fuenzalida, Cristián Parker and Jean-Pierre Bastian, which try to interpret this religious outburst that has re-structured the religious field of Peru, and is also challenging for the first time the hegemony maintained by the Roman Catholic Church in the continent for the last five centuries. *Evangélicos*, and pentecostals in particular, are a growing sector of Christianity that deserve not to be seen as “sects”, a derogatory term still used to refer to them, but as a different expression of the Christian faith in this part of the world.

Secondly, there is a historical account of the different outpourings of the Holy Spirit occurred in the twentieth century which are known as “waves”. The “First Wave” took place in Azusa Street, California, in the 1910s, and gave birth to Pentecostalism, regarded alongside Catholicism and Protestantism as the “third force of Christianity”. The “Second Wave” or Charismatic Renewal Movement of the late 1950s and 1960s, revitalised some pentecostal churches and spawned organizations in mainline denominations to spread charismatic fires, but it “run out of steam” by the 1970s. Recognizing this draught that had overtaken the charismatic movement, Peter Wagner proclaimed a “Third Wave” of the Spirit taking place in the early 1980s. This time it encompassed churches and persons who were open to the move of the Holy Spirit but who considered themselves as neither pentecostal

nor charismatic. While Wagner was particularly referring to his experience with John Wimber's Fuller course "Signs and Wonders", similar phenomenon with supernatural manifestations had been seen in different parts of Latin America. Although these manifestations resembled those of North America, they had their particularities that made them peculiar to the region.

The third and final section deals with the theological worldview of neopentecostals. By observing their *culto* (worship service), issues pertaining to prophets, restoration of the church, revival and "spiritual warfare" are evident. These new fellowships strongly believe in "power encounter" and are determined to fight back the attacks of Satan, who in their view has robbed them their happiness, health and even their material possessions and the possibility for them to become rich. Thus, not only sickness but poverty as well, is attributed to demons of all sorts. This understanding of the unseen is certainly an elaboration of the demonic as traditional pentecostals saw it. While the latter have Satan as the cause of their physical, family and emotional problems, the former are convinced that he is also responsible for the fact that Christians are not the "head" of the world, as the Lord has called them to be, but "the tail". With this in mind, they are now acquiring cinemas, theatres, radio and TV stations, publishing houses, and playing high profile roles in the government and political arena, as in the sports, fashion and entertainment industry.

It would be hard to forecast how much longer the neopentecostal movement will be around, but definitely this will depend on the ability of its leaders to consolidate what they have accomplished already. While Pentecostalism has been known as the religion for the poor and charismatic as the renewal of the old-time denominations, neopentecostalism will surely be referred to as the movement that combines biblical allegory with sophisticated technology, reflecting the spirit of the times.

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# Table of Contents

Declaration	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vii
Charts	
Chart 1 Metropolitan Lima in Millions	5
Chart 2 Growth of the Largest Churches in Lima	8
Chart 3 Origin and Structure of Neopentecostal Churches in Lima	68
Chart 4 Relationship and Finances	69
Chart 5 Basic Doctrines and Beliefs	71
Chart 6 Typology of Neopentecostal Churches in Peru	74
Chart 7 The “Three Waves” in Historical Perspective	76
Chart 8 Differences Between the “Three Waves”	114
Chart 9 Differences in Liturgical Practices	162
Chart 10 Neopentecostal Worldview of the Spiritual World	181

## Part One: Methodological Questions

### Introduction and Approaches to Neopentecostalism

<b>Chapter 1: Preamble and Methodology</b>	1
1. Latin America, a multicultural continent	1
2. Lima, a city overpowered by urbanisation	3
A. Modernization and urbanisation	4
B. Lima, a place where culture and traditions clash	5

3. Delimitations and aims of research	6
4. Disciplines and methods of research	7
A. Socio-religious approach	11
B. Participant observation	12
C. Interviews	14
D. Theological analysis and reflection	15
E. Criteria for selecting churches	15
F. Data compilation	17
G. Definitions, outcomes and remarks	18
<b>Chapter 2: Clues for Interpreting the Religious Revitalisation of Latin America</b>	23
1. The Post-modern debate and the spiritual quest	23
A. The end of modernity: End of an illusion	24
B. The beginning of postmodernity and the spiritual search	27
2. Interpreting the religious changes in Latin America	32
A. The “Second Religiosity”	33
B. The “Other Rationality”	39
1) The “other logic” in popular Catholicism	42
2) The “other logic” of Neopentecostals	43
C. The “Religious Mutation”	46
<b>Chapter 3: Clasification of Neopentecostal Groups</b>	50
1. The Weberian concept of “Church” and “Sect”	50
2. In search of other categories for Latin America	53
3. The Catholic approach	54

4. The Protestant approach	60
A. Attempts to classify the Evangelical Church	62
B. Attempts to classify the Neopentecostal churches	64
1) Origin and structure	65
2) Beliefs and rituals	70
3) Identification with Evangelicals and Pentecostals	73

## **Part Two: The Identity Question**

### **Looking Into The Neopentecostal World**

#### **Chapter 4: Neopentecostal Groups and the “Third Wave”**

<b>In Historical Perspective</b>	75
1. First Wave: Classic Pentecostalism	75
A. Its roots	76
B. Spirituality and Ecumenism	79
C. From Azusa Street Mission to other parts of the World	81
D. Healing Revival Preachers and the “Latter Rain” Movement	85
E. Weaknesses and strengths of Classic Pentecostalism	90
2. Second Wave: The Charismatic Renewal Movement	91
A. Beginnings of the Charismatic Movement	92
B. Similarities to and differences from Classic Pentecostalism	95
C. The Word of Faith Movement	98
D. Praise and Worship Restoration Movement	100
3. Third Wave: Neopentecostalism	106
A. A new start	106
B. Main doctrinal postulates	108
C. Decline of spiritual mysticism	110
D. Its presence in Latin America	113

**Part Three: Theological Questions**  
**Understanding Neopentecostalism in Peru**

<b>Chapter 5: Peru in the “Prophetic Map”</b>	119
1. Beginnings	119
2. Born to be different	123
3. Neopentecostalism’s distinctive birthmarks	127
4. Neopentecostalism’s appealing message for <i>Limeños</i>	129
<b>Chapter 6: Neopentecostal Ecclesiological Worldview</b>	131
1. The need for a new church paradigm shift	134
2. Prophetism, Restorationism and Revivalism	135
A. The Modern Prophetic Wave	135
B. The Prophetic and the "New Wine" for Ibero-America	140
C. Restorationism and Church Historical Revisionism	147
D. Restorationism and Post-denominationalism	149
E. Revivalism	151
F. The need of Pneumatological experiences	155
<b>Chapter 7: Neopentecostal Worship in the Context of “Spiritual Warfare”</b>	161
1. The <i>Culto</i> and the experience of God	163
A. The Song Leader	163
B. The Preacher	166
C. The “Prayer Warriors”	167

2. Spiritual Warfare	168
A. Power encounter: Satan's power versus God's power	169
B. Strategic-level spiritual warfare	178
C. Territorial spirits and "spiritual cartography"	182
<b>Chapter 8: Conclusions, Forecasting the the Future of Neopentecostalism in Latin America</b>	193
<b>Works Cited and Bibliography</b>	201
<b>Neopentecostal Glossary</b>	233

**PART ONE: METHODOLOGICAL QUESTIONS**  
**INTRODUCTION AND APPROACHES TO**  
**NEOPENTECOSTALISM**

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**CHAPTER 1**  
**PREAMBLE AND METHODOLOGY**

**1. LATIN AMERICA, A MULTI-CULTURAL CONTINENT**

Latin America, that particular land made up of South America, Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean, reflects a variety of ethnic and religious heritage that is unmatched in any other region. Inter-marriage among natives, whites, blacks and Asians has created unique blends of cultures. Traditions and beliefs inherited from the indigenous inhabitants, black slaves, and white immigrants have contributed to a rich spiritual culture. Music, arts and crafts, foods, religion, architecture and language all reflect the contributions of American, African, Asian and European heritage.

Within fifty years after the arrival of the Europeans in 1492, more than half of the native population had perished. Within a century, no more than a fourth remained. The disappearance of the native residents has often been attributed to cruel treatment by the Spaniards. However, the introduction of such European diseases as smallpox and measles, against which indigenous people had no natural immunity, had an equal effect.

To provide a supply of labour, the Portuguese and Spanish imported African slaves. During the three centuries prior to 1850, as many as 14 million slaves may have been introduced into Latin America, compared with about 500,000 brought into the United States. In Latin America, most of the slaves were taken to north eastern Brazil and the islands of the Caribbean, where they worked on sugar plantations. The slave trade ended during the early decades of the 19th century. Thereafter, the

need for labour was satisfied by the immigration of about 8 million Europeans into southern Brazil and nearby Argentina and Uruguay. Europeans migrating to Latin America during the 100 years following 1850 exceeded by 15 times the number that arrived in the 300 years prior to that date. Beginning in the mid-1800s, the new arrivals became involved primarily in the production of coffee, grains, wool, and meat, all destined for the markets of north-western Europe. However, in Peru and Chile, a large number of Chinese and Japanese were brought as cheap immigrant labour to work in the *guano* trade and the mines and railroads.

Today, native, *mestizo* (mixed race), and white populations tend to be concentrated in tropical highlands of South America, Central America, and Mexico. Large numbers of blacks and mulattos live in north eastern Brazil, the West Indies, and the tropical lowlands around the Caribbean Sea. The temperate lands of southern South America serve as the homeland of European peoples who are primarily of Portuguese, Spanish, or Italian origin.

Throughout Latin America, language, religion, architectural forms, education and many other aspects of life reflect European culture. However, indigenous and African traditions are strongly represented in regions where natives and blacks are predominant. Most of the people of Latin America now speak Spanish or Portuguese, and a smaller number speak English, French, or Dutch. Spanish is the official language of most Latin American nations, and Portuguese is the state tongue of Brazil, the largest country. Yet, between 20 and 25 million Indians in Latin America continue to speak in their native tongues. Among the main language groups remaining today are the *Quechua/Quichua* and *Aymara* of Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador, the *Chibcha* of Colombia, the *Mam* and *Quiche* of Guatemala, the *Nahuatl* of central Mexico, the *Maya* of the Yucatan and the *Guarani* in Paraguay. Peru alone has thirty-seven distinct tribal groups.

The European conquerors of Latin America brought Roman Catholicism with them, and catholicism is the dominant religion throughout the region today.<sup>1</sup> Almost 90 percent of all Latin Americans claim to be Roman Catholics. Yet, the native communities, though they are formally classified by the Church as Catholics, have integrated many of their ancient practices and traditional beliefs into the Catholic faith. This is also true of the blacks, who are considered Catholics

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<sup>1</sup> For statistics see "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2001" in *IBMR*, Vol.25, No.1 p24-5

although they may observe voodoo rituals of African origin. Protestantism was established wherever the British or Dutch had long-standing control.<sup>2</sup> Around the time of the First World War, Protestant independent missionaries, linked to the so-called “faith-missions”, entered the region to start churches throughout Latin America.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. LIMA, A CITY OVERPOWERED BY URBANISATION

In order to grasp the ethnic diversity and colourful customs of this continent—and its complexity as well—let us have a brief look at one of its cities, Lima, paradigmatic for the peculiarities found across the region.

As happens with other capital cities of Latin America, Lima, also called the City of the Kings (*La Ciudad de los Reyes*), is the heart of Peru. Founded on 18 January 1535, by the Spanish conqueror Francisco Pizarro, Lima was established as the Government seat of Nueva Castilla. According to the Peruvian chronicler Inca Garcilaso de la Vega,<sup>4</sup> *Lima* comes from the word *rimac*, which means “the one who talks” in the language of the Quechua Indians. *Rimac* is the name of the river and valley where Lima is located, and it would seem that Spaniards mispronounced it, turning *Rimac* into *Lima*. For modern historians Lima does not come from the Quechua *rimac* but from the name of *Ishma*, an ancient local god of the Pachacamac people who lived there long before the arrival of the *conquistadores* (conquerors) and Christianity. This might explain why *Limeños* are so enthusiastic about religion, enthusiasm commonly observed in their religious festivities like Easter and the *mes morado*, “the purple month”, October, when an image of Jesus Christ in the form of a painting as Our Lord of Miracles (*Nuestro Señor de los Milagros*) is carried in procession through the main streets of the city and people wear purple habits as devotees.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Brian Stanley’s *The Bible and the Flag* (1990) for parallels with Africa and Asia.

<sup>3</sup> See Arturo Piedra, *Evangelización Protestante en América Latina* (2000).

<sup>4</sup> Inca Garcillaso de la Vega (1539-1616), for notes on his life and works see Manuel M. Marzal, *Historia de la antropología indigenista*. (1989, p.234-54)

<sup>5</sup> October is one of the most important months for the city of Lima. Its streets turn into a huge setting where one of the most original festivities in the world takes place: the procession of *El Señor de los Milagros*. The city dresses in purple, colour of this devotion, and prepares this feast that has long ago surpassed the frontier of the purely religious to become one of the most important popular religious expressions of the country gathering people from all the socio-economic sectors of the country. It all started in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when some black men

Soon after the arrival of the *conquistadores*, Lima became the centre of the political, economic and religious activities of the new world, and its original settlers had to make room for the newcomers who found in these new lands an ideal place to live. Today, the historic Old Quarter of Lima holds a world heritage status and boasts of its beautiful cathedrals, old *casonas* with elaborately carved balconies and patios, colonial *plazas*, nooks and fountains, and *San Marcos* University (the oldest university in America founded in c.1575). These buildings and monuments surely remain as witnesses of the splendour of the old Lima.

### **A. Modernization and Urbanisation**

As time passed, the city went through a process of changes that was to culminate mainly in the twentieth-century. During the 1940's Lima began to experience the effects of urbanisation. Thousands of immigrant peasants would flee the Andes and jungle regions to migrate to the capital, drawn by the apparent or real new industrialisation that was taking place in the country. This caused the formation of the first marginal neighbourhoods or *barrios* in central zones of the city, such as *Barrios Altos*, *La Victoria*, *Rimac* and *Breña*. Surprisingly, other areas towards the south of the city —*San Isidro*, *Miraflores* and *Barranco*— were not affected and remained as exclusive sectors for the rich. The occupation of surrounding agricultural areas followed in the 50's and 60's, and new peripheral human settlements were established, giving birth then to the *pueblos jóvenes* or shantytowns that are found in the outskirts of Lima today. Up to four million people now live on the edge of the desert outside Lima. These families have been driven by poverty, violence and natural disaster to seek a better and safer life in the capital. Unfortunately, their dreams have not always come true and for the majority their condition is worse than it was before.

This Peruvian capital city has now 7,061,000 inhabitants (as of June 1997), making it the fifth largest city of Latin America, after Mexico City, São Paulo, Buenos Aires and Bogotá. But being overcrowded and not so friendly for many does not stop it from continuously receiving more people. Lima's population increases by 500 on an average day, and official sources say that this growth will carry through

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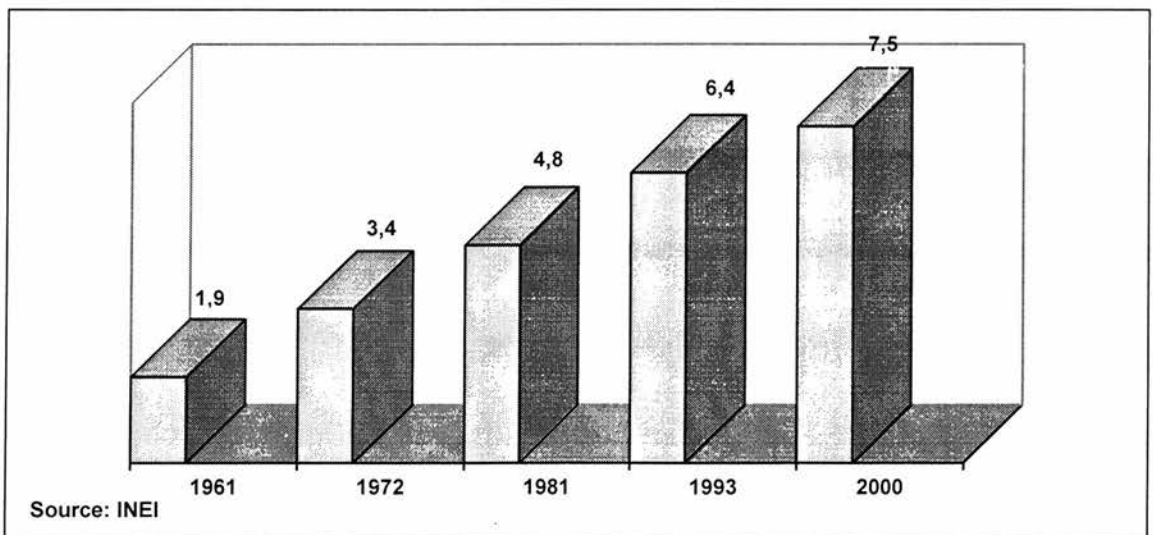
from the coast of Angola constituted a brotherhood in the district of Pachacamilla, where today is the Monastery of the Nazarenas, house of *El Señor de los Milagros*. The *Señor* is also called "Black Christ" since his image has the same colour of his painter. Taken from [www.posadas.com.pe/inkajournal/septiembre/ing\\_senior\\_milagros.htm](http://www.posadas.com.pe/inkajournal/septiembre/ing_senior_milagros.htm)

until the year 2000 when the size of the capital will reach 7,506,000 (INEI 1998:38). [See chart 1]

## B. Lima, a place where culture and traditions clash

When Pizarro and his soldiers strode into the *Rimac* Valley, they found it was already populated by peaceful indigenous people. Once Spaniards settled down here, they not only built a city that would resemble those of their homeland but also expelled anyone who might remind them of the Andes. Thus, white Europeans and Creoles<sup>6</sup> reigned in the old Lima, while peasants were forced to live beyond the city ramparts. In a sense, the same attitude has endured through the years and that is why *Limeños* tend to distance themselves from anything that comes from the *serranías* (or Andes). They do not like to be called *cholos*, which is the derogatory term for highlanders.

Metropolitan Lima in Millions  
[Chart 1]



Today, with the tremendous influx of immigrants to the capital, much of that dichotomy is changing. With the majority of people coming from different parts of the country, one can hardly tell who are Lima's original inhabitants and who are

<sup>6</sup> Person of mixed European and Indian race.

provincial Peruvians. The pre-Hispanic customs and traditions have certainly set about silently re-conquering Lima. This new situation is transforming the ethos of the city, for it has now been forced to become more open to other people's religious expressions and styles of life.

For social scientists and theologians alike, all these changes and this process of inculturation have not gone unnoticed. For example, it is no longer a rarity in Lima to see the image of the Virgin Mary carried shoulder high through the crowds of the faithful, while troupes of folk dancers accompany the procession with a passion and devotion demonstrating that this is their way to express their spirituality. Similarly, among the evangelical churches a new religious fervour has sprung up. Many groups have emerged in the last two decades whose leaders offer new ways to interpret the Bible, introducing teachings and practices totally unfamiliar to traditional *evangélicos* or born-again Christians.<sup>7</sup> They perform signs and wonders in lavish hotels, former cinemas and on television such as had never been seen before. These new pentecostal-type groups have emerged in the last two decades and observers are watching them closely, for they might change the way Christianity, and evangelicalism in particular, is viewed and understood in Latin America.

### 3. DELIMITATIONS AND AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

My research will centre on the rise of the new independent charismatic/pentecostal movement that is restructuring the Evangelical and traditional Pentecostal Church in Peru and in other countries as well. In a sense, this sector of Christianity has become the target of social scientists of religion.<sup>8</sup> My interest is to see how this mixture of people, traditions and beliefs, combined with a global spirituality, is reshaping the religious map of the region and particularly that of Peru.

It was in 1994, while living in Lima, that I noticed the astonishing growth of new pentecostal-like churches in the city. In talking with church leaders, visiting these new communities, collecting materials and reading on the subject I came to realise

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<sup>7</sup> For an explanation of the term *evangélico* see p.20.

<sup>8</sup> D. Stoll's *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?* (1990) and D. Martin's *Tongues of Fire* (1990), were among the first works to alert us to the fact that an extraordinary religious phenomenon was taking place in this part of the world.

that we were in the midst of a large religious phenomenon that would affect the course of the Evangelical Church there. In fact, some mainline churches were already beginning to show this influence especially in their hymnology, their way of conducting worship services and even in their methods of propagation of the Gospel. Moreover, it was becoming evident that conferences, seminars and concerts sponsored by charismatic/pentecostal groups were drawing people from all Protestant traditions regardless of the denomination.

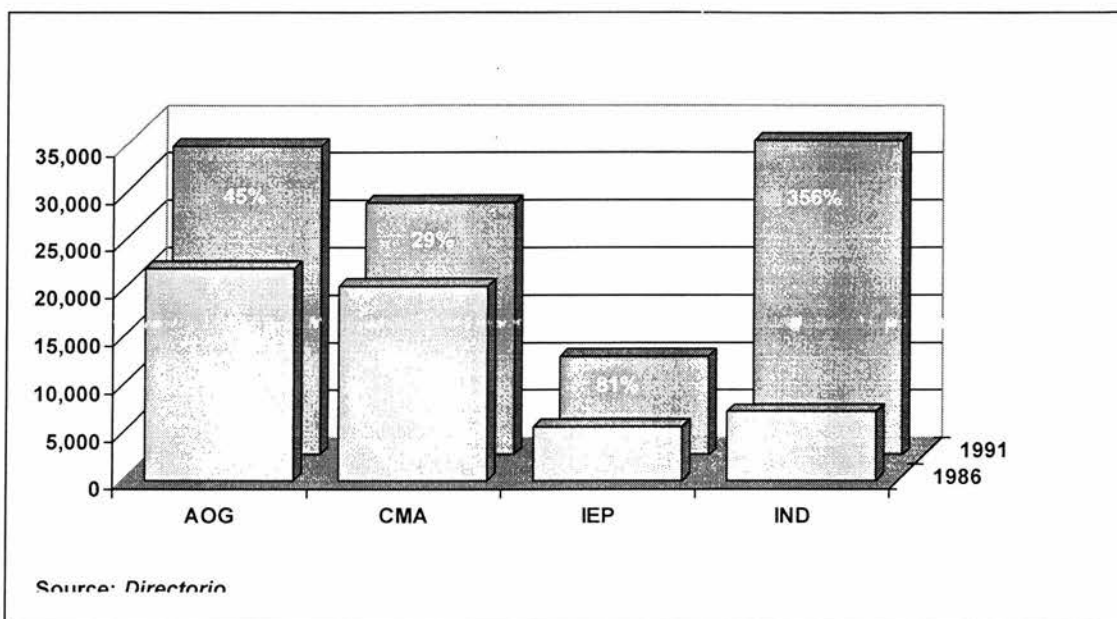
These churches have given birth consequently to new forms of popular expressions of religiosity that are now attracting thousands of people of all socio-economic levels of Latin urbanites. Some of these independent groups might easily be identified with Latin American evangelicalism. But others would hardly fall into this category due to their apparent syncretistic character which might prove to be a combination of Afro-Brazilian, indigenous rituals and Christian elements, thus producing a sort of new religious movement.

Right after I began my investigation I realised how important it was to have the whole Latin American region in perspective as a frame of reference. Due to the international and intercontinental links these groups appear to maintain, my study would have lacked an important ingredient had it focused only on Lima. It is worth noting that these new independent charismatic and pentecostal churches are no longer local, small congregations run by informally trained ministers, but really large trans-national bodies whose male and female leadership exercise managerial skills and whose “success” matches those of multinational business corporations.

But, why focus on Peru? Firstly, because it is a country where these movements are growing very rapidly, and also it will serve as an illustration of how these fellowships are developing in other Latin American nations as well. For example, officially, Protestants make up 7% of the Peruvian population (according to the last census, 1993), but it is said this figure may actually be as high as 10%. Though there is no statistical data available on new independent charismatic/pentecostal churches in Peru, it is known that this segment of the Church represents by far the largest and fastest-growing group in this nation, comprising, along with classic pentecostals, more than half the evangelical population in Lima alone. According to the National Evangelical Council of Peru (CONEP), from 1986 to 1991 Independent churches —meaning mainly neo-charismatic/pentecostals— had an extraordinary growth of 356.8%. In comparison, the three largest denominations of Lima showed a steady increase but not enough to match it: Assemblies of God

(AOG), 45.8%; Christian & Missionary Alliance (CMA), 29.5%; and *Iglesia Evangélica Peruana*, 81.2%. [See Chart 2]. It is very likely that statistics in other parts of the region would show similar percentages.<sup>9</sup>

Growth of the Largest Churches in Lima  
[Chart 2]



Secondly, because the evangelical community in Peru is quite united and compact,<sup>10</sup> this allows us more easily to identify and observe, to some degree, the new groups that appear on the scene.

<sup>9</sup> In Cali, the third largest city of Colombia, between 1992 and 1998 the Evangelical Church experienced an unparalleled growth. In November 1992 a membership of 10,235 had been reported. In December 1995 the number had increased to 28,751 (a growth of 181%). In 1998, figures were up to 168,000, and for 1999 had reached 180,000, a respectable 8.18% of the city population (Segura 1999:7). Pentecostals in Brazil had a growth of 114% in the last decade, while the increment of the national population reached 24% (Fonseca 1998:12, <http://www.sociologia-usp.br/jornadas/papers/index.htm>).

<sup>10</sup> Peruvian evangelical churches are officially represented before the government by the National Evangelical Council of Peru (CONEP). This is the only organisation that brings together practically all historical Protestant denominations and pentecostal churches, missionary societies, para-church agencies and other evangelical institutions that operate in the country. In 1992 a new organisation was established, the International Federation of Christian Pastors (FIPAC), in the hope of drawing in the wide variety of new pentecostal and charismatic churches that now exist in Peru (Amat 1996). In a way, FIPAC has achieved its goal, but still CONEP remains as the official evangelical body in Peru.

Thirdly, because I am from Lima myself, and know personally several leaders of these congregations who I knew would provide me with the information I needed to conduct the research. In the end, this proved to be very useful.

I must confess that when I embarked on this investigation I had no idea what to expect from it. As a missiologist myself, my interest in the subject was firstly expressed in terms of questions related to the nature of this phenomenon and its rapid propagation. What kind of protestantism was rising up out of this new pentecostalist movement? How broad was it? Was it having any influence on the mainline churches? Would it play a missionary role in the near future with respect to the established Evangelical Church? In searching for answers to these questions, I found it necessary to subdivide my research into three main sections, each corresponding to a particular aspect of the study.

In the first section, Part One, I deal with some exogenous factors that have contributed to this religious plurality. Specifically I focus on the impact of the post-modern world in the religious field of Latin America because, to some extent, this appears to have led to the formation of these new churches that claim to be authentic communities of faith, whose beliefs and spirituality are intimately related to both the religious effervescence of the age and the pentecostalization<sup>11</sup> of protestantism in the continent.

Our analysis of the rise and development of this phenomenon utilises new theories for interpreting the religious revitalisation of the continent, according to the proposals of leading authors in this field. In this section I also discuss the nature of these groups in relation to the Weberian approach to Church and Sect types as it is understood by catholic and protestant scholars, and its relevance in the understanding of pentecostalism.

In the second section, Part Two, I analyse the endogenous elements to the Evangelical Church that have also made religious diversification possible. Here I demonstrate that the essential identity of the new churches is to be found not in any particular denomination, but in early extremist pentecostal and charismatic practices. Although they may have connections with North American revivalist movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most of these new fellowships are mainly

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<sup>11</sup> "Pentecostalization" is a term used by pentecostal theologian Bernardo Campos (1997:94f) to explain this category of belief. See also Miguel A. Palomino, "Perú: Pentecostalización en la Iglesia Evangélica" in *ALC* (18 August 2000).

autochthonous expressions whose beliefs transcend geographical borders to become truly international religious movements.

The aim of this second section is to find out the origin and lines of relationship between these groups and the historic evangelical and pentecostal world. By observing the way they have developed, I seek to show how far they have gone towards becoming part of the religious constituency of the region, and particularly of Peru. Their highly visible church buildings and high profile in the community have made great impact in many areas of society, especially in those of mass media communication and politics. At the same time, they have set up their own theological agenda that other Christian churches cannot ignore. The revitalisation of praise and worship, and the theories of spiritual warfare and prosperity theology are just some of the most important issues they have brought into the ecclesiastical debate, not to mention a new portrait of church leaders and pastors who are perceived as role models for the new generations.

My third and last section, Part Three, gives proof that these new churches are so full of vitality that they indeed are reshaping the face of mainline evangelical and old-time pentecostal churches alike. This is particularly taking place in the fields of liturgy and mission, areas that have always been sensitive to fundamental changes, and predictably may develop into a neopentecostal style. By looking at the neopentecostal doctrines that are closely related to the way they view the church and the spiritual world and interpreting their practices and teachings, I try to analyse the new ecclesiology that seems to emerge from these new churches.

The fact that we are studying a relatively young movement—less than twenty-five years old—makes it very hard to tell what its future may be like. It is obvious, however, that this form of new protestantism has brought numerical growth to the Evangelical Church, and spiritual challenge to traditional denominations. The way that their *culto* (worship life) is performed and mission is carried out, are clear indications that we are dealing with a vigorous religious force that is both transforming the evangelical landscape and becoming a harbinger of social change to the region.

## 4. DISCIPLINES AND METHODS OF RESEARCH

Since social and religious phenomena always take place in a particular and defined context, I have used a descriptive research approach to conduct my study. This method combines social, historical and theological research, to give form to what some sociologists call a triangulation of disciplines. In addition to this, I have utilised other supporting research methods such as archive, library and Internet research, participant observation and interviews of the pastors of congregations I visited, interviews being conducted in order to clarify concepts rather than to collect them as empirical data to support any particular point of view.

No doubt, in a study of this nature the selection of documents reveals the researcher's bias and the orientation within which the investigation takes. As a Latin American evangelical minister myself, I cannot hide my preferences. So, besides reading American and European authors, my first line of research has been to investigate documents and oral information produced by new indigenous charismatic and pentecostal leaders themselves. Attention has also been paid to books and other materials written in Spanish, Portuguese and English by Latin American scholars. Here, I have tried to highlight their contributions to the dialogue with North Atlantic authors who might not be so familiar with the language and culture of this region, vital elements in grasping this kind of Latin American protestantism in its essence.

### A. Socio-religious Approach

Though it can easily be observed that this new breed of pentecostals have much in common with classic pentecostalism, it is important to see to what extent studies done on this subject treat the former as a separate movement, or alternatively regard them simply as part of the latter. Generally speaking, with the exception of investigations done particularly in Argentina and also in Brazil, where several universities have been studying this phenomenon from the late '70s,<sup>12</sup> it would seem that many works published recently make no clear distinction between these two groups.

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<sup>12</sup> Some works in this line are those of Douglas Texeira Monteiro (Texeira 1979), Rubem Alves (1979), Paul Freston (1994), and Alejandro Frigerio (1993, 1994).

In the specific case of Peru, only a few studies of this type are to be found (Amat 1999, 1996; Barrera 1999, and Ocaña 1998). Professor Manuel Marzal SJ, chairman of the Social Studies Department of the Peruvian *Pontificia Universidad Católica* (PUC), has devoted a great deal of time to studying popular religion and the evangelical growth in this country (1988, 1996a,b, 1997).<sup>13</sup> Yet he says that Catholic advances on this subject have mainly been done to understand charismatism within the Catholic Church (Sánchez 1990), though some young scholars are beginning to look at the new pentecostal groups as well. Harold Hernández is one of those scholars. He has produced research on the *Dios es Amor* group (1994), the first work of its kind on this church, one most evangelicals would consider extremist even by pentecostal standards. In his opinion more research on this field is needed to foresee the way in which these new churches will affect the established ones in the near future.<sup>14</sup>

Pentecostal theologian Bernardo Campos (1992, 1995),<sup>15</sup> agrees with Hernández. According to him not too many Peruvian scholars are paying attention to this new movement. “Classic pentecostals and neopentecostals are indeed different expressions,” Campos says, and “we should watch very closely its development because these groups show the same preoccupation for renewing the church as their predecessors did at the turn of the century.”<sup>16</sup>

## B. Participant Observation

When Christian Lalive d’Epinay published his *Haven of Masses*, a study on pentecostalism in Chile, he stated: “In this type of society, there is no room for a neutral observer” (1969:xxii). The same observation proves to be true for new pentecostals for they really expect you to participate in their services —songs, prayers, preaching, and so forth. I must confess that, coming from a faith-mission type of church myself, I did not feel a total stranger in a pentecostal setting. However, I should also say that on some occasions I just limited myself to

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<sup>13</sup> Interview carried out in his office on March 5, 1998.

<sup>14</sup> Hernández also teaches at the Catholic University. I interviewed him on 5 March 1998.

<sup>15</sup> Bernardo Campos heads the *Servicio de Información Pentecostal de América Latina y el Caribe* (Latin American and the Caribbean Pentecostal Information Centre).

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Bernardo Campos in Lima on 6 March 1998.

observing what was happening on the platform since I had never been to churches where rituals and practices were performed with such intensity and fervour.<sup>17</sup>

During my visits, every time I was asked I revealed the purpose of my presence in that place. I noticed this eased tensions on both sides: the group and myself. In some instances there was no need for this because I knew the minister and was even greeted from the pulpit. But encounters were not always so friendly. In one church of apparently working class people two ushers insisted that I include myself among the visitors whom the minister invited to come to the altar to be prayed for and anointed with oil. I tried to make them understand that the invitation was mainly for the unchurched ones but not for me because I attended another church—I even showed them my Bible to prove I “was one of them”. But all my arguments were fruitless. They kept on insisting that the invitation was for us all and, in a sense, they were right. I was a stranger there, and they expected me to take their beliefs very seriously.<sup>18</sup>

Another unexpected experience came when I ran into ex-members of churches where I had been a minister before.<sup>19</sup> After the initial surprise upon seeing each other, the question came: “Pastor, what are you doing here?” On the one hand, this situation allowed me to be introduced to the church leaders, but on the other hand, these friends wanted me to be with them all the time which did not help me to accomplish my work. In view of this, I asked the students of my course MS62C *Nuevas Corrientes Misiológicas* (New Missiological Trends) of the *Seminario Bíblico Alianza* in Lima, to complete the visits to these particular groups and let me go to some others instead. This arrangement worked well, and they all did a great job, seeking information and gathering material of various types. Afterwards, we met for evaluation and cross-reference and to share our findings. Some of the students returned to the same group in the following weeks. This helped greatly in the process of selecting whom to interview for we wanted to handle this aspect carefully due to the limited time we had for field research (Ayella 1993:112-113).

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<sup>17</sup> José Míguez (1995:64) says that the “advantage” of neutrality secures objectivity in the process of observing the group, but it has a limitation for it makes it difficult to access “the data of subjectivity which the researcher does not believe in, although this is the very heart of his/her research.”

<sup>18</sup> James Richardson (1991:68), quoting R. Bellah, says that “the researcher should avoid being reductionist in his or her interpretation and should instead take the beliefs of the group seriously, treating them as truth and worthy of respect”.

<sup>19</sup> It is known that most of the new churches attract people of mainline denominations, including that of traditional pentecostal type as well.

From this group, Gina Barbosa, Sofia La Torre and Enio Palomino continued collecting data to complete the information we aimed to obtain.

While visiting and observing the churches, we found that files, documents and other written materials that might have shed some light on the origins and beliefs of these groups, were not in existence or not available to the public. Relevant data, therefore, had to be retrieved by talking to church members, observing their practices and rituals, and taking notes of the various symbols they used in their services.

It was particularly interesting to note that every group owned sophisticated recording equipment which enabled them to video and/or audiotape their services, conferences, classes and other activities. Needless to say, these tapes became very useful as new sources of investigation. Here the researcher has access not only to the “primary message” (sermons, song lyrics, teachings), but to the “para-message” too, such as gestures, movements, sounds, lights, which are equally important. Likewise, while manuals of systematic doctrine are not perceived as necessary vehicles of theological truth, the new leaders have other means to convey their message, mainly by repeating certain themes week after week, or singing songs with messages on specific topics, together with the use of many symbols —Bible, anointing oil, laying on of hands, banners, and so forth— which communicate better and more effectively than written words. All these elements made a very rich source of information that enhanced our understanding of the neopentecostal worldview.

### **C. Interviews**

To complement the participant observation research, I interviewed some pastors when I was not able to access other means of information pertaining to the beginnings of the church, its connections with other organisations abroad, future church projects and plans, members’ attitude towards traditional denominations, and the ways they relate themselves to the evangelical world. With few exceptions, all of them were very kind and receptive, and made passionate comments on the way they understand church work.

I followed “direct” and “non-direct” methods of interview. In the first case, I used a questionnaire with closed questions (giving only yes/no options), multiple-choice

questions (where the interviewee has to choose one of the options), and open questions (for the person to reply as he/she wishes). The fact that some interviews took place during the visits to the churches made it possible to verify the answers against the church's actions. In the second case, the persons I talked with were not given a questionnaire but I had a scheme to follow instead. In these in-depth interviews, questions were of the open-replies type which covered four areas: origin and organisation of the group, methods of propagation, rituals and practices, and finances and relationship with other groups. When possible the interviews were recorded. If not, I took notes during the conversation or else immediately afterwards.

#### **D. Theological Analysis and Reflection**

For many observers, the growth of the new independent charismatic and pentecostal churches fits the category of a social phenomenon, for it accords with the social and political changes the region has been through in the last two decades. Yet we are not to forget we are dealing with a religious expression that deserves to be treated as such, taking into account its spiritual dimension. In the end, it is the religious self-consciousness of the believer that plays a key role in the achievement of any spiritual transformation, as this movement claims to bring. It would not be a surprise then that theologians are taking the overwhelming growth of these groups as a possible "spiritual awakening" that might spread powerfully through the whole continent in the years to come.<sup>20</sup>

To interpret its theological implications, I have chosen to view the movement from a particular perspective: its *culto* (worship life) and the manner in which neopentecostals propagate their teachings through it. The worship life is the most visible area in these communities, which provides us enough insights to forecast the nature of evangelical Christianity in Latin America in the near future.

#### **E. Criteria for Selecting the Churches**

I used two straightforward criteria for the selection of churches I visited in Peru:

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<sup>20</sup> *Boletín Teológico* No 68, 1997, devotes the whole issue to the topic: "¿Hay un 'avivamiento' en la Argentina?". See also *Articles On The Argentine Revival*, in <http://home.istar.ca/~chip/ARGENTINA.html>

- Churches had to be located in the Greater Lima area, and belong to or have some kind of relationship with the evangelical, pentecostal or charismatic community of the country or abroad.
- Churches must have been born in or after 1980.

The *Directorio Evangélico* (Church Directory) published by the National Evangelical Council of Peru (CONEP 1985, 1991, 1996, 1998), helped me to elaborate the list of the communities that met these criteria. After a carefully consideration, I chose four that, apart from being very stable groups with a high profile in the city, represent the wide variety of new pentecostalism:

- 1) *Iglesia Bíblica Emmanuel* (Emmanuel Bible Church), founded in 1987 and affiliated to the Assemblies of God. It is an offshoot of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, with a strong 4,000 plus membership which meets in a church building which they own in the residential zone of *San Isidro*. It runs a Bible training school and has other branches in different sectors of the city, the provinces and abroad.
- 2) *Iglesia Comunidad Cristiana Agua Viva* (Living Water Christian Community Church), founded by a former Catholic Charismatic leader in 1985. They meet in the premises of a cinema in the middle-class district of *Lince*, but they have just bought a large piece of land in one of the most expensive areas of Lima, *Miraflores*, where they are beginning to build their sanctuary and offices. Among the new independent churches, *Agua Viva* is the one that has experienced the most dramatic growth: more than 6,000 members in twelve years. This church runs a weekly TV program of national coverage, and a Bible Institute as well. Its pastor was founder-President of FIPAC<sup>21</sup>.
- 3) *Misión Cristiana Camino de Vida* (Path of Life Christian Mission), located in the exclusive zone of *Corpac, San Isidro*, is the fruit of the missionary expansion of an American Charismatic church. They run a Christian pub, as well as other Christian entertainment businesses. They have work outside Lima and support missionary efforts in other countries.

- 4) *Iglesia “Yo Soy”* (“I Am” Church), meets in a rented premises in Lince district. Its pastor, Hugo Hoyos, left the Catholic Charismatic community where he was converted in the early ‘80s, due to lack of support from his priest. He then started this congregation that now has more than 2,000 members thanks to the “Group of Twelve” strategy.<sup>22</sup> This method was developed by the *Misión Carismática Internacional* of Bogota which, with over 100,000 members, is regarded the largest church in Colombia. “Yo Soy” has strong connections with this Colombian church.

Apart from these churches, I visited several other fellowships in different countries of Central and South America as well. The purpose was to see what these communities had in common, and to what extent they were mirrored in those of Lima. These visits took effect between 1997 and 2000, and included San José, Costa Rica; Guatemala City, Guatemala; Bogotá and Cali, Colombia; and Buenos Aires, Argentina.<sup>23</sup>

## **F. Data compilation**

Primary data was collected in Peru, Colombia, Guatemala and Costa Rica through (1) direct and participant observation of church services; (2) recording of Sunday sermons, prayers and church choruses; (3) focussed and informal interviews; (4) collection of teaching materials, audio and video tapes, and church bulletins; (5) artefact collection, such as flyers, handouts and other material for public distribution, pictures, and anointed handkerchiefs; (6) collection of popular press clips related to the activities of these groups; (7) regular consultation with key evangelical leaders to test observations and revisions of conceptual framework.

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<sup>22</sup> For an account of this strategy, see Joel Comiskey’s *G-12*, 1999.

<sup>23</sup> During the same period I also visited other Latin American churches in England, the United States and Switzerland. I found that despite the hardship the Latin immigrants may encounter in these countries, their church services are full and they show the same vitality as they do at home. The *Comunidad Cristiana de Londres* (CCL) is by far the best example. This church that meets in a rental premises in downtown London, is not only reaching out to the increasing Latin community arriving in the country, but it has also made Kensington Temple, a solid well-known and established church, adopt the same strategy they are using for church growth. With a strong and growing 2,500 plus members, the CCL is now one of the largest congregations of the city. See “The G-12 Vision Explained” in *Revival Times*, Kensington Temple magazine, Vol 3, Issue 2, February 2001.

Other data was gathered from published materials on the Internet, where literally thousands of online books and articles on pentecostalism are now available. For library research I worked mainly at the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World and New College in the University of Edinburgh. For dissertations, theses and other particular materials, I visited the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (Oxford), *Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano* (San José, Costa Rica), *Departamento Ecuménico de Investigaciones* (San José, Costa Rica), *Seminario Teológico Centro Americano* (Guatemala City), *Seminario Bíblico Teológico Neo-Pentecostal* (Guatemala City), *Seminario Bautista Internacional* (Cali), *Centro de Documentación del Centro Evangélico de Misiología Andino-Amazonica* (Lima), and the Department of Social Studies of the *Universidad Católica del Perú* (Lima).

### **G. Definitions, Outcomes and Remarks**

Throughout this work I use terms and concepts that need to be clarified to prevent confusion and misunderstanding. The first has to do with the designation of this new type of Christianity, which is the object of my study. As authors use different descriptive names, a more particular definition is in order because this matter is not as simple as it might seem to be.<sup>24</sup>

For many outsiders independent groups are simply pentecostal churches with certain peculiarities in their practises. Some scholars prefer to refer to them as “Popular Protestantism” (Deiros 1994:113-133), “New Pentecostal Streams” (Míguez 1995:58-59), or even “Third World Indigenous Groups” (Villafañe 1993:86-87) because they differ in many aspects from classic pentecostalism.<sup>25</sup>

The designation “Popular Protestantism”, tacitly implies that the attitudes, beliefs and practises of these groups are somehow distinguishable from those of the traditional and historic churches (González Martínez 1987:39), and their *cultos* and

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<sup>24</sup> Pentecostal theologian Juan Sepúlveda says that “neo-pentecostalism, with its strong emphasis on a sort of ‘prosperity theology’, is a rather different phenomenon which should be studied as a category of its own” (1998:192).

<sup>25</sup> In reading and discussing on this theme, I certainly could not ignore the close relation that exists between this new breed of pentecostalism and the traditional pentecostal movement (Assemblies of God, the Pentecostal Evangelical Church of Peru, Pentecostal Methodist Church, and the like). I decided, however, not to deal with the latter, except naturally when my study required it.

other activities are performed in an environment where emotion prevails rather than reason. Generally speaking, “popular” conveys the idea of a quasi sectarian group made of uneducated people from marginalized sectors of the population. This was certainly the way in which traditional pentecostals were seen in the past. But I am afraid this categorisation does not apply so accurately to the new groups now, mainly because these churches draw people not only from popular classes, but from the professional and middle-class as well. They have members in places of prominence and influence in their countries, TV programmes, and own radio stations and attractive properties in exclusive areas of Latin American cities. In short, this movement then involves people from the various social and economic levels of society, and therefore to call it “popular” will not be doing justice to the nature of its ethos. In any case, “informal” would be preferable to “popular” since these churches do not follow congregational evangelical schemes.

“New Pentecostal Streams” might be a more helpful categorisation because it underlines the socio-economic and cultural differences from old style pentecostals. The category of “Third World Indigenous Groups” seems closer to our objective, yet not fully appropriate either, as some of these churches are not native but have ecclesiastical links with the United States and/or some other Latin American nations.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, this sector of Christianity is a mixture of identities that reflects its international character and definitely sets it apart from classic pentecostalism.

In talking with leaders and members of these communities, one quickly notes that they see themselves as independent charismatic/pentecostal churches for, although they have no official connections with mainstream Protestant and pentecostal denominations, they still hold to some doctrines and observances identified with pentecostalism, such as glossolalia and faith healing, and maintain fraternal relationships with National Evangelical Councils and Fraternities in their own countries.

Here too “the question of definition is not only a semantic but a theological one”, as Hollenweger (1980:68) has put it when he talks about charismatic movements. How then should we name the new groups that have split from conventional churches because their views cannot be contained any more within the non-pentecostal tradition? Likewise, pentecostal religion has always claimed the “Pentecost experience” as its core, “Pentecost experience” meaning mainly

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<sup>26</sup> e.g. *Misión Cristiana Camino de Vida* church has roots in the USA.

“speaking in tongues”. Though it is true that some contemporaneous pentecostal groups may still regard “tongues” as the distinctive sign for entering the community, there are now other less ethereal elements with which they identify and which have become part of their ethos. These new elements, such as “spiritual warfare” and the “prosperity gospel”, may be more compatible with the historical, urban and post-modern conditions of the age, and tend to reaffirm the consumerist values of the middle-class. They offer an optimistic ideal of prosperity within people's reach, contradicting to a large extent the so-called “religion of the poor” for which pentecostalism has always been known.

For the purpose of this study I prefer then to characterise them as New Independent Charismatic and Pentecostal Groups, for it seems to me that this designation conveys the nature and dynamism that identifies these groups, as well as being a term that embraces the wider range of expressions they represent. Naturally, as we move through the pages of this work we will see more about this characterisation. So for the sake of simplicity and clarity, this is the nomenclature I will use to identify these fellowships. However, more succinctly, I will delineate them “neopentecostals”, bearing in mind that “neo” has no other connotation than “new”.

Other terms that need to be defined in this context are “protestant” and “evangelical”. In a continent where catholicism has considered itself as “the Church”, it is necessary to understand what these terms mean. In Latin America, *evangélico* is preferred over *protestante*. However, it is worth noting that *evangélico*, the literal translation of “evangelical”, does not necessarily have the same theological connotation as that in English where it is associated with biblical literalism, social conservatism and religious fundamentalism. In general, *evangélico* encompasses all Protestant churches whose roots are in the Reformation, Anabaptist tradition and the American holiness movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Samuel Escobar (1977, 1998) makes a much clearer distinction when he says that Latin American protestantism must be classified according to its theology, history and position with respect to the ecumenical world. Thus he speaks of “Classic Protestantism” that includes all historical denominations coming from the Reformation; “Evangelical Protestantism”, which is the result of the different independent missions' evangelistic efforts; and “Pentecostal Protestantism”, that is the fruit of the European, American and national pentecostal

movements.<sup>27</sup> In this work, I will use then “protestantism” and “evangelicalism” synonymously, and “pentecostalism” when I want to refer to the classic pentecostal movement.<sup>28</sup>

After clarifying aspects pertaining to terminology, a brief comment on the outcomes of the research is in order. Firstly, I intend to engage in the ecclesiological debate as we will review new ways to understand what “church” is. The Weberian discussion on church and sect would seem insufficient when it comes to defining the new pentecostal communities, for they have other structures, rationality and spirituality that escape the patterns used by sociologists and catholic theologians to typologise religious groups.

Secondly, I aim to spell out the theological agenda neopentecostals have already set up which evangelical leaders and other Christians can no longer ignore. Themes such as “spiritual warfare”, “signs and wonders”, and restoration of the Church are just some examples. The review of this agenda may imply rethinking old-time approaches to church practice, which eventually will define a new kind of evangelicalism that might affect the message taken by Latin American missionaries to other parts of the world.

Thirdly, I hope to work out some basis on which to forecast the future of evangelical Christianity in the region. No doubt, neopentecostal and protestant leaders need to establish better lines of communication and co-operation if the church is to remain stable and strong. Yet, the big question is what will happen if the new leaders fail to consolidate what has already been achieved in terms of evangelical presence in society. Needless to say, the independent charismatic and pentecostal groups can easily be classified as “mega-churches” thanks to their large constituency.<sup>29</sup> But church health is not only to be measured by membership numbers. Other factors have to be taken into account and I will propose some issues along these lines which can help to initiate a dialogue towards that end.

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<sup>27</sup> In some regards pentecostalism cannot be seen as synonymous of protestantism, especially the protestantism linked to the Reformation. Generally speaking, the term “protestant” carries strong feelings of intellectualism which is contrary to the spirit of pentecostals who are regarded as emotional people with little interest in theological erudition.

<sup>28</sup> See the chapter “The Evangelical Face of Latin American Protestantism” in Míguez 1995:35-56.

<sup>29</sup> e.g. César Castellanos’ *Misión Carismática Internacional* church claims over 100,000 members in Bogotá, Colombia. For a testimonial account of this church, see *Sueña y Ganará el Mundo* (Castellanos 1998).

A last word but certainly not the least important. The question of language is essential to this research. I used Spanish as my principal tool for communication. My intention has been to have the voice of the neopentecostal communities expressed throughout all this work. Therefore, although this work is written in English, I have tried to do it in a way that will approximate as closely as possible to the self-understanding of the people whom I am studying. This thesis is purposely couched in an “informal” style which attempts to mirror the context of these groups. This is the whole point of my investigation. If these pages accomplish that, then the effort has been worthwhile.

## CHAPTER 2

### CLUES FOR INTERPRETING THE RELIGIOUS REVITALISATION OF LATIN AMERICA

The rapid changes that are taking place on the religious map of Latin America have sociological and theological implications that may change the course of Evangelical Christianity in the region. In this chapter I will first make a thorough analysis of this phenomenon in the context of the post-modern debate, which might explain the rise and development of new pentecostal-type groups and their connections with other similar movements across Latin and North America. Second, I will review the serious attempts made in recent years to interpret this outburst of religiosity in the region, in order to see how it has inserted itself into mainstream Latin American Christianity.

#### 1. THE POST-MODERN DEBATE AND THE SPIRITUAL QUEST

For many observers the religious effervescence that is taking place in Latin America is not to be regarded as an isolated phenomenon, but as part of a more complex worldwide movement of spiritual revitalisation.<sup>30</sup> Though some would interpret it as millenarian expressions proper to the end of an era (Cox 1996:22), it is obvious that people today are more interested in the spiritual or non-material world than they were twenty or thirty years ago. The growing curiosity about nature and the environment; alternative medicine in forms of acupuncture, aromatherapy, herbal medicine and faith healing; and soul cultivation through meditation or Gregorian music, would seem to indicate this trend even in the most industrialised nations. In the last few years, the popularity of TV series that have to do with paranormal dimensions and talk-shows where guardian angels, guide

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<sup>30</sup> Similar cases are happening in Europe and other industrialised countries where governments are discussing whether or not to control the new religions' activities. See "Cult Control" in *Time* (European issue), Vol 149, No 4, 27 January 1997, 50-58; "¿Por qué cambian de Dios?", in *Tiempo*, (Madrid), No 757, 4 November 1996, 62-65; and Mario Vargas Llosa's article, "En defensa de las sectas", in *Caretas*, No 1454, Lima, 27 February 1997.

spirits and life after death are common topics, has simply been astonishing.<sup>31</sup> Book sales related to New Age, only in the United States, increased from 5.6 million in 1992 to 9.7 million in 1995 according to the American Booksellers Association. But it is not only TV programmes and books that people are interested in. *Forbes* magazine says that about 2,000 million dollars are spent annually in the United States on aromatic therapies, macrobiotic foods and other kinds of spiritual goods. Another 30,000 million should be added to this sum, which is representing what people spend on alternative medicine, spiritual therapies and healers of all types (Chamberlain 1997:24,27).<sup>32</sup> Although the above information is primarily drawn up from the American context, it is worth noting that Latin American TV, for example, runs mostly programmes and series imported from the United States, and that people of the region are fascinated with the “American way of life”. Thus, whatever becomes trendy in the States will be fashionable among the “Creole yuppies” of Latin America.<sup>33</sup> This inclination can easily be observed by simply walking the streets of any city. One will soon notice that the names of the local shops and malls are in English: “Fifth Avenue”, “MegaCity”, “New Fashion”, “Pedro’s Corner”, “Pardos’ Chicken” and so forth. The use of the English language is not purely ornamental but a way of business security, for if a shop, company or school has an English name in the front, it is very likely that more people will pay attention to it.<sup>34</sup>

### **A. The End of Modernity: the End of an Illusion**

In 1965 Harvard theologian Harvey Cox (1965:1,3) wrote: “The rise of urban civilisation and the collapse of traditional religion are the two main hallmarks of our era and are closely related movements... The age of the secular city, the epoch whose ethos is quickly spreading into every corner of the globe, is an age of no religion at all.” Thirty years after this statement, we see that as cities continue to grow tremendously all over the world, so does religion despite Cox’s prediction. No doubt, the religious awareness in the western countries are

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<sup>31</sup> e.g. *The X-Files* (popular Sci-Fi show on Fox, now running its eighth season), and *Touched by an Angel* (weekly TV series on CBS) are just a few examples.

<sup>32</sup> These figures are bigger than most third world countries’ foreign debt.

<sup>33</sup> This is what some observers call the “Miami culture”. See “En el umbral del nuevo limeño”. *Caretas* No 1551, Lima, 21 January 1999.

<sup>34</sup> See “¿Somos derrotistas los peruanos?”, Sunday magazine, *El Comercio* newspaper, Lima, 28 February 2000.

experiencing today would have been hard to foresee it has no precedent in our century. Cox (1996:xv) himself recognises it when he says that from the time of publication of his *The Secular City*; “religion —or at least some religions— seems to have gained a new lease on life. Today it is secularity, not spirituality, that may be headed for extinction.”

The cause of this shift would seem to be the advent of the post-modern age, although some are not quite sure whether this is post-modern or just a radical modern period (Amaladoss 1996:235). Different authors would affirm that post-modernity began right after the 1950s. For example, some theologians view the decade of the 1960’s, with its emphasis on the "the death of God", as the decisive turning point because “even professedly Christian thinkers abandoned transcendent deity, meaning, and purpose” to endorse secular humanism’s social agenda that eventually “became less and less compelling in a universe of impersonal processes and historical relativism,” in other words, just “raw naturalism” (Henry 1995:35). Authors like Arnold Toynbee would rather point out World War I as the episode that brought doubts and disappointment on the achievements that modernity could bring to the world, and therefore 1914 marked modernity’s death (Mohler 1995:68). But for others it is the collapse of communism in the Eastern block that should be seen as the last bastion of the modern era. The epoch that began with the storming of the Bastille in July 1789 and ignited the French Revolution, ended with the collapse of the Berlin wall in 1989 (Oden 1995:23) and with it a period of hope for many died as well.

Before going any further, we need to first clarify the terms “post-modern”, “postmodernism”, and “post-modernity”. For the purpose of this study, “post-modern” will be used to refer to a period of time characterised by many social and cultural phenomena called “post-modernity”, these being mainly caused by the ideology or worldview called “postmodernism”. These definitions may vary from those of authors like Jürgen Habermas (1987) and others who see “modern” as a historical age; "modernity" as the socio-economic process necessary for our society to reach the next stage of technological and economic organization; and “modernisms” as cultural projects that renew the symbolic practices of society. Accordingly, “postmodernism” would refer to something cultural, seen in cultural activities, e.g. arts, while “post-modernity” would refer to a social formation or condition.

In fact, the definition of postmodernism has been changing since its birth. As suggested by Hans Bertens (1995:10), postmodernism rises from literary-critical origins in the 1950s to a level of global conceptualisation in the 1980s. For this reason, although many associate postmodernism with the French deconstructionists such as Jacques Derrida, some insist on the distinction between postmodernism and post-structuralism or deconstructionism due to the fact that postmodernism has its origin in America in 1950s. In the late 1950s, postmodernism referred to a complex of anti-modernist artistic strategies. It can be either a radicalism of the self-reflexive moment within modernism, a turning away from narrative and representation, or an explicit return to narrative and representation, or it can be both, depending on the artistic discipline (e.g. painting, architecture, literary criticism, music, photography, and so forth). In the 1960's, postmodernism gained momentum in the U.S. thanks to the attitude of counterculture in that particular period, which many would regard as a political and anti-modernist position.

During the 1970s and 1980s, other prominent figures such as Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault and Richard Rorty made significant contributions to the debate.<sup>35</sup> The impact of these poststructuralists on the redefinition of postmodernism is indeed significant. On the theoretical level, the poststructuralist practices appeared in all the humanities in the late 1970s, first in the field of literary criticism and then, in the course of 1980s, they filtered into and affected a large number of disciplines, in which their intellectual premises are usually simply called post-modern or postmodernist.

Basically, these authors attacked foundationalist notions of language and representation, assuming the reality of textuality and signs, and that of representation that does not actually represent. Their emphasis was on the workings of power, because it accepts that knowledge and language have become inseparable from power. While the first moment declared the demise of representation but ignored the question of authorship (e.g. Whose history gets told? In whose name? For what purpose?), the second moment went further by addressing the question of subjectivity and authorship, interrogating the institutions that supported the discourses, and working against the hegemony of any system.

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<sup>35</sup> See for example an analysis of these interpretations in Steven Conner, *Postmodernist Culture – An Introduction to the Theories of the Contemporary*, 1992.

To some extent, these theories dethroned certain idolatries of western modernity. They did not dethrone the myth of autonomy, but they did dethrone the myth of universal reason that relegated religion to the private sphere. Such dethronement was good news for the Church. Firstly, because universal reason did not acknowledge the particularity of all human thought and knowledge—all human beings think from a particular place within a particular worldview. Secondly, because modernity had not taken seriously the fallen character of human cognitive processes. Neopentecostal groups are benefiting from these new concepts for they are restructuring old religious narratives—such as the conflict between the powers of darkness and powers of light—in order to explain the nature and purpose of the Church in a post-modern world. In doing so, it would seem that they are telling us we will always have metanarratives with us.

## **B. The beginning of Postmodernity and Spiritual Search**

Since the idea of progress promised by modernism has disappointed many,<sup>36</sup> postmodernism has now been able to penetrate deeply into our everyday life. Thus, deconstructionism, anti-foundationalism and relativism are no longer just philosophical discourses proper for academic circles, but tangible expressions in our society as well. What happens when metanarratives do not deliver what they promise? Or when “progress” offers security and that offer is no longer believable? Tomlinson comments that ideologists are losing credibility and fewer people want to gather around to listen because modernity has brought them great disillusionment. This author (1997:75-76) states:

Out of the crumbling Western culture a new post-modern world is emerging. It is a world which understands itself through biological rather than mechanistic models; a world where people see themselves as belonging to the environment, rather than over it or apart from it; a world distrustful of institutions, hierarchies, centralised bureaucracies and male dominated organisations. It is a world in which networks and local grass-roots activities take precedence over large-scale structures and grand designs; a

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<sup>36</sup> For many, the earthly paradise promised by the myth of “progress” has in fact left us with a despoiled wilderness. The environmental crisis is another indication of the death of progress. But there are also the voices of women, of aboriginal peoples, of colonised peoples, who are saying that progress was perhaps good news for one segment of the world's population, but invariably at the expense of others.

world in which the book age is giving way to the screen age; a world hungry for spirituality, yet dismissive of systematised religion. It is a world in which image and reality are so deeply intertwined that is difficult to draw the line between the two. Those who think that postmodernism is a figment of the academic imagination, a passing intellectual fad, could not be more wrong. Postmodernism has flowed right out of the musty corridors of academia into the world of popular culture; it is on the pages of youth magazines, on CD boxes and the fashion pages of *Vogue*. It has abolished the old distinction between “high” and “low” art, and created new art forms out of things like music videos, urban graffiti and computer graphics. Few things could, in fact, sum up the post-modern situation better than the term “virtual reality”, for it is a world in which the old certainties are dissolving.

Tomlinson’s description of the post-modern world points out very accurately the characteristics of post-modernity in western culture. For many, post-modernity, as currently applied, seems to be an umbrella concept covering styles, movements, shifts, and approaches in the fields of art, history, architecture, literature, political sciences, economics, and philosophy —not to mention theology. Furthermore, “the term is imprecise, irregular and malleable, but also highly marketable. It is inserted into book titles, advertising slogans, and academic course descriptions with abandon.” (Mohler 1995:68).

Within this perspective, post-modern culture has therefore become a plurality of sub-cultures corresponding to a variety of social groups that seek their own right to exist and co-exist with other sub-cultures in western society. For some authors, this may well mean that “post-modern culture is both materialist and psychic, porno and discreet, innovative and retro, consumerist and ecological, sophisticated and spontaneous, spectacular and creative. The future will not have to choose between one of these tendencies but will have to develop a dualistic logic”.<sup>37</sup> In real terms, these post-modern tendencies and dualistic logic can be seen in operation in at least three areas that, for the purpose of this study, are relevant to understanding the proliferation of new religious movements in the world.

Firstly, these postmodernist tendencies have already permeated people's way of thinking, especially that of the youth. In this post-modern age all truth becomes

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<sup>37</sup> Gladys Adamson, Guadalajara University, *Posmodernidad y la lógica cultural del capitalismo tardío*. [www.cucsh.udg.mx/CUCSH/Sincronia/winter97.htm](http://www.cucsh.udg.mx/CUCSH/Sincronia/winter97.htm). Accessed 16 November 1999.

relative. Nobody has the right to impose what he or she believes on others. We are therefore in no position to say that points of views different from ours are wrong. Tolerance becomes the highest virtue and no judgment should be passed. Phrases like "there is no absolute" and "religious pluralism" have now become common expressions. Particularly for the so-called "generation-X", metadiscourses do not have any appeal at all for they are convinced that truth is not what big theories and dogmas will tell us, but what we find out ourselves (González Dorado 1993:148). We are to find our own truth and be open to accept other "truths" that for others are perfectly valid. Being able to have a life or religion *à la carte* would seem to be the utopia of post-modern times. Ironically, it is this manner of conceiving truth that is taking the western world to its spiritual quest that will not be, necessarily, through the conventional religions —Protestantism or Catholicism (Tomlinson 1997:78)— as many would have expected, but rather in the form of independent-charismatic types of groups. It is there where many feel more at ease.

Secondly, the simulated world of image-enhanced hyper-reality is distancing us from contextual reality. It is important to note that although the post-modern age rejects the Cartesian ideal in the modern world (i.e., the external world objectively exists and can be studied objectively), it ironically intensifies another aspect of modernism which is human autonomy, the belief that humans can do whatever they want, even create reality for themselves. In a sense, we cannot ignore the fact that this inclination carries a certain pleasure in what is ephemeral. No doubt cyberspace is bringing a change of life habits in young people, to the extent that virtual reality is becoming not only a technology for the brain and mind but also for the soul. This cybernetic search for spirituality may explain the rise and fall of new religious expressions like "Heaven's Gate", the Californian Internet religious group composed of white middle-class sophisticated professionals, whose leader, Marshall Applewhite, led them to a collective suicide in March 1997. Applewhite and 39 of his followers committed suicide at a house in Rancho Santa Fe, California, seeking redemption in a space ship they believed was following the Hale-Bopp comet, as advertised in their website.<sup>38</sup>

Thirdly, religions are seen as commodities. In both modern and premodern times, religion involved beliefs about what is real. Today religion is not seen as a set of beliefs about what is real and what is not. Rather, religion is seen as a preference, a simple matter of choice. People believe in what they like. Very frequently, intellect

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<sup>38</sup> See [www.heavensgate.com/](http://www.heavensgate.com/)

gives place to will and spiritual experience. Perhaps this explains why new religious movements take in so many intelligent and well-educated people. Even in evangelical churches we often hear that believers like their church because the people there are caring or the pastor speaks on things relevant to their lives and not boring theology. Religious traditions, which used to be authoritatively imposed, now have to be marketed and have become consumer commodities. If there is no absolute and everything is relative, there is no point in arguing with others on what is true and what is not. Instead one can focus on subjective feelings and enjoy the experience as much as possible. This trend would seem to permeate the religious climate today.

In observing the rise of many religious groups lately, the Argentinean sociologist F. Mallimaci (1993:27) says: "This is not a passing phenomenon of 'sects invasion' or casual arrival of 'new religious movements', but a deep restructure of the religious field and the emergence of new beliefs that are expressed within catholicism and other religious manifestations as well." Certainly, if we observe people's religious behaviour in the last years, we will notice, for example, that what may have begun with a certain preference for Gregorian music,<sup>39</sup> has now led to the rediscovery of ancient forms of spirituality like Taizé in France and Celtic in Great Britain.<sup>40</sup> The pentecostal-charismatic movement is also reaping a harvest from this fascination with spirituality. In countries like Great Britain, where each month Christian churches are closed down,<sup>41</sup> charismatics are revitalising traditional denominations,

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<sup>39</sup> *Santo Domingo de Silos* monks, in Spain, are regarded among the first ones in successfully recording a CD with mediaeval music sung in Latin. In the United States, the trapist monks of Vermont did the same but with ancient songs both in Latin and English. The United Kingdom has the *Mediaeval Babes*, a group composed only of women, which interprets Latin songs from the 13<sup>th</sup> century and whose record hit the list of the "Top 10" in Christmas of 1997. This sudden interest for "flat singing" is also seen in Latin America. In 1994 Father Bernardo Velásquez Anaque, Colombian and member of the Carmelites community, hit the musical billboard of his country when his CD of Gregorian chants competed in popularity and sales with modern singers. (*De Villa de Leyva, Colombia. Cantos Gregorianos*, by Father Bernardo Velásquez Anaque. Compact Disc produced by SONOLUX, Colombia, 1994)

<sup>40</sup> Taizé is an ecumenical and international community founded in 1940, in Taizé, France, by Brother Roger. For sound clips, prayers and meditative singing of this community, see <http://www.taize.fr/en/index.htm>. The Iona Community, founded in 1938 by the Rev George MacLeod, is an ecumenical Christian community that is committed to seeking new ways of living the Gospel in today's world. See <http://www.iona.org.uk/>

<sup>41</sup> If church membership continues to decline, experts say that in 40 years' time the Church of Scotland will have no members at all.

preventing them from extinction.<sup>42</sup> A similar phenomenon is taking place in other European nations too, like Spain where the *Hallelujahs* —the name given to pentecostals— are targeting Gypsies in an attempt to profit from their rich religious potential (González Dorado 1993:149); and Switzerland, where African and *Latino* immigrants of the Independent Churches (mostly pentecostal and evangelical), go out into the streets to convert people to their faith.

Mallimaci's statement may go even farther. In Latin American countries, the irruption of neopentecostal groups are challenging even the belief people had in government and civil institutions. While this would seem to fall, belief in religion remains high as the increment in new churches' membership would show. One of the reasons religion is up is that religion is increasingly doing what politics once did: offering alternatives to achieve better life. The new religious leaders are preaching not only moral values but new values of the free market as well. They also seem more effective in carrying them out, as churches get things done because they generate social capital.<sup>43</sup> They possess the moral authority to call people to service on behalf of others, something most politicians and civil servants lack. By doing so, they are creating new jobs that economists would label as "informal", and giving people hope which is essential to endure the hardship of unpleasant socio-political policies that affect thousands of individuals.

This dynamic is perhaps the best sign to understand the effects of post-modernity in non-industrialised countries. Here it comes in the form of the decline of centralism (a return to "primal society"?),<sup>44</sup> and through the phenomenon of street vendors and small informal businesses, which is a form of survival rather than an expression of progress. Furthermore, post-modernity in this context also means to become more

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<sup>42</sup> In *Frontline Scotland*, 6 May 1997 at 9:30 p.m., the BBC1 showed a 30-minute report on *The Toronto Blessing* and its impact on British traditional churches. The BBC2 aired another report conducted by Philip Differ on cases of healing which occurred in Protestant and Catholic churches —*Right To Differ*, 29 January 1998 at 8:00 p.m. Both programmes make very clear the charismatic influence on mainstream historical churches.

<sup>43</sup> Colombian newspaper *El Espectador* (December 1997) published in its Economy supplement "500 Good Financial Tips of the Year". After recognising the most successful businesses of 1997, the editors would suggest the "creation of an evangelical congregation in the neighbourhood" as one of the best ideas to reach economic success. Among the reasons: steady income, quick promotion of human resources, generous donations from the members, fast expansion of the market, and above all the aura of a successful leader.

<sup>44</sup> Ethno-historian Estuardo McIntosh views the lack of relevance of many representative civil organisations today as a "return to primal society". See "Leyendo los tiempos" in *La vara de almendro*, Lima, 24 November 1992.

community-oriented, where the concept of community is defined in terms of race, family, neighbourhood association and even non-traditional church attendance. In this perspective, some observers of the Peruvian reality back in the early '90s foresaw:

tomorrow will be the day of the small business and the Independent Church. Planting new churches and cell groups shall be the secret of church growth in post-modern times...The "school of prophets", once again, will take over the role of the priests! Revitalisation and messianic movements will come to the fore. In both the Church and the nation it will not be the educated elite who will handle affairs but the shamans. Evangelicals will take part in vast migratory movements of holistic mission (300,000 Peruvians flee the country every year!) due to unemployment, hunger, better opportunities of life for the children abroad, reunion with their relatives and so on. In the years to come we will see the formation of "transplant churches" in new geographical locations.<sup>45</sup>

Almost a decade later we see now that these predictions have come true. No doubt what is happening in Peru is what other countries are experiencing as well. Religion is trendy to the point that *Time* magazine finds it not hard to imagine in the year 2025 God making the cover again. But unlike the Spring of 1965 when *Time*'s stark black cover bore the words *Is God Dead?*, this time He will likely be pictured as alive and well.<sup>46</sup> Postmodernism has indeed given religion a new lease on life, as Harvey Cox says, and Latin America seems to be the land where it has found home.

## 2. INTERPRETING THE RELIGIOUS CHANGES IN LATIN AMERICA

Three authors are of special interest here as interpreters of the religious revitalisation of the region. First, the Peruvian anthropologist and San Marcos University professor Fernando Fuenzalida. In his book *Tierra Baldía* (1995), he affirms that we are witnessing a new religiosity that operates outside the realm of established religion. Its message and agenda certainly appeal to post-modern individuals whose quest for a spiritual life does not consider formal or traditional

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<sup>45</sup> Estuardo McIntosh, "Enfrentando el porvenir. Una perspectiva cristiana" (1993b).

<sup>46</sup> *Time*, 21 February 2000.

churches. The second author is Chilean Cristián Parker. This sociology professor at the Catholic University of Chile, speaks of a different rationality that characterises the new religious movements. In his *Otra lógica en América Latina. Religión popular y modernización capitalista* (1993), Parker points out the “other logic” of Latin Americans as one of the factors that makes different expressions of popular religiosity and emotional rituals, no matter how syncretistic they may be, legitimate forms of spirituality. The third author is the Swiss historian Jean-Pierre Bastian, head of CEHILA (Commission for the Study of Church History in Latin America) and professor at the Universidad Autónoma of Mexico. His work *La mutación religiosa de América Latina* (1997) outlines the theory that Latin America is in the process of “religious mutation”. According to Bastian, for the first time in modern Latin American history, the multiplication of religious movements is seriously threatening the Roman Catholic hegemony to the point that in some countries, catholicism has been virtually displaced by the various versions of pentecostalism that would seem to shape the new type of church which is emerging today.

### **A. The “Second Religiosity”**

Post-modernity is one reason used in Latin America to explain the religious revitalisation this continent is experiencing today. Fuenzalida affirms that this whole “wave of spirituality” has its origin in the disorientation and disillusionment in modern reason that began in the '50s. According to this author, “we live in a society that has killed hope, which is the centre and purpose of our lives... Super sophisticated, artificial and hedonist societies are the ones with highest suicide rates and alcoholism... Perhaps the vertiginous 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen how science has devoured herself, or simply technology has got out of hands”.<sup>47</sup> In the midst of this disorientation, people have come to seek after this missing spirituality to the point that in our days more individuals claim to have seen angels and even demons than in the past.

However, for some in Latin America, to speak of the end of modernity may sound contradictory and paradoxical. In regions where illiteracy and infant mortality rates are still shocking; where foreign debt reaches immoral figures because it hinders

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<sup>47</sup> Quoted by Ana María Mejía Rusconi in “Espiritual marejada de fin de siglo”. *Mira*, Sunday magazine of *El Sol* newspaper, Year 1, No 52, Lima, 23 March 1997. p16-19

nations from developing social programmes; where millions live in absolute poverty, deprived of the minimal facilities of modern life such as electricity, running water, and drainage; where unemployment and under-employment undermine quality of life and human dignity, it would seem that modernity simply never touched those lands. Yet we have large modern cities like Mexico City, Caracas, Santiago, Buenos Aires or Sao Paulo that closely resemble cities of the first-world. Needless to say, this is the kind of environment where traits of post-modernity can best be found, and this would certainly explain the rise of that spiritual longing that Fuenzalida and others point out. But this scheme cannot be applied to the whole region, so it is necessary to find other clues in order to understand the rise and rapid spread of neopentecostalism throughout the region.

It was during the 1960s that Latin America began to look to its future with optimism. The Cuban revolution was in place after defeating the Batista forces, and circumstances seemed to suggest that socio-political and economic changes for the better would be seen in other nations as well. Dictatorship, that almost without exception had accompanied the republican life of most of the countries, was but a problem to be solved, for this hindered the progress. John A. Mackay (1932:59), a great Scottish thinker, who knew Latin America at first hand as few foreigners do, had commented: "Dictatorships have been evidence of the fact that most South American lands were not ready for democracy when they became politically free." While this statement would seem an exaggeration, the painful truth was that by the '70s almost every nation of the region was under a prolonged tyranny of military government. It is in this context then that student and worker revolutions played an important role in social and political life, for they raised awareness and a level of expectation towards a better future for their people.

One example of this optimism is the song *Canción del poder popular* (People's Power Song) that the Chilean folk band *Inti Illimani* popularised in the early '70s. Its lyrics, although they are about Chile, soon became a kind of popular anthem that was sung in university campuses and trade unions' headquarters, and played on

radio stations during protest picketing.<sup>48</sup> The words are pregnant with the concept of the Marxist utopia, and summarise the dreams of people who, putting their political preferences aside, whether leftist or populist, were longing for a better society in which to live.

*Si nuestra tierra nos pide  
Tenemos que ser nosotros  
Los que levantemos Chile  
Así es que a poner el hombro*

If our land asks us to  
We shall have to be the ones  
Who will save Chile,  
So, let's put our backs into it

*Vamos a llevar las riendas  
De todos nuestros asuntos  
Y que de una vez entiendan  
Hombre y mujer todos juntos*

We will take control of  
Our own affairs  
And once for all understand,  
Men and women together

*Porque esta vez no se trata  
De cambiar presidente  
Será el pueblo quien construya  
Un Chile bien diferente*

Because this time it is not about  
Changing a president  
It is the people who will build  
A very different Chile.

*Todos vénganse a juntar  
Tenemos la puerta abierta  
Y la Unidad Popular  
Es para todo el que quiera*

All come together,  
The doors are wide open  
And the Unidad Popular  
Is for everybody who wants it

*Echaremos fuera al yanqui  
Y su lenguaje siniestro  
Con la Unidad Popular  
Ahora somos gobierno*

We'll get the Yankee thrown out  
With his sinister language,  
With the Unidad Popular  
We are the government now.

*La patria se verá grande  
Con su tierra liberada*

The nation will be great  
With its freed land,

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<sup>48</sup> Student protests have been part of the Latin American tradition for they brought radical political changes. In Argentina, for example, the university student movement of Córdoba during the 1950s, was one of the largest protest movements. In the case of Peru, it was the APRA (*Alianza Pro Revolucionaria Americana*) that would control universities and trade unions between the 1940s and 1960s, and thereafter the communist party practically took over national universities. However, in the most crucial days, both private and national university students went on to the streets to protest along side the "apristas", Muscovites and even "Acción Popular", the latter being a party linked to the right that won the elections in the mid '60s. The decades of the '70s and '80s have not seen similar demonstrations. This might have been due to the repression of the government in power, but also because the so-called Generation-X, the fruit of postmodernism, would seem to be indifferent to politics and metadiscourses. As some have observed, this generation is more interested in virtual games and MTV, than in promoting social changes in the continent.

*Porque tenemos la llave  
Ahora la cosa marcha*

Now that we have the key  
Things will be all right

*Ya nadie puede quitarnos  
El derecho de ser libres  
Y como seres humanos  
Podremos vivir en Chile*

Nobody can take away from us  
The right to be free  
And as human beings  
We will be able to live in Chile.<sup>49</sup>

Marxist rhetoric, however, was not able to deliver the promises made to the people. Sadly, Latin America has not yet seen much of such desired progress. Many countries are still fighting the same socio-political and economic problems they were contending with in the past. Furthermore, with the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, the Marxist hope that many held for their nations has also fallen apart.

To the failure of the Marxist Utopia, the disillusion of Capitalism should be added too because it failed to bring technological progress and well-being to the region as people expected. Changes that many believed would have occurred during the last two decades never arrived, despite the fact that nations returned to democracy and opened themselves to the world economic market.<sup>50</sup> On the contrary, during the same period we have seen an unprecedented social and moral deterioration in many countries within Latin America. People now not only have to endure poverty and

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<sup>49</sup> From the album *Viva Chile*, by Inti Illimani. (Translation is mine). Available on line: <http://phys.cfm.udec.cl/~eunda/inti/vivachil.htm>. Accessed: 15 February 1998.

<sup>50</sup> The topic of the neoliberal economy raises many unsolved issues. Some theologians see it as contrary to the very nature of Christianity. Miguel Esteban Hesayne, Catholic Bishop of Viedma in Argentina, made the following statement. "One cannot be a Christian and neoliberal at the same time because neoliberalism, in actuality, is still the old capitalism. The neoliberal doctrine and its practices are the antitheses of the Gospel of Jesus Christ... A neoliberal —embodying a capitalistic mentality, whose internal dynamics look for the accumulation of goods— is nourished with the spirit of profit, that is to say, a desire for obtaining increasing income. Besides, his spirit of competition is inflamed by a strong individualism. This provokes rivalry between individuals who want to obtain greater earnings that tend to lead to monopoly. This represents freedom of self at its highest and a gross limitation for others... The spirit of neoliberalism is diametrically opposed to the spirit of Christianity: Wherever it is implanted it brings death by marginalising the remaining majority, creating the class of the excluded due to the unemployment that it generates. Neoliberalism dehumanises economic progress, in contrast to the Christian project which calls for an equitable distribution. It also alters and corrupts freedom and democracy since neoliberalism is not accompanied by justice, truth and solidarity in love... In the end, one cannot be a Christian and neoliberal because the Christian faith promotes life, but neoliberal ideology in its historical perspective is the precursor of death for the excluded majority." Abstract of "El hombre es más importante que la economía y el mercado", in the newspaper *El Clarín*, Buenos Aires, 5 February 1998, section *Tribuna Abierta*.

great misery, but also have to live in shame and distrust as leaders are accused of embezzlement and obscure links with drug dealers and the international Mafia.

This atmosphere of disenchantment has made it possible for religious groups of urban and international character to bloom in this continent. Fuenzalida (1995:28) offers some clues to understanding this phenomenon. This author claims that we are faced with a “second religiosity”<sup>51</sup> which represents a tremendous challenge, one that sociological analysis should not ignore. Fuenzalida, quoting O. Spengler, states that this religiosity contains features of primal eras, a world of “primitive religion that now reappears with powerful effect in popular syncretism” (1995:122). This new religiosity operating without reference to other religious institutions that society would consider respectable, is revitalising “systems of beliefs and cults that humanity had practised in the past”. Fuenzalida also warns that here are varied expressions of religion that are fighting for legitimization in the post-modern world, seeking to consolidate their presence in the religious market of the “sacred products”. There are millennialisms waiting to enter the consumer society; prophetisms that attempt to revive the past through ethnographic reports and arbitrary inventions; and the Creole indigenism that wants to get rid of its Christian influences and return to its ancestral roots.<sup>52</sup> Fuenzalida affirms that it is in this setting that the various kinds of pentecostalism are to be placed.

One of the most interesting aspects in all of this is that these new religions have quickly and comfortably inserted themselves into society. They are not necessarily the isolated *sect-type* groups —according to Weber— but open communities which combine a high degree of organisation and sophistication that can hardly be ignored. In years past, sect premises were located in remote corners of the city, but today these new groups have their buildings in the most important thoroughfares and glamorous megacities of the world, where they make use of modern mass media to transmit their message.

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<sup>51</sup> Fuenzalida says that “second religiosity” was coined at the beginning of the century by the German historian Oswald Spengler in his book *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (II, 3 and 4), C.H. Beckescher Verlag, München 1920.

<sup>52</sup> In speaking of “indigenism” Fuenzalida (1995:122) affirms that this can also be observed in North Atlantic countries. “In the United States and Europe the return to mythical religions and blood rituals is expressed in the Wicca, re-creation of pagan cults of Herodias, Cernunos and Diana, and witchcraft practices of Margaret Murray, the English anthropologist and folklorist from the school of Frazer. Wicca or Ancestral Wisdom is properly a form of shamanism of matriarchal tradition consecrated to fertility and physical health.”

Are all these religious groups “new sects”? Fuenzalida thinks not. In the first place, he argues against the use of the term “sect” because it “incorporates semantic secession nuances, a cloistered life, exclusion and militancy, uncompromising and active antagonism in relationship to other groups” (1995:37). This definition is certainly not true for these communities which have now members playing high profile roles in politics and other public areas such as: former Guatemalan President Efraín Ríos Montt, member of *El Verbo*, a neopentecostal church in Guatemala City; Claudia Castellanos, congresswoman during the ‘90s who is wife of Cesar Castellanos, pastor of the 100,000 members *Misión Carismática Internacional* in Bogotá, Colombia; and the fourteen Universal Church of the Kingdom of God members elected for the Brazilian Parliament in 1998. Secondly, they are not “new” if we consider that some are updated religious expressions the origins of which are to be found in the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries,<sup>53</sup> the newest ones coming from the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The author suggests that “the novelty has to do with their presence in geographical areas in which they were absent before, and with their journey from a long, marginalized and ignored road to the front pages of the newspapers” (1995:37).

Since we are facing an urban socio-religious and post-modern phenomenon, Fuenzalida affirms that we require new methods of analysis and theories that can help us to interpret the multiple ways of interaction that are taking place in the world. To achieve this end, it will be necessary to legitimate sources that until now have been unattended by modern scholars. Here the author (1995:186-187) raises some questions:

Will the instruments designed for observation and analysis of other societies prove to be adequate for the observation and analysis of a society of such a complexity as our own? Are we in a position to recognise what is “magic” and “mythical” in our thinking with the same ability we have shown in recognising them in the ‘primitive man’?... This is a task for a new kind of anthropologist and social scientist, endowed with ethnographic and historical knowledge and trained in both Western and Eastern disciplines.

This call to legitimate “unattended sources” is also a wake-up call for theologians, inasmuch as some may have chosen to marginalize and reject other groups, simply

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<sup>53</sup> For example, the Prophets of Zwickaow, *Los Alumbrados*, Wesleyanism and others.

because they are different, with practices which are hard to fit into western theological schemes. The challenge to review traditional ecclesiology is an imperative task when we talk about new religious movements.

## B. The “Other Rationality”

Chilean sociologist Cristián Parker offers another route to understanding the religious ethos of the many pentecostal groups. He claims that scholarship has not been entirely diffident towards the persistent vitality of popular religions in a region which, not too long ago, “had been categorised by the church as a ‘Catholic continent’” (1995:34). In the context of the theory of modernisation, this author argues that the secularising process, far from increasing rationalisation, has instead revitalised the magic and symbolic religious arena in underdeveloped Latin America. This paradox, says Parker (1995:35), is due to the fact that “the ordinary person operates in a unique socio-cultural environment, producing and reproducing cultural models subjected to a rationality that is not western rationalism”. This other rationality or other logic (Parker 1993, 1996) causes scientific and religious features to coexist in popular mentality without opposing each other, thus forming a deep mystical sense of life.

Parker develops his thesis in arguing that a human can be seen as “reason and heart in one unity, and spirit and body holistically”. Regrettably, western rationalism “made us believe for long time that we were nothing else but reason, nothing else but thinking beings”, where symbolism and religion had no place in the social subject. Parker proposes to re-assess the different expressions of popular religiosity which are present in pentecostal affective and emotional rituals, as well as in the various catholic festivities and pilgrimages regardless of how syncretistic they may appear. According to Parker, these expressions are legitimate forms of spirituality, bringing with them a new worldview that helps to understand this religious phenomenon. For example, the categories of “salvation” and “healing” that are rooted in pentecostalism and other divine cure movements,<sup>54</sup> serve better than the *sacred-profane* dualism that has been “for almost a century the foundation category for the sociology of religion” (1995:36). Without doubt, we have here new

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<sup>54</sup> Some sociologists say that one of the factors that leads the faithful to make a pilgrimage through various religious groups is their search for salvation. Eventually, many find it in pentecostal churches because they offer inner healing as well as body healing (Giménez Béliveau 1997:38).

theoretical categories that need further exploration. As the same author says, “It is never too late to remember that it is possible and desirable to think our own reality in our own terms”, because for so long we have been depending on conceptual theories elaborated in Europe and North America (1995:33).

Other authors would also use the same argument to explain the religious outburst in these countries. Historian John Kessler finds it more natural to take animism rather than postmodernism in seeking to provide an interpretative framework for what is happening in this part of the world. “Postmodernism” says Kessler, “is the result of the deception of mechanicism, but in Latin America we have never had the European technology. We are therefore returning to animism where the Latin American has his roots”.<sup>55</sup> Emilio Antonio Núñez, professor at the *Seminario Teológico Latinoamericano* in Guatemala, is of the same opinion. Speaking of some neopentecostal practices, he states that

demonism and prosperity gospel are elements that have contributed largely in the development of these new churches. But they also emphasise praise and dance in which there may be a cultural connection. In the past, dances had the purpose of moving the gods’ will. What we see today might be a manifestation of ancient cultures, for instance, indigenous dances.<sup>56</sup>

Without doubt, Latin American spirituality is nourished by traditions and ancestral practices that originate from times long before Christianity touched this land. Peruvian José Carlos Mariátegui has noted that, “Catholic rite was superimposed

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<sup>55</sup> John B.A. Kessler is the author of *Study of the Older Protestant Missions and Churches in Peru and Chile* (1967), *La historia de la evangelización en el Perú* (1993) among other works. This is part of an interview I carried out in his office on 22 July 1997, in San José, Costa Rica, where he currently resides.

<sup>56</sup> From a conversation that took place in his office in Guatemala city, on 7 August 1997. Dr. G. Stewart McIntosh, former missionary to Peru and ethno-historian of the Andean culture, suggested that we should look up the ancient tradition of the *Taki Onqoy* —dance of illness— to see how music and dance were used to bring healing to the community. In this regard, Spaniard Cristobal de Molina reminds us that in 1564, the *huacas* (places where Indians buried their dead) were very upset because Indians had stopped offering sacrifices and pouring *chicha* (corn beer) to the ground (*pachamama* or mother-earth). Then, some started “dancing pretending to have the *huaca* in their bodies; others would shake screaming and calling out to it. Some even reached the edge of the cliff and ritual death. It was the *Taki Onkoy*’ times, time for healing and fertility.” (Kapsoli 1994:14-15). See “Taqui Onqoy, la enfermedad del canto”; “El Taqui Onqoy, reflexiones psicoanalíticas” and “El Taqui Onqoy, el drama y sus protagonistas”, by M. Hernandez, M. Lemlij, L. Millones, A. Pendola, M. Rostworowski, in M. Lemlij & L. Millones (1991), p183-262.

on the indigenous rites without absorbing them totally.” Then he adds, “The study of religious feeling in Spanish America consequently has to begin with the practices found here by the conquistadors” (1986:163). What was this indigenous spirituality that conquistadors regarded only as superstition and magic? The great Inca Empire’s religion, affirms Mariátegui, “was a moral code rather than a metaphysical conception... Religion would melt in society.” The three great commandments that governed them: *ama sua*, *ama quella*, and *ama yulla* (do not lie, do not steal, do not be lazy), summarised in themselves the socio-religious character of the Incas. Likewise, the Tawantinsuyo’s religion

was not made of complex abstractions, but of simple allegories. The instincts and spontaneous mores of a nation constituted by agrarian tribes, healthy and rurally pantheistic, more inclined to co-operation than war, sustained its roots... The indigenous animism covered the Tawantinsuyo territory with ghosts or local gods, whose ritual would offer the Christian evangelisation a much greater resistance than the Inca cult for the Sun or god Kon. ‘Totemism’, co-substantial with the *ayllu* and tribe, more enduring than the Empire, was kept safe not only in the tradition but also in the very blood of the Indian. Magic, identified as the primitive art of curing the sick, was so deeply rooted that it could survive for a long time under any other religious belief. (Mariátegui 1986:168).

In Mariátegui’s description we find some of the threads that can help us to understanding the intricate weave of popular religiosity.<sup>57</sup> The fact that in many instances peasants have the *pachamama* (earth goddess) and their *apus* (mountain spirits) replaced by the Virgin<sup>58</sup> and the catholic saints, is telling us that we are in a religious setting totally different from peninsular catholicism. At the same time, this phenomenon would also explain the emergence of all kinds of pentecostalism that have incorporated practices never seen before in evangelical circles, such as people receiving gold teeth and fillings which they did not previously have during miraculous services; oil flowing supernaturally from believers’ bodies; or gold dust coming down from the prayer room’s ceiling when people are gathered.

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<sup>57</sup> This topic has been widely studied by Marzal (1971, 1983), González Martínez (1987), Kapsoli (1994), Llanque (1997), and others. With respect to popular religiosity in Brazil and the Caribbean, it is necessary to take into account the influence of the African and the *emerging cultures*’ — Amazonian ethnic peoples little affected by Colonialism— religious forms. (Ribeiro 1979).

<sup>58</sup> See the film *The Healer* (Maryknoll 1989) for a vivid account of it.

## 1) The “other logic” in popular Catholicism

Firstly, it is important to point out that it was only after *Medellín* in 1968 that the Catholic Church began to pay close attention to popular expressions of faith within the Church, the major reason being the driving force of these demonstrations and their impact on the culture of the people (González Martínez 1987:37).<sup>59</sup>

Secondly, there are various types of popular catholicism with different dynamics. Generally speaking, in the past scholars have looked into the indigenous religious practices before the arrival of Spaniards to America, but recently they have begun to observe other newer expressions that fit better the variety of ethnicity in the region. For example, José Luis González, following Ribeiro’s scheme (1979), has categorised Peruvian popular religion into four types:<sup>60</sup>

- 1) As “testimony”, where he refers to the autochthonous religious systems. Example, the *pachamama* ritual.
- 2) “Creole”, due to the religious syncretism and inculturation taking place in Peru. Example, procession of *Señor de los Milagros* (Lord of Miracles) in Lima.
- 3) “Implanted”, because it is composed of forms originating in Spain, which are practised with few modifications in Peru. Example, Holy Week, and the rosary.
- 4) “Emerging”, which refers to the religious practices of the indigenous communities in the Amazon basin. (González Martínez 1987:38)

Thirdly, popular catholicism expresses itself through rites and magic beliefs in order to have access to the sacred. Some reject this approach because it has been associated with the rural world and lower class. “Popular religion”, in this sense, carries the notion of “poor”, “weak”, “ignorant”, “emotional” and “mythical”, contrasting with “official catholicism” that represents what is rich, powerful, educated, rational and scientific (Higuet 1984:24-26). However, this type of religiosity is not inferior to any other but different, for it represents another cultural expression. The fact that it prefers to be informal rather than liturgical, emotional

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<sup>59</sup> See “Medellin, hito en la historia de la Iglesia Latinoamericana”, p111-129 (Oliveiros 1977).

<sup>60</sup> The same scheme could be applied to other Andean countries as well.

instead of sacramental, and chooses the symbolic over the homily, does not necessarily make it a lesser religion at all.

## 2) The “other logic” of Neopentecostals

Popular faith is to be found not only within catholicism but in protestantism as well. This is completely natural, for Latin American evangelical Protestantism is not immune to the re-formulation of its rites and practices among members who have inherited a rich religious tradition. What are the implications of this background for the understanding of neopentecostalism?

Firstly, since pentecostals first appeared in the world, they suffered isolation from historic denominations due to their practices and doctrinal emphasis that distinguished them clearly from the others. In a sense, they incarnated that “popular religiosity” so feared by traditional evangelical church leaders. It was Walter Hollenweger who helped change this stereotype through his seminal work on pentecostalism.<sup>61</sup> He then wrote:

In the cultures of Latin American Pentecostalism and African Independent Churches there are equally relevant forms of doing theology. In these pre-literate or semi-literate cultures the medium of communication is —just as in biblical times— not the definition but the description, not the statement but the history, not the doctrine but the testimony, not the book but the parable, not the summa theological but the song, not the treatise but the TV programme (Hollenweger 1972:229).

The author demonstrated that though pentecostals lacked a systematised theology as understood in the western culture, they had “a theology hidden in their spirituality”. This was expressed in songs and story; prayer for the sick as an alternative or complement to the so-called medical science; exorcism as an exploration in the depths of the souls; and the glossolalia, a cathedral of sounds (Hollenweger 1992:228-232).

It was as recently as the second half of the twentieth century that historical denominations in Peru stopped viewing the Pentecostal Church as “sect”, mainly

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<sup>61</sup> See *The Pentecostals: The Charismatic Movement in the Churches* (1972), “Theology of the New World. The Religion of the Poor is not a Poor Religion” (1976), “After 20 Years’ Research on Pentecostalism” (1986).

because of its participation in united activities with evangelical churches.<sup>62</sup> Today, the Assemblies of God and the several National Pentecostal Churches enjoy the same respect as Baptists, Christian and Missionary Alliance, *Evangélica Peruana*, Methodist, Presbyterians and others have. Their contribution in biblical and theological areas is recognised and appreciated, and their leaders are key elements in the development of evangelicalism in the nation.

Secondly, even though the above is true for classic pentecostalism, the new breed of pentecostals are still fighting for recognition at different levels, especially in the areas of theology and identity. The Swiss historian Jean-Pierre Bastian makes an interesting remark in his *Breve historia del Protestantismo en América Latina* (1986), where he suggests that the Latin American traditional culture is subsisting under the new semblance of various pentecostalisms. Presbyterian sociologist Leonildo Silveira Campos seems to agree with Bastian when he affirms that a powerful syncretism is operating on the continent, “joining Roman Catholic, African and indigenous traditions seasoned with pentecostal vocabulary of protestant origin... In place and under the label of 'Pentecostalism'” adds Silveira (1995:111,124), “will not a new religion be emerging? If so, what kind of relationships will historic Protestantism be able to maintain with a religion in a constant process of mutation?”.

Thirdly, Silveira's questions take us right to the centre of neopentecostalism. There are three elements to this. A first element to be considered is its socio-economic ethos. New pentecostals are no longer rural but highly urban and, therefore, they are not exclusively poor and uneducated, but middle-class and professional.<sup>63</sup> However, the autochthonous traditions rooted in people's minds are still there — like magic beliefs<sup>64</sup> and superstition— which are translated in the use of sacred objects —handkerchiefs, oil, water— to operate divine healing, or in transferring power to the Bible to bring good luck, or even protection against evil.

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<sup>62</sup> Two events drew pentecostals closer to evangelicals. The first one was the Billy Graham crusade held in Lima in the late '50s, and the other was Evangelism-in-Depth in 1967. In both cases pentecostals mobilised large numbers of members in clear sign of co-operation and identification with the evangelical world.

<sup>63</sup> The same happens within catholicism. Gonzáles Martínez uses “religion of elite” and “popular religiosity” to distinguish between the two of them (1987:39).

<sup>64</sup> “Magic” in the sense of “primitive art for curing the sick” (Mariátegui 1986:167), rather than body of traditions and primary beliefs (Carrasco 1991:11).

A second element has to do with neopentecostal's approach to God. For Catholics, the priest is the mediator between God and the faithful. The Reformation broke this pattern with its teaching of the universal priesthood of the believers, and evangelicals and pentecostals, in particular, have been keen to take this doctrine as far as they could. That is to say, every believer is entitled to address God personally and be sure he/she will be listened to without mediators other than Jesus Christ. However, it would seem that neopentecostals are juxtaposing the priesthood of all believers with a vertical hierarchy that is separating them from the people. Like old-time pentecostals who were seen as keepers of the traditional autocratic power reflected in the "*pastor-patrón*" (pastor-feudal lord) figure (D'Épinay), the new pentecostals today seem to favour the same type of authoritarian vertical structure, which comes now in the form of business-like centralised ecclesiastical government led by bishops, apostles and prophets.<sup>65</sup> As such, people see in them special agents through whom God performs signs and wonders.<sup>66</sup>

A third element is the social and urban environment that shapes neopentecostal spirituality. Latin American cities are centres where Christian values mix and merge with pseudo-Christian principles, indigenous and foreign traditions, and traditional and non-traditional religious practices. All this gives rise to a particular religious culture that is peculiar to the context in which new religions are emerging. An example from Peru illustrates this. In the early 1980s, a musical band composed by migrants from some provinces, made up a new rhythm called *chicha*,<sup>67</sup> which was the fusion of *huayno* (Andean melody), *cumbia* (Colombian rhythm), ballad and rock. At the beginning, this new musical style was only appreciated by street vendors, truck and provincial bus drivers, and rural migrants living now in the Capital.<sup>41</sup> But soon after, *chicha* would be heard in all *Limeño* strata too, and became known just not as a musical beat but also as a popular term to refer to all types of blends that were not conventional combinations. *Chicha-religion* would certainly describe some services where Hebrew songs and dances mix with modern tunes; or deep Old Testament symbolism is expressed through sophisticated sound and video media; and sermons alternate with long periods of "spiritual battle"

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<sup>65</sup> Authors like Bastian (1994:126), view neopentecostal leaders as chiefs and landlords of a religious movement they created themselves which they will pass it on their children in a nepotistic fashion.

<sup>66</sup> It is interesting to observe the parallels between intermediaries in Catholicism and neopentecostalism and the roles of shamanism in Andean and Amazonian culture.

<sup>67</sup> *Chicha* is a beverage made of different kinds of corn. It is served with a meal, but it can also be used as an alcoholic drink when it goes through a fermentation process.

where demons are expelled from people's lives and physical places. In Parker's analysis this religious demonstration would be seen to follow that "other logic" that identifies the new religious communities of Latin America.

### **C. The "Religious Mutation"**

A third track is offered by the Swiss historian Jean-Pierre Bastian (1997) as he describes Latin America as being in a process of "religious mutation". Bastian affirms that for the first time in modern Latin American history, the multiplication of the various religious movements is seriously threatening the Roman Catholic hegemony. While catholicism still enjoys historical legitimacy, "everything seems to indicate that the tendency to religious atomisation is growing to the extent that in certain countries, the Catholic church has been virtually displaced of her central role as leader of the religious field" (1997:10). In all of these rival organisations, Bastian identifies that what seems to prevail is a pentecostal model representative of the new type of church leader today.

For this author, the emergence of these pentecostalisms shows the beginning of a genuine Latin American religion that escapes the structural framework of catholicism and historical protestantism as well. Bastian highlights at least two key characteristics of this movement. The first one, and perhaps the most dramatic, has to do with its open competition to the Catholic Church. Bastian (1997:73-74) says that a fundamental feature of this new breed of pentecostals is their total rupture with the catholics. The author affirms that from time immemorial the traditional religious richness of the region stayed intact despite the Iberian conquests. "Latin America had entered the 20<sup>th</sup> century with no substantial change in the way people used to relate to the divine" (1997:8). However, in the last 40 years this situation has changed. "New religious groups no longer make use of the traditional mediations of the Catholic Church. The Virgin Mary and saints are absent from their rituals, so are the numerous images, relics and symbols that characterise

popular catholicism” (1997:9).<sup>68</sup> At the same time, the new leaders, who mostly lack formal instruction and theological training, are also entering the political arena seeking recognition by the public and the State, territory that until now was reserved only for participators identified with the church of the majority. These church leaders lead both humble and marginal communities, and well-respected megachurches made of professionals and middle-class. They mobilise thousands of followers of all social levels that meet in stadiums, ex-cinemas and gigantic tents, letting everybody know about their presence. For the leaders and members alike, church is both the place where they go to seek spiritual solace, and the organisation with a strong social and economic power that can be a match for other religious groups. In other words, Bastian (1997:12-13) states that

One could say that we have passed through the situation where the Roman Catholic Church used to be able to control religious movements and forms of Catholicism without a priesthood, which always abounded. But now there is a new situation where confrontation and rejection of the Roman Catholic Church is in force, and a new universal independent religious universe is increasing exponentially.

The second characteristic of these groups is their commitment to creating a new community based on an emotional religiosity, which will make it possible for the poor of the rural and urban sectors to both participate and survive. Bastian observes that the poorest sectors need to rebuild their identity and life in order to survive in the midst of an adverse social environment. That some political and religious powers maintain the fiction of “democratic transition” in Latin America, should make us question whether the expansion of the new religious groups is a “response by those most in need within a closed political system, or at least an attempt to achieve autonomy with respect to the official political scene” (Bastian 1997:93). It seems that a large sector of the population is seeking new and alternatives religious

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<sup>68</sup> This statement is better understood in relation to the Afro-Brazilian and indigenous rituals, rather than pentecostalism. Pentecostals traditionally have been known as anti-catholic. But the opposite is proving quite true for certain sectors of catholicism where “pentecostalization” is taking place in an effort to stop the increasing number of people converting to the Pentecostal church. It is not strange now to see, for instance, catholic priests performing healing masses and visible demonstrations of the Holy Spirit, basically translated into tongues and collective fainting. This is the case of Father Ignacio Peries in Rosario, Argentina, and Father Manuel Rodríguez in Lima, Peru.

practices and structures, in order to survive within an environment of change. So far, people would seem to be finding these alternatives in neopentecostalism.

The Peruvian experience would seem to confirm Bastian's analysis. It was in 1990 that evangelicals participated in the presidential elections of Peru supporting *Cambio 90*,<sup>69</sup> President Alberto Fujimori's party, rather than the world famous novelist Mario Vargas Llosa. Twenty per cent of Fujimori's list of senators and deputies claimed to be evangelicals, a much higher percentage than the 7% of Protestant population registered in the census of 1988. Naturally, this made the catholic hierarchy react very strongly while the electoral process was still taking place, to the point that the venerated images of the *Virgen de la Evangelización* and *Señor de los Milagros* were taken out on the streets to reaffirm the "people's faith".<sup>70</sup> Fujimori won the April 1990 elections, having as his second-vice President the Reverend Carlos García, a Baptist minister. This made many observers believe that Fujimori's victory was owed to the evangelical vote, something that we will never know for sure.

That Peruvians voted in an independent, politically inexperienced and unknown candidate like Fujimori, tells a lot about the people's attitude regarding traditional institutions.<sup>71</sup> In some respects, this is also true for religion, as Bastian affirms. Established churches, such as Catholic and historic Protestant, are losing members to newer and more informal neopentecostal type groups. Some scholars say that this tendency fits perfectly the postdenominationalist shift (Deiros 1997:104) that is shaping contemporary Christianity. According to this pattern, many will opt for following new leaders who offer economic prosperity and relief for both body and soul. Since this offer is a practical and concrete alternative, it will be hard for people to turn it down. In the end, what individuals first seek in religion, as Cristián Parker (1995:53) well puts it, "is not an explanation to enrich our knowledge and make us think, but to help us live".

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<sup>69</sup> Here Peru follows the trend that had been already observed in countries like Nicaragua or Brazil, where evangelicals have been participating very actively in politics as Stoll (1990), Padilla (1991), Freston (1994) and other authors have documented.

<sup>70</sup> See *Caretas*, 28 May 1990, Marzal (1990:6), and D. Paole (1992:146-148).

<sup>71</sup> It is worth noting that in the 1995 elections, Alberto Fujimori was re-elected, defeating this time nothing less than the well-respected and experienced politician Javier Pérez de Cuellar, former UN Secretary General. Like the previous election, all traditional parties like APRA, Peruvian Communist Party, Acción Popular, Christian Popular Party and others, literally disappeared from the political scene for they did not even obtain sufficient votes to continue operating.

By looking at the way people can behave given certain circumstances, Bastian states that this phenomenon cannot be studied then from the perspective of the European secularisation and sociology of religious minorities in their relationship with society,<sup>72</sup> but in line with “a sociology of religious mutations that take into account the structural changes that affect all Latin American religious fields” (1997:18). The pioneer sociological analyses of pentecostalism in Brazil and Chile (Willems 1967 and d’Epinay 1969), were basically structured following the theories of modernisation and dependency that were in place at the beginning of the ‘60s (Parker 1996). According to this theory, Latin America was in the transition from a “traditional society” to a “modern society”, or from a “feudal society” to a “capitalistic society”. Today, concepts and categories related to the theory of modernity have certainly changed. In this part of the world modernity and secularisation are more formal than real, which means that in values and social behaviour, tradition will prevail over reason. Therefore, it is worth asking whether this religious fervour is really a sign of religious and social transformation that the region is likely to experience in the near future.

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<sup>72</sup> According to Bastian, Christian Lalive d’Epinay’s *Haven of Masses* (1969) follows this line. Sociologist Alejandro Frigerio (1994:23) says that current pentecostalism is not the same movement studied by Willems and Lalive d’Epinay, therefore we need new keys of interpretation.

## CHAPTER 3

### CLASSIFICATION OF NEOPENTECOSTAL GROUPS

After considering some theories that explain the rise of pentecostal-type religious movements, we need to move on to another area that deals with the nature of these groups. What is it like to be a minority community in a region like Latin America where Roman Catholicism is regarded as the “official church”? We have to recall that the Catholic Church has been in this land for five centuries, and until recently was protected by the Constitution of many States.<sup>73</sup> The fact that sociologists and catholic theologians have used the category “church/sect” to differentiate the non-catholic sector, and specifically pentecostalism, should lead us to think whether or not this category is still valid, at least in Latin America, or is there a need to formulate a fairer concept to define the new churches in other terms and conditions. In attempting this, we will see also how protestant sociologists and theologians typify evangelicals and pentecostals. Lastly, I will categorise the neopentecostal groups, hoping that a new typology will give us a more adequate insight of this sector of the Church.

#### 1. THE WEBERIAN CONCEPT OF “CHURCH” AND “SECT”

There is no doubt that the dual concept of “church/sect” with which Max Weber and Ernest Troeltsch began the sociological study of Christianity almost a century ago has given cause for a variety of interpretations that even today try to explain the religious phenomenon.<sup>74</sup> It was the protestant theologian Troeltsch who developed the sociological and theological concepts of church and sect that first Weber (1881-1961) had stated.<sup>75</sup> His theory tried to demonstrate that socio-

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<sup>73</sup> In the case of Peru, although the Constitution of 1993 establishes freedom of religion, its Article 50 also states that the country will collaborate very closely with the Catholic Church considering her contribution to the history and culture of the nation. Then it adds: “The State respects other confessions and might have some ways of collaborating with them.”

<sup>74</sup> *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber 1958), and *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (Troeltsch 1960).

<sup>75</sup> See Giddens’ work *Sociology* (1993:463,723-31).

economic conditions of his time were exercising an influence on the Church's behaviour. So, he defined “church” as the institution endowed with grace and divine salvation, and fruit of the work of redemption brought about by Jesus Christ. And of “sect” he said it was a society of a voluntary type, compounded by Christians mutually related in a strict manner, who live apart from society and give more importance to law than to grace. He also observed that sects would emerge out of the lower social strata and “possess a very strict ethic, a still living mythology, and a passionate hope in the future” (Marzal 1988:378) that would encourage them to continue in the road they had chosen. For Troeltsch, the church type was perfectly incarnated in both Catholicism and Protestantism since both were State religions. And *sect* was to be found in small communities of these two main religions —Montanists within the Reformed tradition, and Franciscans within catholicism—, which demanded from their members that they live out unconditionally the ethic of the gospels.<sup>76</sup>

Although Troeltsch developed this concept fully, at the end he was not convinced by it because the dichotomy church/sect left no room for anything intermediate. He then introduced a third type called “mysticism” that he defined as the inner religious experience that seeks an intimate relationship with God, which goes beyond traditions, rituals and the established institution. In short, “mysticism” was nothing else than a radical form of individualism, a category that perfectly fits the configuration of the God's Friends, Philadelphians, Brethren, and others.

In digging deeper, Troeltsch also found that church and sect in actuality were not mutually exclusive. In other words, sect did not carry any derogatory connotation as it does today. Transferring these concepts to the Europe of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, he proved that while sects were adverse to the existing order, the church type organisations would easily accommodate themselves to secular institutions. Thus, sects were basically protest groups for, as Galindo (1992:62) says, they always had “a censure against something that they judged bad and therefore tried to change.” Thus, sects were and still “are a challenge to the world or a separation from it.” (Martín 1995:118). This is the driving force behind them because, in most cases, their expansion should be seen not necessarily in connection with sound teachings, but rather thanks to their competence to offer plain answers to very complicated problems and situations, which is strengthened by the

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<sup>76</sup> There are strong parallels between the concepts of *religio* and *superstitio* in the post apostolic era. See Workman, *Persecution in the Early Church* (1960).

enthusiasm and friendliness of their leaders. These elements help to convince followers that what is good is inside the group while evil is outside it.

Though the “church/sect” postulate was quickly incorporated into socio-religious studies at the beginning of the century, not all researchers were in agreement with it. Richard Niebuhr was perhaps one of the first authors to challenge this concept. According to him this theory was not adequate for the analysis of the church in other contexts as, for example, in American society. In his classic book *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (1929), he states that as the years go by sects tend to turn into denominations or respectable and established confessions, due to the fact that their members are not longer in conflict with the society they condemned initially. The reason for this change is quite simple. Second and third generations of the faithful neither have the same drive as their predecessors nor belong necessarily to a lower class, as their parents did.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, their attitudes and mentality being now more similar to those of middle class, they feel more comfortable with the values of modern society in general. Thus, Neibuhr concluded, any sect would hardly survive more than one generation.

The fact that sects in the United States established relationships with other organisations and eventually became part of the American cultural and religious ethos, has its explanation basically in the religious pluralism that exists in that country, in contrast to Europe where there is an official church. This led sociologist Bryan Wilson (1970:24-25) to redefine sects as volunteer groups with a strong sense of identity that believe they own the true doctrine, adequate rites, and appropriate rules of social behaviour. Furthermore, he distinguished four basic types of sects: a) Conversionists, who seek to transform the world by changing first the human being (Pentecostals, Salvation Army); b) Adventists or revolutionary, who anxiously await the end of the world (Jehovah’s Witnesses); c) Introversionists or pietistic, who seek to flee from the corruption of society (Quakers); and d) Gnostics, who tend to reinterpret Christianity on the basis of

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<sup>77</sup> The Wesleyan movement of England in the eighteenth century eventually became the Methodist Church, and the Peruvian sectarian group *Los Israelitas del Nuevo Pacto Universal* (The Israelites of the New Universal Covenant) has become during the ‘90s a recognised religious institution with some representatives in the Congress of Peru. See Kenneth Scott, *Los Israelitas del Nuevo Pacto Universal. Una Historia* (1990).

their esoteric doctrine (Christian Science). In a sense, this typology has been used by other social scientists for subsequent studies.<sup>78</sup>

## 2. IN SEARCH OF OTHER CATEGORIES FOR LATIN AMERICA

In the Latin American context scholars have also been studying this topic, warning that the religious reality in this continent requires a different approach. The religious revitalisation that this region is experiencing in terms of Afro-Brazilian rites, or the mixture of catholicism with neopentecostalism as well as the proliferation of groups of oriental background, is making a visible impact even in cities like Buenos Aires and Montevideo, that have always been seen as the secular bastions of Latin America.

On the one hand, many authors are opting for the term New Religious Movements (NERMS) instead of “sects”, because this does not carry a derogatory meaning but suggests a much wider field of research. In this line, Argentine sociologist María Julia Carozzi says that, in South America, when scholars refer to New Religious Movements (NERMS) they mean a broader definition than that used in the United States and Europe where NERMS comprise only those groups formed in the late 1960s, and in some instances, neopentecostals and Eastern religions. For Latin Americans this concept encompasses a wider period, taking as reference both the Catholic Church and historical Protestant denominations because they include:

- a) The emergence of new religions (Church of Unification, of the Reverend Sun Myung; Hare Krishna or International Society for the Krishna Consciousness; God's Children; Christian Science; Mission of Divine Light, etc.).
- b) The

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<sup>78</sup> Other authors have also contributed to the development of this subject. One of them is Milton Yinger (1967:154) who added another classification to this typology: “cult”. According to him cult is the spontaneous group, which lacks organisational structure and has a charismatic leader on whom practically all the life of the organisation is based. Cults, unlike sects that have departed from established Christian churches, have various origins not necessarily linked to Christianity. This is then one of the main differences between these two groups. Stark and Brainbridge (1985) have classified three cult levels: a) as audience, they read the horoscope, practise some forms of yoga, and read New Age books; b) as clientele, with groups like the *Umbanda* that practise healing; and c) as church, that is to say established religion.

expansion of geographical religions into new areas (Eastern religions in America and Europe; Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses from the United States to South America and Europe; *Santería* from Cuba to the United States and Central America; *Umbanda* from Brazil to Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina, Chile and, on a small scale, to the United States and Europe). c) Revivals in the established religions (Charismatic reforms within Evangelicalism and Catholicism; emergence of "spiritualist" Catholic groups; etc.). d) Religious therapies and quasi religious organisations (what is now known in America and Europe as New Age) (Carozzi 1993:35).

Certainly, social scientists are not studying all this variety of religious movements, but they are researching on those whose diversification and reputation deserve some attention.<sup>79</sup> In North America and Europe this attention has centred on groups of recent creation regardless their Christian tradition. In Latin America studies are focussing more in new pentecostals and Afro-Brazilian expressions like *Camdomblé* and *Umbanda*. The change of perception in the study of these different groups is important because, on the one hand, researches of this type are no longer limited to phenomenology, but are also concerned with the active participation of these groups in the social and religious shift that is taking place in the region. On the other hand, some of these groups that now are perceived by many as "sects" or even "cults", will soon establish themselves as respectable churches and denominations, as Weber and Troeltsch had presaged. The Pentecostal Church, whose peculiar beginnings made long-established protestants reject it, walked this road during the past century, and now it seems that neopentecostals are following the same lead although it might not take them as long to make it into the diverse mainstream of Latin American evangelicalism.

### 3. THE CATHOLIC APPROACH

Because neopentecostalism is closely related to the evangelical and pentecostal protestantism in Latin America, we cannot avoid studying it in reference to the Catholic Church and her understanding of evangelicals and pentecostals in particular. As we said previously, catholicism was the official

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<sup>79</sup> Special attention should be paid to the H. W. Turner database on NERMS at Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham.

religion in practically all the Latin countries until not too many years ago. Even though there is a separation between Church and State now, in practice the Catholic hierarchy still exercises great influence upon the nations. Argentinean Fortunato Mallimaci (1993:27), professor at Buenos Aires University, puts it this way: “the dominant catholicism does not act and reflect only in religious terms, but extends its influence to the social, political and cultural arena”. That is why catholics see in other religious movements “an assault on the catholic identity of the Argentine nation”. Dr. Angel Centeno, Culture Secretary of the same country, expresses it in even more eloquent terms: “Argentina is not a Catholic State but a Catholic nation”.<sup>80</sup>

These two statements reflect a constant attitude of the catholic hierarchy in a continent that for centuries has lived under the belief “that the Latin American culture is intrinsically catholic”, and considered “protestantism as foreign to the Latin soul” (Moros Ruanos 1995:254). For them, the growth of the “sects” is alarming because all their attempts to stop it have simply failed (Pérez Guadalupe 1992:5).<sup>81</sup> This has led some observers to affirm that if current growth continues, evangelicals will be a majority in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Stoll 1990). It is not surprising then that in many studies on protestantism, historians and social scientists use concepts and phrases such as “sects”, “conspirators of the American imperialism”,<sup>82</sup> “enemies of the national identity” and the like to refer to evangelicals.<sup>83</sup> Carlos Martínez García (1991:59-61), researcher in the Centre for Studies of Mexican Protestantism, raises important questions here: “What is a sect? Is to be a minority synonymous with being sectarian? In countries where catholicism is a minority, is she a sect? What is the difference between a small church and a sect?”

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<sup>80</sup> Quoted by Mallimaci (1993:24). Colombia still has a specific *Concordat* relationship with the Vatican and Peru’s Constitution (1980) still accorded the importance of the Roman Catholic Church in state and society.

<sup>81</sup> According to Marzal (1996:3), the catholic bishops “have expressed alarm in their continental meetings such as Santo Domingo in 1992.”

<sup>82</sup> The “theory of conspiracy” basically argues that Protestant “sects” are funded by American organisations to destabilise the political and social order in Latin America. See Pérez Guadalupe (1992:10-13), and Escobar (1994:112).

<sup>83</sup> Protestants are also concerned with other expressions used incorrectly by the media, such as “fanatical” instead of faithful, and “proselytise” instead of evangelism.

An example of this attitude can be found in the document of the Latin American Episcopal Commission (CELAM), signed in Ypacaraí, Paraguay, in 1990 that says:

Sects, with their aggressive proselytism, attempt against the Catholic identity of our continent and make our families split; furthermore, they frequently encourage political passiveness that hinder many people from seeking the legitimate promotion of their rights and searching for fairer and more human conditions.<sup>84</sup>

The term sect as used in the document is provocative if we consider that sociologically speaking, intolerance and “aggressive proselytism” are not merely seen in non-catholic groups but within the Catholic Church too and Base Communities in particular. Things deteriorated when the Pope called the “fundamentalist” sects “ravaging wolves” during the Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops in Santo Domingo, in October of 1992.<sup>85</sup> And in his visit to Mexico in January of 1999, the Pope signed the official document the *Apostolic Exhortation of the American Synod*, which contains defamatory and uncertain terms towards other religious groups.<sup>86</sup> Although the Vatican has suggested the use of New Religious Movements instead of “sects” and “cults”, it would seem that it will take some time until we see a change of attitude in this matter.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> See the Vatican Document on Sects and New Religious Movements in *Cristianismo y Sociedad*, Year XXIV, N° 88, 1986.

<sup>85</sup> Edward Cleary, catholic theologian of Yale, in his article “El maltrato de la jerarquía católica a los pentecostales” (1993), affirms that the Pope’s attacks on evangelicals and other religions in his inaugural speech in Santo Domingo, increased the tensions between the catholic hierarchy and the pentecostal sector in particular.

<sup>86</sup> John Paul II delivered the *Apostolic Exhortation of the American Synod* on 23 January 1999, in the *Basílica of Guadalupe*. This document mentions the struggle of the Catholic Church with the evangelical churches, indicating that the methods of evangelism developed by them and other new Protestant groups are serious obstacles for the catholic presence in Latin America. “The proselytist advances of the sects and new religious groups in America can not be taken with indifference”, warns the document. (UPI/GABRIPES Madrid, 25 January 1999).

<sup>87</sup> Catholic theologian Philip Berryman (1996:168) says that no matter the recommendations, the Catholic clergy will continue calling “sects” all churches and groups with which they have no ecumenical relationships. Some new publications would seem to confirm this statement. In *Informe sobre las sectas*, published in Argentina, the author, Oscar Gerometta (1998), uses the term “Christian” as synonymous with “catholic”. Gerometta defines “sect” as a “group of people that have separated from a church to follow the teaching or doctrine of a particular teacher because they consider it is more important to

A catholic priest who is moving in a different direction is the Jesuit anthropologist Manuel Marzal. He has done several studies on popular religion and Protestantism in Peru, in an attempt to be better acquainted with the people's religiosity. According to him, for catholic theology all churches that do not preserve the "deposit of faith" transmitted by Jesus and the apostles are sectarian, though "in conventional language they are heretical when they deny some Christian dogma, and schismatic when they refuse to accept the authority of the church". Nevertheless, Marzal (1988: 376) admits that most of the non-catholic churches preserve part or much of that "deposit of faith", and that is why according to the Vatican II they are considered "separated brethren" because in some way or another they are part of the only Church.<sup>88</sup>

Though Marzal's criteria to speak of church and sect are theological, it is important to note that at this level there will always be limits that one establishes from his or her own religious background. The fact that catholics consider themselves as members of the "only Christian Church" means that they see themselves as recipients and bearers of Jesus Christ's authentic doctrine. However, this is not exclusive to them. The Baptists, Pentecostals and other evangelicals would argue the same from their own theological standpoint. While the Catholic Church developed as "the Church" in Latin America, basically for being the first to reach these lands, the evangelical Protestant Church has waited for years to be granted the right to be also called "church", and being recognised as such thanks, in part, to the dramatic growth that they have shown lately.

Marzal then prefers to speak of denominations to refer to this sector of the church rather than "sects". Quoting the National Evangelical Council of Peru in its definition of denomination,<sup>89</sup> he classifies them in three categories:

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support some particular point of view than the unity of the Truth; and therefore they disqualify themselves from communion." Here the author distinguishes between Christian churches —Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant— and "sects", which he locates under the category of "fundamentalist sects", the "non-historical evangelical groups" and pentecostals.

<sup>88</sup> Marzal elaborates on this subject in "Catolicismo y pluralismo en el Perú contemporáneo" (1990), and *El Protestantismo en los Pueblos Jóvenes de la Gran Lima* (1996).

<sup>89</sup> The *Directorio Evangélico* defines denomination as "the association of churches (usually legally incorporated), identified by the same historical background, similar doctrine and same organisation, in most of the cases" (CONEP 1986:08).

- 1) “Evangelical Denominations”, characterised by their emphasis on the word of God and salvation by faith in Jesus Christ as personal Saviour: *Iglesia Evangélica Peruana*, Presbyterian Church, Baptist Convention, Christian and Missionary Alliance.
- 2) “Pentecostal Denominations”, with the same characteristics as evangelicals, but in addition emphasising the work of the Holy Spirit through a new baptism expressed in glossolalia and healing: Assemblies of God, *Iglesia de Dios de la Profecía*, *Movimiento Evangélico Misionero*, and Independent Pentecostal churches.
- 3) “Eschatological Denominations”, preaching the imminence of the world's end. Church of the Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and the *Israelitas del Nuevo Pacto Universal*. (Marzal 1988:273-277).<sup>90</sup>

In order to study them in detail, Marzal elaborates a scheme of five points that helps towards an understanding of the cultural and theological dynamics of each denomination: history, beliefs, rites, form of organisation and codes of behaviour.<sup>91</sup> This blueprint follows very closely the recommendations given by the Report of the Episcopal Conference of Brazil in 1984, which has five criteria for classifying non-catholic societies: origin, that is to say whether they are independent or dissenting groups; source of inspiration, that can be Christianity or other religion; openness and/or hostility to society; time of appearance on the scene, old or new; country of origin, whether they are autochthonous or come from some Western or Eastern countries; and social strata with which they work, that can be urban or rural, rich or poor, youth or adult.

On the same line, another catholic theologian, Florencio Galindo, proposes a more specific and detailed classification maintaining also the criteria drawn from the Episcopal Conference of Brazil. In his work *El Protestantismo fundamentalista, una experiencia ambigua para Latin America* (1992), Galindo (1992:72) states that religious groups operating in Latin America,

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<sup>90</sup> It is worth noting that the National Evangelical Council of Peru does not recognise the “Eschatological Denominations” as evangelicals.

<sup>91</sup> Marzal's typology differs from that of Lalive (1966), where the Swiss sociologist basically follows these criteria: relationship of pentecostals with civil society, their claim to universality, their lack of professional clergy, their community links, and their theological inclination.

Oscillate between two large spiritual families of universal dimension: the first one elaborates its theology and ethics out of the Judeo-Christian tradition, and considers the Bible as its only, or at least initial, source of inspiration. In this category we should locate the various Protestant groups and those that have their origin in a Protestant dissension although they may not be recognised as such today. The second one is inspired in the Western esoteric tradition, in eastern religious-philosophical principles, science, para-psychology and even science fiction, or Afro-American religions.

Since our research has to do with evangelical protestantism and more specifically with neopentecostalism, we will only mention the first classification developed by Galindo (1992:72-74). This presents three types.

- 1) “Historical Protestant Churches of European Origin”, also called “transplant churches” because they arrived with the European immigrants in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: Lutheran (German), Presbyterian and Baptists (Scottish), Anglican (English), Valdensian (French), Reformed and Mennonites (Dutch and Swiss).
- 2) “Historical Churches of American Origin”, also called “Mission Protestantism” because they originated in the United States and arrived in the region by the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Two groups should be distinguished here: churches with a confessional type of tradition like Lutheran, Episcopal, Presbyterian and Quaker; and the 'free' churches linked to the revival movement like Methodists, Baptists, Congregational, Disciples of Christ and Salvation Army.
- 3) “Evangelical”, a movement established in the 1920s by fundamentalist American missionaries. Here Galindo identifies four sub-categories. a) “Faith Missions”, economically supported by conservative churches and entrepreneurs, whose work concentrated mainly on indigenous populations: Central American Mission, Summer Institute of Linguistics. b) “International religious agencies”, founded during the 1950s whose goals are not ecclesiastical but ideological, being characterised by their militancy and strong economic power: Campus Crusade, World Vision, Youth with a Mission, SEPAL (Service for Evangelising Latin America), Latin American Mission, Youth for Christ, etc. c) “Pentecostal Churches”, whose beginning goes back to the turn of the century in Chile, Brazil and

Argentina in connection with the pentecostal movement of the United States. These churches make up 70-80% of the evangelical population in Latin America. They are almost exclusively autochthonous and self-supporting: Assemblies of God, Pentecostal Evangelical Church that takes on different names like Foursquare Gospel, *Congregação Cristã no Brasil*, *O Brasil para Cristo*. d) “Ideological Vanguard”, which can be national or international such as the Electronic Church and its ramifications.

Both Marzal and Galindo agree to locate pentecostals in a category apart from evangelicals because they move in a different dimension that makes them quite different in the evangelical world. It is within this category that we should also place neopentecostalism and charismatism for they share similar teachings and practices with classic pentecostalism as we will see in the next chapters.

#### **4. THE PROTESTANT APPROACH**

Due to the fact that the scope of Latin American evangelicalism is so broad and complex, we need to make some specifications to understand it thoroughly. In the first place, there are many well-organised and developed churches that perfectly fit the “church” category as it is commonly understood. They have professional clergy hierarchically constituted, run theological training schools, maintain ecumenical relationships with other religious institutions, and have the respect and recognition of both civil and religious institutions. But there are also groups that suit the “sect” description because they have a basic institutional structure, depend on a charismatic leader, maintain very strict codes of behaviour, have a low theological profile for they lack trained leaders to accomplish this task, and do not participate in political or community activities because they are “too busy winning people for Christ”. It is here where the sociological classification of “church/sect” is inadequate to rightly describe the large body of evangelical fellowships in general and the neopentecostal groups in particular, because they show traits of both simultaneously.

In the second place, theologically speaking, members of these communities are fully aware of their belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ. Even though evangelicalism is a diverse movement representing a wide spectrum of denominations, congregations and parachurch agencies, it is possible to find a

central ecclesiology running through their personal spiritual biographies, hymns, praise songs, formal and informal theological reflections in the form of sermons, teachings, and what they do best, evangelism and missions. Due to the fact that Latin American evangelicals owe their origins to the spiritual revival movements of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in Europe and the United States, they feel part of the Church formed of all who have had a conversion experience through Jesus Christ;<sup>92</sup> have been baptised in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; and have the Bible as their only norm of faith and conduct. Theologically speaking, evangelical churches identify themselves with the main postulates of the Reformation: *Sola Gratia*, *Sola Fide* and *Sola Scriptura*.<sup>93</sup> *Sola Gratia* refers to the conviction that justification is, from beginning to end, a matter of God's grace. It is wholly the result of God's unmerited favour to the sinner in Christ, in which He pardons all his or her sins, and accepts and accounts this person righteous in his sight for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ. *Sola Fide* refers to the conviction that justification, as described above, is through faith alone. That is, the sinner is justified when, by faith, the person believes the promise of God in the gospel and receives and rests upon Christ and Christ's righteousness alone. *Sola Scriptura* refers to the conviction that Scripture and Scripture alone is the ultimate and final authority in matters of faith and practice for the believer. Evangelicals maintain that every person should have access to the Scriptures and should seek to understand them. However, it is worth noting that while historical denominations certainly believe in an institutional Church and do not support the idea of the Church (i.e., the clergy) serving as a mediator between the sinner and God, neopentecostals here tend to rely very heavily on interpretations and even new divine revelations that their leaders may have for

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<sup>92</sup> Social scientists make a distinction between recruitment, conversion and commitment when they speak of the adherents' incorporation into different religious groups. They indicate that not every recruited person necessarily has been converted, and that not all converts are prepared to assume a commitment to all the demands the group requires (Carozzi 1993:21-22). From a theological point of view something similar happens. Protestant churches handle a similar language when they refer to *visitors*, *converts* and *members in full communion*. *Visitors* are those who attend church sporadically or out of curiosity; *converts* are those who publicly have accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour; and *members in full communion* are those who are baptised and participate actively, supporting the church.

<sup>93</sup> For example, the National Evangelical Council of Peru states: "The Evangelical community in Peru is an expression of the Christian body inspired in the doctrinal heritage of the first century Christian Church, asserting the principles of the Protestant Reformation: God's grace alone, faith in Jesus Christ alone, the Scriptures alone." Taken from *CONEP* (undated pamphlet).

them. In this regard, new pentecostal groups might be closer to the catholic tradition which affirms that the Church is the ultimate source of all divine knowledge, than to the evangelical belief that no other authority and revelation are needed apart from that of the Scriptures alone.

In the third place, for evangelicals in general, any church or group that does not meet the standards described above fall into the “sect” category, whether because they are denying fundamental elements of the Christian faith or because they are adding other teachings that contradict the essence of the Christian faith. The National Evangelical Council of Peru (CONEP) puts it in practical terms:

The Evangelical community in Peru is formed of denominations and ecclesiastical missions, service institutions and centres of education entrenched on the Christian message revealed in the Bible, whose beginning and end is Jesus Christ, who makes God’s character visible manifested in His creative and redemptive action. The evangelical community, faithful to Jesus Christ and His message, declares and defends the dignity and value of all human beings as creation and image of God. The evangelical Christian community comprises a sector of the Peruvian population with a visible presence in the country. Evangelical congregations located in each town and city, carry a missionary and pastoral task, proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus, supporting Christian values and serving their community in its personal and social needs.<sup>94</sup>

What CONEP outlines here gives us an insight of what these congregations look like and believe in. With minor variations, new charismatic and pentecostal churches would fully agree with it.

### **A. Attempts to Classify the Evangelical Church**

Classifications of the Evangelical Church do certainly help us to better grasp their nature and doctrinal emphasis. First attempts recognised only two types: historical denominations and emotional groups. Even though this typology would serve European Protestantism perfectly, it was of no use in Latin America because the nature of the evangelical phenomenon in this part of the world was different (Westmeier 1986:376). Other attempts followed and authors like José

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

Míguez Bonino would speak, for example, of two missionary models, the “civiliser” and “evangeliser”,<sup>95</sup> while others would rather begin to use “Transplant Churches” and “Faith Movement Churches” to classify the types of Protestantism that were operating in the region (Valle 1972).

The Puerto Rican missiologist Orlando Costas (1976:30-50) was one of the first scholars to use a typology where pentecostalism was seen in a different category, not because of their “sectarian” characteristics but because of their theological and doctrinal emphasis. Costas then classified evangelical protestantism as follows:

- 1) “Transplant Protestantism” which arrived in Latin America with the first European immigrants at the end of the nineteenth century. It was called this because their members only meant to maintain their language and culture in small European colonies, with no intention of doing evangelism.
- 2) “Missionary Protestantism” arrived around the beginning of the twentieth century, bringing with it British and American missionaries of historical churches (Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists), and the “faith movement” of the United States. Their emphasis was in pietism, conversion as emotional and personal crisis, centrality of the Bible, and little commitment of their members to the outside world.
- 3) “Pentecostal Protestantism” which was linked to the movement that began around the beginning of the twentieth century in California and which in only a few years would extend throughout the country and become the largest and most dynamic religious expression in the world.

Following the same scheme, Samuel Escobar (1977:2), missiology professor at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, PA, would broaden this classification bearing triple criteria in mind: the group/denomination’s theology, its history, and its position with respect to the ecumenical movement:

- 1) “Classic Protestantism”, rooted in the historical churches of the Reformation and by affinity, but not by origin, also related to the existing ethnic communities of the region.

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<sup>95</sup> In the epilogue of *Haven of Masses* (D’Epinay 1969).

- 2) “Evangelical Protestantism”, the result of the evangelising efforts of different independent faith missions that came to work in the continent.
- 3) “Pentecostal Protestantism”, the fruit both of indigenous movements which split from established churches, for example in Chile and Brazil, and European and American Pentecostal missionary efforts.

More recent works are structured around the same typology (Schäfer 1989:11-13; Martínez 1989:28-29), coinciding also in giving pentecostalism its own place within the spectrum of Latin American evangelicalism.<sup>96</sup>

## B. Attempts to Classify Neopentecostal Churches

The diversity and complexity of neopentecostal congregations, the history of which is still unfolding, make it very difficult to grasp their richness in its whole dimension. Yet, we deem a classification of them is an important part of our study inasmuch as it will help us to understand the dynamic of these groups, and their relationship with evangelicalism.

Pentecostal theologian Carmelo Alvarez (1995:38, 49-50) has already attempted to classify neopentecostalism by dividing it into two categories: “Heretical Pentecostals” and “Pentecostalism of Divine Cure and Prosperity”. Let us see what he has to say in this regard.

The “Heretical Pentecostal Movement” arises from Creole churches with strong messianic patterns. Structurally and economically speaking it is a co-operative and community oriented movement under indigenous leadership, which is led by an authoritative and hierarchical charismatic-messianic figure. Examples: Church of Mita in Aarón, Puerto Rico, founded by Juan García; and *Luz del Mundo* (Light of the World) in Guadalajara, Mexico, founded by the prophet Isaí. The “Pentecostalism of Divine Cure and Prosperity” arises

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<sup>96</sup> Historian Juan Kessler proposes another typology for Peru in his classic *La historia de la evangelización en el Perú* (1993). Here, this reformed author says that Protestant Reform did not have direct influence on Latin America, and it was the Anglo-Saxon *Evangelicals* who implanted Protestantism in the region (Kessler 1993:20). Kessler then classifies the churches by their baptismal practices: those that practised child baptism (Methodists), adult baptism (Baptists, Christian and Missionary Alliance, *Iglesia Evangélica Peruana*, and so forth), baptism in the Spirit (all pentecostal churches in general), and the church that does not practise baptism (Salvation Army).

from dissenting or alternative streams of Creole churches. It also has strong messianic patterns with an economy and structure clearly entrepreneurial. Its indigenous ministry is weak and relies heavily on the charismatic businessman hero. Example, the bishop Edir Macedo of the Universal Church of God's Kingdom in Brazil.

Alvarez's typology gives us a good start for considering a suitable framework to classify the new pentecostal churches in Peru. The criteria used in his analysis have at least four elements to be considered: origin, structure and organisation, economy, and leadership. In this work I will take some of his elements and add to them beliefs and rituals, and identification with the evangelical/pentecostal community to see how these groups insert themselves in the Peruvian religious scene. Since in the last chapters we will see more of these churches in detail, here I will limit myself to underline their most outstanding characteristics that will help us to understand the nature of new pentecostalism.

### **1) Origin and Structure**

Peruvian neopentecostals basically come from four different sources. A first group comes out of the mainline denominations and classic pentecostal movement, due mainly to internal splits. These are the cases of *Iglesia Bíblica de Fe* that came out of *Palabra de Fe* and the *Iglesia Bíblica Emmanuel*. *Emmanuel* separated from the Christian and Missionary Alliance in 1987, led by the architect Humberto Lay, a well-respected clergyman in Alliance circles. This church is located in the residential district of San Isidro and is where more than 3,000 people meet every Sunday in its own premises. *Emmanuel* is one of the few churches in Lima that works with the upper middle class of the capital. It is a self-supporting congregation,<sup>97</sup> running different programmes of service for the community.

A second group comes from the catholic charismatic wing as a movement of renewal and not as a party resulting from splits within any church in particular (Amat 1996:10). Following the charismatic trend of the 1970s, people remained in their own parishes in order to change them from within. Over the years and

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<sup>97</sup> The nineteenth-twentieth century missionary principles of being self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating church were fully embodied by pentecostals and now these new fellowships are walking on the same footprints.

after much effort, some saw their attempts useless and decided to leave the tutelage of their priests to begin a new life as evangelical church. This is the case of *Centro Cristiano "Yo Soy"* that meets in Lince district, and also the *Comunidad Agua Viva*, whose pastor, Juan Capurro, was a successful businessman and catholic charismatic leader in charge of several Bible study groups before becoming *Agua Viva* founder. He was also founder and first president of the International Federation of Christian Pastors (FIPAC). Today, this congregation is a strong church of several thousand members with a weekly TV programme. Like Emmanuel, these churches are also self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating.

A third group is the fruit of some American independent Charismatic missionaries in the '80s. The most representative churches in Lima are *Camino de Vida* pastored by Robert Barriguer, who maintains links with the 700 Club and the preacher Benny Hinn; and *Palabra de Fe*, led by Jim Andrews who spreads the teachings of Rhema Bible Institute and that of authors like Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland. These groups work in the middle-class sectors of Lima. Although these churches are self-supporting, they also receive economic help from their sister churches in the States to finance many of their projects.

The last group is the product of Latin American neopentecostal missionary work from two different sources. The first line comes from charismatic mega-churches of Central and South America, whose interest is both helping local congregations and planting new churches in Peru. One of them is the *Misión Carismática Internacional* (MCI) of Bogotá,<sup>98</sup> Colombia, which with its G-12 model is surely re-shaping and challenging old patterns of church growth strategy known.<sup>99</sup> Its influence is not only affecting charismatic groups, but traditional denominations are also taking up the MCI model to revitalise their own congregations.<sup>100</sup> In a lesser degree but with similar effect is the work of *Elim* and *El-Shaddai* (Caballeros 1999) churches from Guatemala, and *Centro Cristiano* from Costa Rica, which has relationship with *Iglesia de Cristo*, a growing congregation in Pueblo Libre district. In the end, the force combined between these powerful

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<sup>98</sup> See César Castellanos, *Sueña y ganarás el mundo* (1998).

<sup>99</sup> Joel Comiskey, *Groups of 12* (1999).

<sup>100</sup> The most notorious example is the Christian & Missionary Alliance church in Lince, Lima, which has adopted the G-12 plan. Lince church gave birth to the Encounter Movement in the 1970s, one of the most dynamic urban missionary strategies of the region. See Miguel A. Palomino, *Misión en la ciudad* (1990).

churches have made a dramatic impact on both charismatics and traditional evangelicals of that nation

The second line comes from Brazil with groups like *Dios es Amor* (Hernández 1994) and *Iglesia Universal del Reino de Dios*, better known in Lima as *Pare de Sufrir*.<sup>101</sup> These two groups are very controversial because they mix Brazilian and Peruvian indigenous rituals with pentecostal elements. This has led the evangelical community to look on them with suspicion. *Dios es Amor* meets in the facilities of the ex-cinema *Arica* in Breña, an old section of the capital, and *Pare de Sufrir* holds its services in another former cinema, the *Concorde*, located in Lince, a middle sector in the city. Both churches have brought thousands of members who go to church every day—and at any time in the case of *Dios es Amor*—looking for healing, miracles and spiritual comfort. They have a daily radio programme that reaches the whole country, which has helped them to open new branches in many other provinces outside Lima.

Some other details about the churches mentioned here are found in Charts 3 and 4. Three elements draw immediate attention: Firstly, the autocratic form of church government that most of these groups exercise, whether through a strong-one-man leader or the apostolic system that is gaining momentum among these fellowships. Secondly, many pastors lack formal theological training. This last element is what makes evangelical leaders cautious about this movement. Early pentecostals had to face the same limitations and made it through. However, neopentecostal constituency is different and sooner or later its high expectations and demands will require a leadership better trained in church and Bible matters. Thirdly, the business-oriented approach of these groups is clearly reflective of the entrepreneurial skills of the leaders, who finance their programmes selling all sorts of goods. Unlike traditional evangelical churches that would not allow any kind of trade within their premises, neopentecostal display of food, books, videos, CDs and blessed objects make their meeting places look like exhibition halls. In part, this accords with the spirit of economic survival that is perceived in Lima, where people go out to the streets to sell anything they can in order to endure the severe crisis that country is going through.

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<sup>101</sup> This church name *Pare de Sufrir* (Stop Suffering) is both a command and an invitation to fight back the fatalistic attitude that has identified many people in Latin America. *Pare de Sufrir* is the opposite to resignation; it is to defiance poverty, abuse, mistreatment and other social ills that have kept *Latinos* from prospering and enjoying themselves. Behind this brand name might be the clue for success of this church.

**ORIGIN AND STRUCTURE OF NEOPENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN LIMA**  
[Chart 3]

CHURCH	ORIGIN	STRUCTURE	COMPOSITION	LEADERSHIP
<i>AGUA VIVA</i> (Living Water)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Began as a cell group in Lima, 1985.</li> <li>Founded by Juan Capurro, a former catholic charismatic leader.</li> <li>Over 6,000 members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charismatic/ Independent</li> <li>Leader-centred</li> <li>Governed by the pastor and elders (cell group)</li> <li>Linked to the net of apostolic churches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sectors B and C<sup>1</sup></li> <li>No dress code</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pastor Capurro lacks formal theological training, but his associate pastors are Bible college graduates.</li> <li>Main leaders work with the cells</li> <li>Leaders are trained in its own Bible academy</li> </ul>
<i>CAMINO DE VIDA</i> (Path of Life)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Began as a cell group in Lima, 1985, and established itself as a church in 1989</li> <li>Founded by Robert Barriger, an American Charismatic missionary</li> <li>Nearly 2,000 members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charismatic / Independent</li> <li>Leader-centred</li> <li>Governed by the pastor and a body of officers elected by the congregation in its Annual Business Session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sectors B and A</li> <li>No dress code</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Barriger is a career missionary with formal theological training</li> <li>Female leadership is accepted</li> <li>Leaders are trained in its own Bible Institute which is accredited by Word Bible College, San Diego, CA.</li> </ul>
<i>DIOS ES AMOR</i> (God is Love)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Began in 1984 as the fruit of Brazilian missionaries from God is Love church, whose founder is David Miranda</li> <li>Over 1,000 members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pentecostal, with strong links to its Brazilian headquarters</li> <li>Leader-centred</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urban poor. Sectors C and D</li> <li>Dress code observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior pastor S. de Souza (Brazil) has no formal theological training</li> <li>Female leadership accepted</li> <li>No training Bible Institute</li> </ul>
<i>IGLESIA UNIVERSAL DEL REINO DE DIOS</i> (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Missionary work of Brazilian IURD.</li> <li>Began working in Peru in the mid-eighties</li> <li>Several thousand members nation wide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent Pentecostal</li> <li>Leader-centred</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sector C</li> <li>Dress code observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior pastor Marcelo Santos (Portugal) has no formal theological training</li> <li>No female leadership</li> </ul>
<i>IGLESIA BIBLICA DE FE</i> (Faith Biblical Church)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Split from <i>Palabra de Fe</i></li> <li>Began in 1992 (approx.) with C. Campos its current pastor</li> <li>600 members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent Charismatic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sectors C and B</li> <li>No dress code</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pastor César Campos has formal theological training</li> <li>Female leadership accepted</li> </ul>
<i>IGLESIA BIBLICA EMMANUEL</i> (Emmanuel Biblical Church)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Split from the CMA in 1987</li> <li>Founder and current pastor Humberto Lay</li> <li>Over 4,000 members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affiliated to the Assemblies of God in USA (1988)</li> <li>Leader-Centred</li> <li>Linked to the net of apostolic churches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sectors B and A</li> <li>No dress code</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humberto Lay is self taught. His associates have Bible school training</li> <li>Has a Bible Institute and Missionary Institute</li> </ul>
<i>IGLESIA DE CRISTO</i> (Church of Christ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Came from California and established itself in Peru approx. ten years ago</li> <li>Founder César Miani</li> <li>600 members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neopentecostal/ Independent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sectors C</li> <li>No dress code</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pastor Juan Terrazos has theological training</li> <li>Bible Academy and Ministries Institute</li> </ul>
<i>PALABRA DE FE</i> (Word of Faith)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work connected to Kenneth Hagin ministries (USA)</li> <li>Arrived in the mid 1980s with US missionary Jim Andrews</li> <li>Over 500 members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charismatic/ independent</li> <li>Leader-centred</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sectors B and C</li> <li>No dress code</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jim Andrews has theological training</li> <li>No female leadership</li> <li>Bible study Centre</li> </ul>
<i>IGLESIA "YO SOY"</i> (“I Am” Church)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Began in the mid eighties as a catholic charismatic cell group led by Hugo Hoyos, newly converted in the CMA</li> <li>Over 2,500 members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charismatic / Independent</li> <li>Leader-centred</li> <li>Linked to the net of apostolic churches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sectors B and C</li> <li>No dress code</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr &amp; Mrs Hoyos have no formal theological training</li> <li>Female leadership is strongly encouraged</li> <li>Run the School of Leaders where people get trained to work with the G-12 strategy</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Sector A with incomes of more than US\$ 3,440/month; Sector B, US\$ 947/month; Sector C, US\$ 379/month; Sector D, US\$ 225/month; and Sector E, US\$ 157/month. Taken from “Los nuevos pobres de Lima”, *Caretas*, 2 September 1999.

**RELATIONSHIPS AND FINANCES**  
[Chart 4]

CHURCH	COMMUNITY SERVICE	MEMBERSHIP AND CHURCH GOVERNMENT	RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EVANGELICAL WORLD	FINANCES
<i>AGUA VIVA</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools</li> <li>Members in public offices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership by baptism</li> <li>Officers elected by members</li> <li>Control by pastors</li> <li>Apostolic government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affiliated to CONEP and FIPAC</li> <li>Participant of activities organised by CONEP and FIPAC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tithes, offerings and donations</li> <li>Cafeteria</li> <li>Sale of videos, cassettes and books</li> </ul>
<i>CAMINO DE VIDA</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nursery and schools</li> <li>Members in public offices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership by baptism and transfer</li> <li>Officers elected in its Annual Business Session</li> <li>Control by pastors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FIPAC</li> <li>Participant of activities organised by CONEP and FIPAC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tithes and offerings</li> <li>Sale of videos, cassettes and books</li> </ul>
<i>DIOS ES AMOR</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No community service. They are seen as a "sect"</li> <li>Broadcasting of the services through their own radio station</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership by baptism</li> <li>Total pastoral control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unrelated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Donations and pledges</li> <li>Sale of blessed objects</li> </ul>
<i>IGLESIA UNIVERSAL DEL REINO DE DIOS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No community service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership by baptism and transfer</li> <li>Bishops and pastors control everything</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unrelated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offerings, tithes and donations</li> <li>Sale of videos, cassettes, books and blessed objects</li> <li>Sale of food after de services</li> </ul>
<i>IGLESIA BIBLICA DE FE</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No community service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership by baptism and transfer</li> <li>Church governed by the pastor and his officers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affiliated to FIPAC</li> <li>Participant of activities organised by charismatic churches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offering and tithes</li> <li>Bookstore</li> <li>Sale of cassettes</li> </ul>
<i>IGLESIA BIBLICA EMMANUEL</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools</li> <li>Offer financial services</li> <li>Training College</li> <li>Members in public service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership by baptism and transfer</li> <li>Apostolic government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affiliated to CONEP and FIPAC</li> <li>Its pastor is respected in evangelical circles</li> <li>Participant of activities organised by CONEP and FIPAC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offering, tithes and donations</li> <li>Cafeteria and bookstore</li> <li>Sale of cassettes and videos</li> </ul>
<i>IGLESIA DE CRISTO</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No community service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership by baptism and transfer</li> <li>Church governed by the pastor and his officers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affiliated to CONEP</li> <li>Participant of activities organised by CONEP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offerings and tithes</li> <li>Sale of cassettes and books</li> </ul>
<i>PALABRA DE FE</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No community service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership by baptism and transfer</li> <li>Closed books</li> <li>One pastor controls all</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affiliated to FIPAC</li> <li>Links with other charismatic organizations abroad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offering and tithes</li> <li>Bookstore</li> <li>Sale of cassettes</li> </ul>
<i>YO SOY</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No community service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership by baptism and transfer</li> <li>Apostolic government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affiliated to FIPAC</li> <li>Links with other charismatic organizations abroad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offerings, tithes and pledged</li> <li>Bookstore</li> <li>Sale of videos and cassettes</li> </ul>

## 2) Beliefs and rituals

Neopentecostals, like evangelicals, believe in the divine Trinity, and in the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They believe in the moral fall of human beings and consequently in their need of salvation and redemption through the expiatory work of Jesus Christ. They accept the Bible as God's revelation for Christians, and therefore regard it as their only norm for faith and conduct. Yet, they also recognise modern prophets and apostles to rule the church through special revelations and visions they may receive from God. These "ministries", as they call them, are part of their restorationist viewpoint that claims that the New Testament offices of prophets and apostles are also meant for today, similarly to those of evangelists, pastors and teachers that are in place in traditional churches.

In terms of rituals and ceremonies, they all practise both baptism by immersion after confession of faith in Jesus Christ, and the Lord's Supper. For the latter only those who have been baptised in the evangelical faith are allowed to partake. In actuality, these two ceremonies draw neopentecostals closer to the same doctrinal statements that evangelicals endorse. However, another practice, the laying-on of hands is an edgy issue where the two groups doctrinally depart from each other. Their method of "imparting" the Spirit through the laying-on of hands seems fanatical to most traditional denominations. So does the imparting of the anointing by the preacher during the personal ministry time, which is regarded as a high point of almost every charismatic service. This happens when the congregants with various needs are called upon to come up to the front of the church and receive the supernatural anointing of the Spirit. The receiver will then fall backwards into the arms of a designated "catcher". This phenomenon known popularly as being "slain in the Spirit," has brought controversy to evangelical circles.

Although these manifestations do not take place in all neopentecostal churches, the laying-on of hands upon the sick or even the demon possessed is general practise in these congregations. This takes place after the preaching when people have been invited to come forward for the time of "ministry". Usually, it is the pastors, preachers and leaders who pray in this fashion, but the prayer teams and "prayer warriors" play also a significant role here for they are supporting and helping preachers to control any situation that may spoil this crucial moment of

the *culto*. On the one hand, this could be understood as a form of democratisation of the charisma as it happens with the gift of tongues or glossolalia among classic pentecostals. But on the other hand, it is also true that these prayer assistants will probably never get the chance to become a pastor or preacher, occupations that would seem to be reserved only for the church founders and anointed prophets and apostles.

Chart 5 summarises the main beliefs of these churches in Lima. It is worth noticing that neopentecostal basic doctrines such as conversion, sanctification, water baptism and the return of Christ are similar to those which *evangélicos* would regard as biblical foundations. The same occurs with the evangelistic zeal which is seen as first priority, but when it comes to the Bible they seem to regard it mostly as an instrument for defence against Satan's attacks —a sort of amulet?— rather than a book for Christian indoctrination.

### BASIC DOCTRINES AND BELIEFS [Chart 5]

CHURCH	BASIC DOCTRINES	BIBLE	CHRIST'S RETURN	GOD'S PLAN FOR HIS CHILDREN
<i>AGUA VIVA</i>	Conversion Sanctification Baptism Holy Spirit Baptism Tongues	Word of God Sword against Satan Protection Meditation book Tells the future	Any moment Will take me to heaven In the future Will fix the world Will destroy the world	Evangelise others To be saved from hell Not be in politics Prosperity
<i>CAMINO DE VIDA</i>	Conversion Baptism Sanctification Holy Spirit Baptism Tongues	Word of God Sword against Satan Tells the future Meditation book Protection	Any moment Will fix the world Will take me to heaven In the future Will destroy the World	Evangelise others To be saved from hell Prosperity Not be in politics
<i>DIOS ES AMOR</i>	Conversion Baptism Holy Spirit Baptism Tongues Sanctification	Word of God Sword against Satan Protection Tells the future Meditation book	In the future Will take me to heaven Any moment Will destroy the World	Evangelise others To be saved from hell Prosperity Not be in politics

<i>IGLESIA UNIVERSAL DEL REINO DE DIOS</i>	Conversion Sanctification Baptism Holy Spirit Baptism Tongues	Word of God Sword against Satan Protection Tells the future Meditation book	In the future Will take me to heaven Any moment Will fix the world Will destroy the World	Evangelise others Prosperity To be saved from hell
<i>IGLESIA BIBLICA DE FE</i>	Conversion Sanctification Baptism Holy Spirit Baptism Tongues	Word of God Sword against Satan Meditation book Tells the future Protection	Any moment Will take me to heaven In the future Will fix the world Will destroy the World	Evangelise others To be saved from hell Prosperity Not be in politics
<i>IGLESIA BIBLICA EMMANUEL</i>	Conversion Sanctification Baptism Holy Spirit Baptism Tongues	Word of God Sword against Satan Tells the future Meditation book Protection	Any moment Will take me to heaven In the future Will fix the world Will destroy the World	Evangelise others To be saved from hell Prosperity Not be in politics
<i>IGLESIA DE CRISTO</i>	Conversion Sanctification Baptism Holy Spirit Baptism Tongues	Word of God Sword against Satan Tells the future Protection Meditation book	Any moment Will take me to heaven In the future Will fix the world Will destroy the World	Evangelise others To be saved from hell Prosperity Not be in politics
<i>PALABRA DE FE</i>	Conversion Sanctification Baptism Holy Spirit Baptism Tongues	Word of God Sword against Satan Protection Tells the future Meditation book	Any moment Will take me to heaven In the future Will fix the world Will destroy the World	Evangelise others Prosperity Not be in politics
<i>"YO SOY"</i>	Conversion Sanctification Baptism Holy Spirit Baptism Tongues	Word of God Sword against Satan Protection Tells the future Meditation book	Any moment Will take me to heaven In the future Will fix the world Will destroy the World	Evangelise others Prosperity

### 3) Identification with Evangelical and Pentecostal Protestantism

Most of these churches are in cordial relationships with evangelicals and pentecostals. Many of them are either members of the National Evangelical Council of Peru (CONEP) or the International Federation of Christian Pastors (FIPAC). The faithful of these communities see themselves as evangelicals and their leaders are recognised by the traditional denominations.

However, the situation with *Dios es Amor* and *Pare de Sufrir* is different. By their practices and teachings they may look like pentecostals, but evangelicals prefer not have any contact with them because they consider that their over-emphasis on suspicious super-natural demonstrations weakens the real message of the Gospels.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, the fact that these churches request money in exchange for healing prayers, or distribute blessed roses with faculties “to clean” homes from evil spirits, hinders their acceptance into the evangelical world.<sup>103</sup> In a city where superstitions (primal religion?) and witchcraft (shamanism?) are still very latent, practices like these would seem to contradict what protestantism has tried to eradicate in the last hundred years. “What these churches do is ‘evangelical sorcery’”, a pentecostal pastor said to me, a statement that others would also endorse.

Having said this, it seems apparent to classify neopentecostals into three types: Charismatic Communities due to their source of origin; Restorationists because of their revivalist theology; and Churches of *Cura Divina* (“Divine Cure”) for their emphasis on offering healing prayer as the major attraction to their services. In the next chapters I will go into detail of each group except for the Churches of *Cura Divina* for the reasons stated above. The chart below has a definition of each one of them, as well as some of the churches that belong to each type.

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<sup>102</sup> In the ‘90s both churches requested affiliation to the National Evangelical Council of Peru, but their application was turned down because this organisation considered that their doctrinal emphases radically differed from those of the other members. (Interview with Rev. Felix Calle, CONEP’s President).

<sup>103</sup> Pastors of *Dios es Amor* church request a generous offering every time they pray for an individual.

**TYOLOGY OF NEOPENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN PERU**  
**[Chart 6]**

<b>TYPE</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>CHURCH</b>
Charismatic Communities	They come out of the Charismatic movement, both from Peru and the United States. Their main emphasis is on the prosperity gospel. They fully identify themselves with evangelical Protestantism.	American Origin: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Camino de Vida</i></li> <li>• <i>Palabra de Fe</i></li> </ul> National Origin: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Agua Viva</i></li> <li>• <i>Yo Soy</i></li> </ul>
Restorationists	National churches or the fruit of other Latin American missions. Their emphases are on revival —expressed in miracles, healing, exorcism and other super-natural demonstrations— and the restoration of praise and worship in the church according to the Old Testament patterns. They identify themselves with Pentecostal Protestantism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Iglesia Bíblica Emmanuel</i></li> <li>• <i>Asociación de Ministerios Internacionales de Restauración</i></li> <li>• <i>Iglesia de Cristo</i></li> </ul>
Churches of <i>Cura Divina</i> (Divine Cure)	These churches come particularly from Brazil. Their practices are a mixture of Afro-Brazilian rituals, ancestral beliefs, and shamanistic therapies. They do not have relationship with evangelical Protestantism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Dios es Amor</i></li> <li>• <i>Pare de Sufrir</i></li> </ul>

## **PART TWO: THE IDENTITY QUESTION LOOKING INTO THE NEOPENTECOSTAL WORLD**

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### **CHAPTER 4**

#### **NEOPENTECOSTALS AND THE “THIRD WAVE” IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The neopentecostal phenomenon is often linked to the “Third Wave” or “Signs and Wonders” movement, which originated in California in the early 1980s. Naturally, in speaking of a “third wave” we are implicitly recognising the existence of two previous waves. The First Wave gave birth to classic Pentecostalism at the turn of the twentieth century, and the Charismatic Renewal Movement of the 1960s was born out of the “Second Wave”.<sup>104</sup> In this section we will see some of the historical aspects of these three waves, their connections with the Latin American Pentecostal movement, and the way in which the Third Wave is currently developing in the region, particularly in Peru. See Chart 7.

#### **1. FIRST WAVE: CLASSIC PENTECOSTALISM**

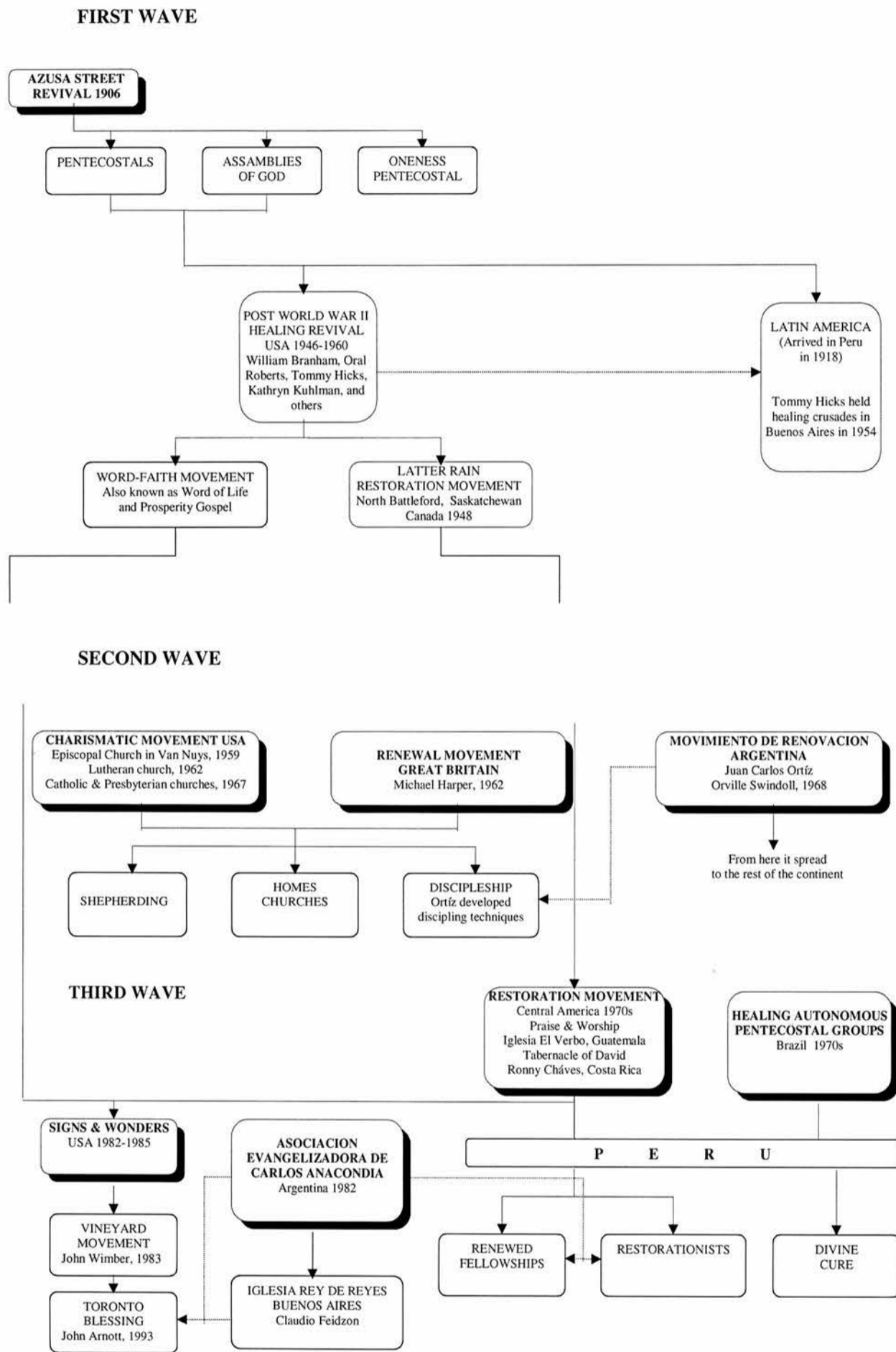
Pentecostalism is the sector of Christianity whose members claim to have a personal, emotional and spiritual experience of the Holy Spirit. This experience, “baptism of the Holy Spirit”, comes after conversion and is sealed with the bestowing

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<sup>104</sup> According to Barrett (1988), the First Wave, or classic pentecostalism, extends from 1741 until 1901 when the first evidence of the baptism of the Spirit is given by means of tongues in Topeka, Arkansas. The Second Wave, or Charismatic Movement, begins in 1907 and 1918, but its expansion takes place mainly in the decade of the 1950s. And the Third Wave, or Restoration in the Established Churches, begins in 1980 and continues until today.

# THE "THREE WAVES" IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

[Chart 7]



of one or more supernatural gifts, tongues or glossolalia being its distinctive and final trademark.

### A. Its Roots

Generally speaking, there are two events considered to be the landmarks of the beginning of pentecostalism. One is the prayer meeting held at Bethel Bible Institute in Topeka, Kansas, in 1901, when Agnes N. Ozman spoke in an unknown language. The other episode is the Azusa Street revival of 1906 in Los Angeles, California, that gave rise to the black Holiness preacher (1870-1922) William Seymour as the spokesman of early pentecostals.<sup>105</sup> Yet, scholars agree that the movement's roots are to be found in German pietism and English Methodism. Particularly, it is said that the radical Holiness movement that blossomed in North America at the end of the past century, and the Keswick Conventions in England during the same period, laid the foundation of pentecostalism (Synan 1971; Dayton 1987).<sup>106</sup>

It certainly was the radicalisation of the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification by a sector of American Methodism made up basically of immigrants and poor from the countryside, which gave birth to this movement that emphasised "entire sanctification" as a personal crisis after conversion.<sup>107</sup> At the time some revival

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<sup>105</sup> William J. Seymour was the central figure of the Azusa street revival and will always be remembered as the black man who sparked the worldwide Pentecost experience. He was a Nazarene preacher, but left his church when he came across the holiness circles in Los Angeles in 1906. There he found that one cannot say that he has been "baptized in the Holy Spirit" without the "initial evidence" of speaking in tongues as early Christians did on the Day of Pentecost. This was an offensive and revolutionary teaching since practically all Christians claimed to be baptized in the Spirit —evangelicals at the time of conversion and holiness people at the time of their "second blessing" or "entire sanctification." The teaching of a glossolalia-attested Spirit baptism became then the centerpiece of pentecostal teaching, with Seymour as the apostle of the movement.

<sup>106</sup> Pentecostal theologian Carmelo Alvarez (1995:35) affirms that pentecostalism was born out of historical churches from the Reformation. "Therefore," says Alvarez, "Pentecostal churches are daughters and granddaughters of the Reformation".

<sup>107</sup> Originally, this doctrine would refer to Christian perfection as a second work of grace. See John Wesley's *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*.

preachers had also begun to speak of a theological link between the doctrine of sanctification and that of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.<sup>108</sup> For the followers of this new teaching, the climax of Christian life would mean an ecstatic experience with the Spirit translated into visions, dreams and other emotional experiences that confirmed the new perfection stage in the believer's life (Conn 1959:169-180; Jones 1974:406-409). In practical terms, this understanding of holiness had a great influence on people's personal and daily behaviour. Wesleyan Puritanism had also become radical, and this eventually made the new pentecostal groups develop strict codes of dress and behaviour that up to today identify classic pentecostalism. As far as the leaders of the Keswick movement were concerned, sanctification was a life-long process rather than a one-time experience. For them, this process, as John Wesley had taught it, was carried out by Jesus Christ and although they rejected the idea of sanctification as sinless perfection, yet they agreed that the "infilling of the Spirit" or "second blessing" was a different experience from salvation, and that it brought victory over sin and empowered Christians for service in the church (Bundy 1988:518-519). This is why healing, miracles and evangelism played an important role during the famous Keswick conferences.<sup>109</sup>

In this regard, Douglas Petersen (96:21) says:

Though pentecostals can trace their origins to the Wesleyan-Holiness movement it is clear that the subsequent early influence of the Keswick teachings regarding dispensationalism, premillennialism and more importantly their understanding of progressive sanctification, as well as their experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit for empowerment, became predominant theological elements in later pentecostal thought.

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<sup>108</sup> See for example R.A. Torrey, *Baptism with the Holy Spirit*, and A.B. Simpson, *Wholly Sanctified*.

<sup>109</sup> The Keswick Convention began in 1875. The Convention, which is held annually in the English town of Keswick in the Lakes District, England, is a non-denominational Christian convention emphasizing "higher life" teaching. The motto of the Convention is "*all one in Christ Jesus*."

## B. Spirituality and Ecumenism

The spirituality of the first groups deserves also some consideration. Walter Hollenweger (1989:8s), senior scholar on pentecostalism, has pointed out that among early pentecostals there is a Roman Catholic spirituality mediated through Wesleyanism<sup>110</sup> and an African spirituality expressed in oral liturgy where the narrative, visions and healing prayers play an important role. By emphasising bodily healing, pentecostals apparently wanted to overcome the western dualism between spirit and matter and replace it with a holistic spirituality, where soul and body would be integrated. Therefore, “one could say that Pentecostalism”, that was born in Los Angeles in 1906, “is in part the result of an encounter of catholic spirituality and black spirituality on American soil” (Hollenweger 1980:68).

This wedding of catholic and African spiritualities would hold the key to understanding the vitality of pentecostalism and might also explain two things. Firstly, the resistance of traditional North American evangelicals to pentecostal manifestations,<sup>111</sup> for “they rightly sense the difference between pentecostal/charismatic spirituality and their own. Only to the extent that pentecostalism loosens its roots in catholic and black spirituality does it become acceptable to Evangelicalism” (Hollenweger 1980:68). And secondly, though these ingredients contributed to the marginalisation of pentecostalism in North America, paradoxically these same elements may have caused pentecostalism to be successful in others countries, particularly in Latin America.<sup>112</sup> This success can be measured in two ways:

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<sup>110</sup> Some Latin American scholars find in pentecostalism certain affinities with elements of eschatological Catholic tradition, where salvation is reached through personal “purification” or “perfection.” This somewhat resembles the Holiness movement tradition. The fact that pentecostalism, as a revivalist movement, “elaborates this element deeply buried in the catholic soul may explain its vitality in Latin countries” (Forni 1993:15). Other authors, such as Lalive d'Épinay, go even further and claim that Latin American pentecostalism is not actually protestantism but rather a sort of popular catholicism. As such, Lalive foresees that its rapid growth in Chile and other Latin countries would begin to slow down and eventually stop completely. Cited by Harvey Cox in *Fire from Heaven*, p174.

<sup>111</sup> On the attempts of pentecostals to earn acceptance among evangelicals in North America, see Gerald Sheppard's “Word and Spirit: Scripture in the Pentecostal Tradition.”

<sup>112</sup> Pentecostalism has not only been widely accepted in Latin America but has also established itself in first world countries that supposedly had neither interest nor friendliness for this type of religiosity. According to David Barrett's (1988:119) statistics, in 1988 Europe had

its explosive growth, and its potential for ecumenism. For Donald Dayton (1991:6), the fact that Latin America seems to be the continent where pentecostalism has found its destiny may prove that pentecostals are here to stay. Certainly, if we only take the Assemblies of God, we will see that this is the largest pentecostal denomination in fourteen out of the eighteen Spanish-speaking countries of the continent (Wagner 1988:185). And if we consider the whole range of pentecostal groups, we would readily see that pentecostalism makes up 75% of the evangelical population of the region (Núñez 1996:159).

Yet it has been its recent inroads into the ecumenical arena that deserve equal or even more attention. In years past, the Renewal Movement showed itself to be wide open to dialogue with catholics in unforeseen ways. However, lately it has been classic pentecostals who have been taking the lead as some interfaith encounters testify. Ever since (1905-1987) David DuPlessis,<sup>113</sup> known also as Mr. Pentecost, began the ecumenical dialogue thanks to his participation in Vatican Council II, four international meetings between catholics and pentecostals have taken place. The last one was held in San Rafael, near Quito, Ecuador, from 12-14 May 1998. About forty theologians and pastors from fourteen different countries representing the two largest Christian expressions of Latin America, gathered together to discuss the development of the ecumenical dialogue in the last twenty-five years.<sup>114</sup> In this regard, the Chilean pentecostal theologian Juan Sepúlveda (1998a) says, “In serious theological literature, Pentecostalism is no longer viewed as part of the world of cults and pseudo-Christianity. On the contrary, it is now recognised as the youngest of the confessional families within the diversified picture of apostolic Christianity. Should some prejudices still exist for giving this recognition full expression, these are far more notorious within the Protestant ecumenical movement than in the Catholic world. The Vatican Secretariat for the Unity of Christians stated a long time ago that pentecostalism was a valid interlocutor for theological dialogue”.

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reached 24 million charismatics and neopentecostals worshipping in historical churches, despite the belief that Europeans were reluctant to let their churches become pentecostal.

<sup>113</sup> See biography in *BDCM* p189-90 (Anderson 1997).

<sup>114</sup> “Ecuador: Diálogo católico-pentecostal”, “Ecuador: Frutos del diálogo católico-pentecostal”, and “Católicos y pentecostales se comprometen a buscar caminos de encuentro” in *ALC*, Lima 14, 16 and 19 may 1998, respectively.

### C. From the Azusa Street Mission to Other Parts of the World

Certainly, nobody could have anticipated nor even imagined that from those meetings which the black Holiness evangelist William Seymour held in April of 1906 in an old abandoned warehouse in a downtown area of Los Angeles, would emerge one of the most extraordinary religious movements believed to be “the third force of Christianity”.<sup>115</sup> It was here that Seymour would openly preach about glossolalia as the unquestionable sign of having been baptised in the Holy Spirit, and this captivated hundreds who now shared the same experience with him.

Yet as glossolalia had already been seen during the American revival in the late nineteenth century, it is fair to say that its identification with pentecostalism began in January 1901, when several students of (1873-1929) Charles F. Parham Bethel Bible Institute in Topeka,<sup>116</sup> Kansas, were baptised with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. Parham himself reports what happened there on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1901 during a New Year’s prayer service:

About 75 people besides the school... which consisted of 40 students, had gathered for the watch night service. A mighty spiritual power filled the entire school. At 10:30 A.M. Sister Agnes N. Ozman, (now La Berge) asked that hands might be laid upon her to receive the Holy Spirit as she hoped to go to foreign fields. At first I refused, not having the experience myself. Then being pressed further to do it in the name of Jesus, I laid my hands upon her head and prayed. I had scarcely repeated three dozen sentences when the glory fell upon her, a halo seemed to surround her head and face, and she began speaking in the

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<sup>115</sup> In *LIFE* magazine, (No 44, June 9 1959, p113-114), Union Theological Seminary professor Dr. Van Dussen, described pentecostalism as “the great Christian movement with the most dynamic growth in the world today. It is so dynamic that it must be placed alongside catholicism and historical protestantism as the third force of Christianity.” Bishop Lesslie Newbigin would also say the same in his *The Household of God* (1953).

<sup>116</sup> See biography in *BDCM* p515-16 (Anderson 1997).

Chinese language, and was unable to speak English for three days.<sup>117</sup>

From then on, glossolalia and thereafter the bestowing of other supernatural gifts such as tongues' interpretation, prophecies, healing and miracles were seen as signs of authority and empowerment for evangelism. Obviously, these manifestations became the normative spiritual experience and theological framework of early Pentecostals. For Parham and Seymour, these charismatic demonstrations proved that New Testament apostolic ministries (or offices) had been restored, and any believer regardless of their condition and race, could have access to them.<sup>118</sup> For many, this was good enough for them to feel drawn to this new teaching. In the words of Princeton Seminary professor Richard Shaull (1997:35):

In times when division and racial hatred were so strong in the United States that two blacks were lynched every week, William Seymour saw the presence of the Spirit as a force that would conquer hatred and defeat the racial and ethnic conflicts. In the Azusa Street revival, blacks and whites, women and men, Asian and Mexican, black blue-collared workers and white teachers, found themselves speaking to each other on the same level. In Seymour's first congregation, the racial divisions and class separations were torn out by an ecstatic experience.<sup>119</sup>

Soon the influence of the movement was felt within the Holiness church from which Seymour came, and many of them converted to pentecostalism after the Azusa Street revival began. This happened to the Pentecostal Holiness Church (1906), the Church of God (1906) and the Church of God Cleveland (1907). Afterwards, other groups

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<sup>117</sup> Cited by Petersen (1996:10). On Parham's work, see James R. Goff, Jr., *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism*

<sup>118</sup> It is known that Seymour himself suffered discrimination. An alleged racist, Parham never permitted him to enter his classroom in Houston, Texas, so "Seymour had to remain out in the hall and listen through the open door" (Petersen 1996:12).

<sup>119</sup> According to Robert Anderson (1979:22), some twenty nationalities were represented in the Azusa Street church. There, immigrants from the countryside and Europe alike, found "dignity and spirit of community that modern society had denied them."

linked to the Keswick Convention formed the Assemblies of God in 1914, from which other denominations emerged, such as the Pentecostal Church of God (1919) and the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel (1923). Thus, the pentecostal movement began showing a particularity that made it different from other churches: its tendency to break up to give birth to a variety of groups that share the same doctrinal foundation.<sup>120</sup>

For some pentecostal theologians, this “pentecostality”,<sup>121</sup> as they like to call it, rightly reflects the common identity that paradoxically unites pentecostals. It is basically a life style that pentecostals anywhere in the world now share. “Pentecostality” discloses itself in the various forms of pentecostalism that currently exist, this being characterised by having “frontiers neither of class nor ideology, neither territory nor confession” (Campos 1995:59). This peculiarity was made evident from the first years of the movement when supernatural demonstrations that took place at the Azusa Street mission made the headlines. Those who attended the church and many others, who would come to see the occurrences, soon converted to pentecostalism and became missionaries of this new doctrine. William H. Durham, a Baptist minister, was one of them. He made his church in Chicago a centre for pentecostalism that eventually influenced the rest of the world. It was in this church that the (1866-1964) Italian Luigi Francescon,<sup>122</sup> from a Presbyterian background, received the baptism of the Spirit and then began planting churches in some American cities where Italian communities had been established. In 1909, Francescon went to Buenos Aires, Argentina, to do the same, and afterwards settled down in São Paulo, Brazil, where he started the *Congregação Cristã no Brasil*

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<sup>120</sup> Church division has always been a polemical topic. We generally assume that division is wrong and we should do everything possible to avoid it. Speaking of pentecostal propensity to division, Donald Dayton (1991:20) asks: “Is it not true that any renewal movement is going to bring an unavoidable division?” And he goes on to say: “It is necessary to develop a much deeper view of Christian unity that will give room for other expressions in the Church that bring along their own tendency to fragmentation.” For example, in the case of Peru, from 1930 through 1990 there have been 17 divisions within the Assemblies of God, which later developed into new denominations. See Hidalgo Zavala’s book *Historia de las Asambleas de Dios del Peru*, p166-71.

<sup>121</sup> Other authors would rather speak of “mentality” to identify pentecostals (Silveira 1995:117).

<sup>122</sup> See biography in *BDCM*, p221.

(Christian Congregation in Brazil), which is one of the largest denominations in the country (Alvárez 1995:40-41). It was also Durham who introduced Pentecostalism to the Swedish Baptists Adolf Gunnar Vingren<sup>123</sup> and Daniel Berg<sup>124</sup> who upon receiving a prophetic vision understood that they had to go to Brazil, which they did, arriving in that country in 1910. Other Scandinavians who had also met Durham got involved with Willis C. Hoover,<sup>125</sup> a physician working in Valparaíso, Chile, who in 1909 established the Pentecostal Methodist Church (Hoover 1948) after being separated from the Methodist church. It is worth mentioning that all these new churches were neither extensions nor missions of American or European Pentecostal congregations. They were rather local expressions that reflected their own ethos, with the particularity of their emphasis in the baptism of the Holy Spirit manifested primarily in tongues. In so being, these fellowships definitely set themselves apart from other churches which were already operating in the continent on more traditional evangelical grounds.

In pursuing this missionary style, that is to say of individuals who after having a vision, set off for distant lands with the economic support of friends and local churches,<sup>126</sup> pentecostalism entered Central America and the Caribbean the following decade, and in the other countries of the region soon after. In this respect, Petersen (1996:5) well says:

The extension of pentecostalism to Latin America was not a result of North American churches sending professional missionaries to reproduce their institutions overseas, but rather the development of national churches within their own culture utilising patterns of religious assertiveness and motivation which were available for selective adoption by Latin Americans.

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid. p765.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid. p56

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. p303.

<sup>126</sup> The missionary emphasis that follows the initiative of individuals rather than missionary agencies' schemes, is found too in neopentecostals today. As opposed to Second Wavers that did not display great missionary zeal, Third Wavers are proving themselves to be a real missionary force that rivals western missions.

In the specific case of Peru, the first attempts to establish a pentecostal church go back to 1911 when independent American missionaries Howard C. Cragin and his wife arrived in El Callao port near Lima. As soon as Cragin felt missionaries from other denominations were not happy with the pentecostal doctrine, he decided to work in Ecuador. It was not until 1919 that two new missionary couples landed in Peru. Mr. Hurlburt and Mr. Baker were sent by the Assemblies of God to start what would be the first pentecostal church in Peru. After arriving, John Ritchie suggested that they go to Ancash, a province north of Lima, where there was no evangelical presence at all.<sup>127</sup> A few years after, they would be joined by Lief, Walter and Arthur Erickson who, with the aid of national workers, played an important role in the expansion and consolidation of the Assemblies of God work (Kessler 1993:271-275).

#### **D. Healing Revival Preachers and the Latter Rain Movement**

Meanwhile, the pentecostal movement in the United States had been growing steadily but apart from mainstream Protestantism. However, after World War II, between 1946 and 1960 approximately, a group of healing preachers emerged and came into the public life of the nation. William Branham, Oral Roberts, Tommy Hicks, Kathryn Kuhlman and others began holding massive crusades in large stadiums and public premises; in addition to preaching these leaders prayed for the sick as well. Thousands of people, pentecostals and non-pentecostals, rushed to hear them and see them perform miracles. Some of these preachers went to Latin America too, taking the same message. Tommy Hicks was one of them. He went to Buenos Aires, Argentina, to hold evangelistic crusades for 62 days. From April to June of 1954, Hicks preached in the Atlanta and Huracán stadiums of the Argentine capital. In days when it was difficult to obtain a permit for such meetings, the healing of a

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<sup>127</sup> John Ritchie, Scottish missionary founder of the *Iglesia Evangélica Peruana*, an indigenous denomination, was at the time the president of the Committee on Co-operation in Peru. The Committee on Co-operation in Latin America had been formed at the Congress of Panama in 1916, in order for the Board of Foreign Missions operating in the region to follow certain principles and avoid conflicts between them. In Peru's case, it was in 1917 that missionaries from various denominations agreed to divide the country into three regions — Northern, Central and Southern— and work only within the assigned areas (Kessler 1993:152-153).

member of the presidential guard —and allegedly that of the very president himself Juan Domingo Perón— made it possible for pentecostals to procure the facilities for their meetings (Berberían 1980:26; Wimber 1985:171-172).<sup>128</sup> In looking back on that event, sociologists say that it was a new paradigm of popular evangelism that anticipated the blooming of neopentecostal preachers in the '70s and '80s (Forni 1993:13).<sup>129</sup>

The influence of healing preachers in North America resulted in the creation of new movements within the pentecostal world whose new teachings served as the groundwork for the Second and Third Waves. One of them was the Restoration Movement or the New Order of the Latter Rain, which came to people's attention in 1948 out of classic pentecostalism in Saskatchewan, Canada, and quickly disseminated throughout the United States and Europe. William Branham, who had begun his healing ministry in 1946, was instrumental in the birth of the Latter Rain through a crusade he held in Vancouver in the autumn of 1947. There, he preached on the need for a new revival due to the state of spiritual dryness in most Pentecostal churches. Among the attendees, the group from North Battleford, Saskatchewan, was heavily impacted by Branham's teachings. Some months later, this group, led by pentecostal pastors George Hawtin and Herrick Holt, had an Azusa-Street-like experience that made them see the church and believers' role in a new dimension not seen before.<sup>130</sup> Unlike the Azusa Street revival that had evangelism as its major

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<sup>128</sup> Argentinean preacher Carmelo Terranova remembers those days as he was heavily involved with Hicks' crusade. According to him, many young men were either converted or influenced by Hicks' enthusiasm, and later became prominent Evangelical church leaders in Argentina. Today, Terranova affirms that the roots of some well-known evangelists and ministers of the region may be traced back to Hicks' revival meetings. (Personal interview with Terranova in Bogotá, Colombia, on 11 June 1999. He died in December 1999).

<sup>129</sup> Hicks is also regarded by many as the forerunner of the Argentine revival. He set the way for the Renewal Charismatic Movement of the '70s, and prophesied the new revival of the '80s (*Tommy Hicks' End-Times Vision*. <http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~revival/hicks.html>). To some observers, this revivalist preacher was God's instrument for bringing a special blessing to that nation. Edward Miller, missionary to Argentina, saw Hicks' crusade as God's visitation to Argentina "in a sovereign way. He was making the nation aware of his name." Cited by Berberían 1980:26.

<sup>130</sup> Stephen Sizer (1998) recognises Franklin Hall as founder of the American Latter Rain movement that began in San Diego, California, in 1946. According to Sizer, the doctrinal

priority, the Latter Rain emphasised the spiritual keenness of the church for a universal revival. Some of its more widespread teachings are:

- The restoration of the Early Church five-fold ministry to the modern church, especially the self-appointed leadership of the prophet and apostle for they have prominence over others since they deal with direct revelations from God.
- The bestowing of spiritual gifts by the laying-on-of hands
- The practice of confession and pronouncement of forgiveness by one member to another
- The casting out of demons from Christians by the laying-on of hands
- The restoration of the Tabernacle of David with its emphasis on praise and worship as the means to usher people into God's presence. The three biggest Israelite holidays —Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles— typify the Church periods in history. Passover was already fulfilled with the death of Jesus. So was Pentecost with the pouring out of the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2. But Tabernacles is yet to be fulfilled (Warnock 1951:14-20).

The Latter Rain was forced out of the Assemblies of God during the General Council of 1949, which stated that its leaders distorted the Scriptures, arriving at conclusions which the denomination would not accept.<sup>131</sup> After this action, many Assembly ministers resigned or were excommunicated for their involvement with the movement, and formed independent Latter Rain churches, most being small in size.

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basis of this movement is found in his book *Atomic Power with God Through Fasting and Prayer* (1946) which made a tremendous impact in pentecostal circles.

<sup>131</sup> The 1949 General Council passed a six-part resolution denouncing the movement. Among other practices: 1) it relied too heavily upon present-day apostles and prophets; 2) it practised the confessing and pronouncing of forgiveness by one member upon another; 3) it advocated the practice of bestowing spiritual gifts by the laying-on of hands; 4) it distorted Scripture so as to arrive at conclusions not generally accepted by the Assemblies of God. (Melton 1989:47).

In 1965, the Latter Rain merged with the Charismatic Movement (Barrett 1988:127; Tillin 1997), and at present, many of its teachings have been reworded by neopentecostal leaders, teachings that are viewed with suspicion by conservative evangelicals.

It is worth noting that the influence of healing preachers was not restricted to pentecostal churches but passed into historical denominations as well. Kathryn Kuhlman is perhaps the clearest example of this impact.<sup>132</sup> At the beginning of 1950, Kuhlman received wide coverage due to her healing crusades. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Catholics and others, attended her meetings either through curiosity or simply because they were interested in what this woman was doing. Though this work does not intend to analyse the complex topic of divine healing, neither to issue some judgement with respect to the practices that Kuhlman used in her services, it cannot be denied that she played an important role in the development of the Charismatic Movement in the years that followed. In this regard, Wayne E. Warner (1995:65) says:

While pentecostals and evangelicals were urging born-again members and clergy to leave these churches, Kuhlman was sending them back in an effort to make a difference in the life of their church. This wider view of the Kingdom frustrated the pentecostals and evangelicals but became the means for Kuhlman to influence mainline and Catholic churches to rely more on the ministry of the Holy Spirit and to begin conducting their own healing services.

In addition to having influenced the ecumenical world, Kathryn Kuhlman is said to be also responsible for the introduction of the manifestation known as “slain in the Spirit”, a practice that characterises Third Wave preachers today. Among them, it is the American Palestinian evangelist Benny Hinn who has successfully copied Kuhlman’s format. Hinn gained international recognition during the ‘80s through his spectacular healing services where people, in large numbers, were all simultaneously

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<sup>132</sup> For more references on her life and work, see *I Believe in Miracles* (1962), *God, Can I Give it Again* (1969) and *Nothing is Impossible with God* (1974). Kathryn Kuhlman died in 1976 at the age of 69.

slain in the Spirit. In his book *Good Morning, Holy Spirit* (1991:4-11), Hinn describes the influence that Kuhlman had in his life. Here Hinn says that while waiting in line for Kuhlman's meeting, he started to shake uncontrollably. During the service he then encountered a plethora of emotional experiences. He experienced "an unusual sensation that didn't really seem physical at all," "a feeling of intense glory," "as if I had exploded". He then felt the Spirit "go down one arm and up the other. I actually felt it moving". Hinn saw "what seemed to be a mist around and over" Kathryn Kuhlman. This so grasped his attention that he cried out that he had to have what she had. This experience changed Benny's life and made him later on one of the most prominent neopentecostal leaders in the world, whose influence is also visible in the lives of Latin American Third Wavers.

Kuhlman's influence in Latin America came through Bolivian preacher Julio Ruibal, who one day was invited to attend a Kathryn Kuhlman rally in the Shrine Auditorium of Los Angeles. During the service, Ruibal felt a warm sensation in his back and was healed from an illness that had afflicted him since his early teen years. A year later he returned to Bolivia to start the *Ekklesia* Church in the capital, La Paz, that currently has more than 11,000 members, making it the largest neopentecostal church in that country. At first he faced opposition, but when a leading government official was healed of paralysis after Ruibal prayed, the president of the country was so impressed that he gave Ruibal the use of stadiums, media and transportation for his revival meetings—a similar experience to that of Tommy Hicks with President Perón in Argentina. Revival then spread throughout Bolivia and other nations with 60,000 to 85,000 people filling the various stadiums to hear Ruibal. His services imitated Kuhlman's style, where healing and being slain in the Spirit were performed, the latter being very unusual in evangelical circles. He then moved to Cali, Colombia, to minister in 1978. Ruibal and his wife Ruth continued their focus on the local church and founded *Ekklesia Centro Cristiano Colombiano*. In 1989 they bought 22-acre land, which the Colombian government sold to them for less than one percent of its value in recognition of the work they were doing to improve Colombian society. During the spring of 1994, Ruibal launched the first low-powered Christian television station in Colombia, following changes in the Constitution that permitted Christian television. For some years Ruibal contended

that Cali was in the wrong export business. “Some day Cali is going to export the gospel of Jesus Christ instead of drugs,” he affirmed. Ruibal was convinced that if churches would join together and pray, the demonic grip on the city would be broken. It was then in 1995 that Ruibal organised a series of prayer and fasting meetings to defeat the powers of darkness. Thousands of believers of all the denominations attended the prayer service at three o’clock that afternoon, where they felt encouraged upon seeing that in the very year they began praying, the Cali drug cartel had almost been disarticulated by the police. Cartel people then threatened Ruibal and other church leaders. “It was one block from the church where the director's board of the Pastors' Association of Cali, Colombia, was gathering for a meeting. A thin man with gentle eyes stepped out, leaving the driver and two young women inside the car. He began to walk the few steps to the church building to join the other pastors. Suddenly two shots rang out, and the man's body crumpled limply to the pavement. A crowd gathered, but the assassins had already escaped by motorcycle into the crowded streets. These bullets ended the life of Julio Cesar Ruibal on December 13, 1995. He was 42.<sup>133</sup> Today, the Pastors' Association still continues carrying Ruibal's legacy, for they are convinced that prayer is God's weapon to overcome the evils of the cartels.

### **E. Weaknesses and Strengths of Pentecostalism**

The extraordinary growth of pentecostalism represents, no doubt, the main force of change in the protestant landscape of the region. Besides originating many national indigenous groups bringing pluralism into the Evangelical Church, historical denominations are also lately witnessing the “pentecostalisation” of their churches due the influence of pentecostal practices through its music, radio and TV programmes, teachers and preachers.

The first researchers of pentecostalism would have hardly envisioned what this movement would become today. For some, pentecostalism was really a religion that

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<sup>133</sup> Taken from W. Terry Whalin, *Murdered but not Defeated* ([www.charisma.net/strang/cm/stories/cy197120.htm](http://www.charisma.net/strang/cm/stories/cy197120.htm)), and David Miller, *Latin America's Sweeping Revival* ([www.charisma.net/strang/cm/stories/cmju96mi.htm](http://www.charisma.net/strang/cm/stories/cmju96mi.htm)).

freed the convert from addictions such as alcoholism and brought broken families together, which as a result propitiated an ethic of work that made followers to achieve economical success in a greater scale than the rest of the population (D'Epainay 1970:205-246).<sup>134</sup> Though this is a good accomplishment, it would seem that not everyone is happy with giving pentecostalism the credit that it deserves. Ricardo Gondin (1996:81-83), an Assemblies of God pastor himself criticises the pentecostal movement for: having a “simplistic cosmology”, adopting forms of worship and theological teachings uncritically, being vulnerable to syncretism, and preaching a market-oriented gospel among others.

Despite these critics, it would be difficult not to accept what pentecostalism has done for the poor in terms of having lent itself as a strategy for survival in urban settings (Stoll 1990:331). Likewise, pentecostalism has strengthened families ties, has freed thousands from illegal drugs, has raised the self-esteem of its converts, and has encouraged and given believers hope for the future and a new subjective identity which is reflected in their personal testimonies. Some scholars even claim that this movement is changing the *machista* attitude seen in the Latin culture (Garrard-Burnett & Stoll 1993), redefining gender relationships and giving wives more autonomy. The eventual benefits that pentecostalism may propitiate among its congregants are great potential not only for theological transformation, but for cultural and social transformation as well.

## **2. SECOND WAVE: THE CHARISMATIC RENEWAL MOVEMENT**

The Second Wave identifies the Charismatic Renewal Movement. It is composed of members of historical denominations who had a miraculous and

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<sup>134</sup> Other authors like Willems (1967:36, 133-136, 217-218) viewed pentecostalism as a means of social adaptation for the deprived and rural migrants who came to the big cities in search of better opportunities. Though Willems perceived pentecostals churches as communities of psychological and economic security, he did not think these groups should be seen as modern agents of social change because they were only interested in reading the Bible and made no efforts to progress professionally. According to this author, the pentecostal mysticism hindered the adepts' abilities to progress in the secularised world.

supernatural experience with the Spirit, and who instead of abandoning their churches decided to remain in them in order to renew them from the inside. Charismatics claim to have all of the *charismata pneumatika* (gifts of the Spirit as mentioned in Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4; and 1 Peter 4) and believe in signs and wonders, but unlike Pentecostals they do not regard glossolalia as the distinctive mark that makes an individual spiritually renewed.

### **A. Beginnings of the Charismatic Movement**

It was in the mid-50s that charismatism began in the United States. The first outbreak took place within the Full Gospel International Association of Businessmen, an organisation founded in 1954 by Demos Shakarian.<sup>135</sup> But 1959-60 is generally accepted as the birthday of the Renewal Movement, when *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines of July and August 1960 respectively, covered the baptism in the Spirit of Episcopalian priest Rev. Denis Bennett of Saint Mark in Van Nuys, California. Needless to say, this testimony increased people's curiosity. Records show that Lutherans reported a similar experience in 1962, and by 1967 the Presbyterian and Catholic churches would join the list of institutions touched by charismatism.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> The Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International is an organization founded on prophetic vision in 1951 in Los Angeles, California. Today the Fellowship operates in 132 countries, holding meetings in small hamlets, farm towns, outlying suburbs and urban power centres. The complete story is in the classic inspirational book, *The Happiest People on Earth*, by Demos Shakarian, the California dairyman who is the Fellowship's founder.

<sup>136</sup> Since this work focuses on Evangelical Protestantism, we will not deal with the Catholic Renewal movement. However, it is worth noting that its development in Latin America came in part due to the ecumenical opening encouraged by Vatican Council II. Manuel Marzal (1990:18-19) rightly points out that at first, charismatics were viewed with distrust because of their emphasis on charismas and their propensity to division. Yet, the movement quickly gained acceptance mainly among the poor "who have always been open to religious emotions, but also among the middle-class, as they began to get tired of the coldness of religion in the secular city." Marzal says that by its rituals, catholic charismatism resembles very much pentecostalism, "which could mean that dogmatic and disciplinary frontiers that now separate their respective churches might vanish... The church of the charismatics is the institutional and hierarchic Church, the one they want to help and with which they say they identify, though in practice they are closer to their own prayer groups and keep their distance from the Church that, due to its

The first traces of charismaticism in Latin America are found among the Baptists in Bello Horizonte, São Paulo, Brazil, in 1958. Unfortunately, “its dearth of theological creativity and its sectarianism made it lose, after a short time, its strength and initial potential.” (Saracco 1988:15). Years later, the movement came back with unusual force in Argentina, as a group of American missionaries and national pastors of different evangelical denominations began to gather together in March of 1967 to share their experiences of the Holy Spirit. The core was made up of twenty-five people who had chosen Monday evenings to meet and pray at the home of Alberto Darling, a member of the group who lived in one of the most prestigious areas of Buenos Aires. Orville Swindoll (1981:22), leader of the movement, recalls:

Without handing out flyers or posting announcements in church bulletins, the news that some Christians praying in the house of Darling for a revival in Argentina were experiencing the fullness of the Holy Spirit, quickly spread like fire in a dry grazing land. Every week the participants increased in number.

By the beginning of 1968 three things had happened according to Swindoll (1981:25-26). First, the group had not only grown considerably but most of the participants had been baptised with the Spirit, which gave the group a new face. Second, the purpose of the meetings had changed from the cry for a spiritual renewal when the group started, to a time for sharing answered prayers and testimonies of victory that eventually led to worship. Third, some pastors and church elders began to be recognised as natural leaders of the movement. Soon they understood they had to provide pastoral care for those believers, and see what to do with this group of more than 200 that still gathered each Monday in Darling's house.

The new leadership soon emerged, having Orville Swindoll, Augusto Ericsson, Ivan Baker, Keith Bentson, Jorge Himitián, Angel Negro and Juan Carlos Ortíz as the most prominent leaders. All of them were “men of profound pastoral vocation,” who

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institutional weight, risks forgetting the charismas.” In the specific case of Peru, some observers have noticed that charismaticism served as a catalyst for the middle-class during the years of terrorism and economic recession. According to Simon Strong (1993:193), “so strong is the congregational growth of the charismatic movement that it has taken root among catholic groups in some of the wealthiest districts... Meanwhile, such was the renewed demand to join the Church between 1989 and 1991 that three seminaries were reopened.”

from the beginning committed themselves to unity and teamwork (1981:87). Between them, Jorge Himitián became known as the theologian of the group, and Juan Carlos Ortíz as the articulator par excellence (1981:73). In a sense, these men's teachings laid down the theological foundation of the Latin American Charismatic Renewal,<sup>137</sup> which served to give it depth and fluency and the international projection that it enjoyed years later.

Two of the keystone teachings of the Charismatic Renewal were the lordship of Christ and the Gospel of God's Kingdom. Himitián was the first to develop them in 1968. After studying Romans 10:9-10 and other similar passages, "it was increasingly clear to him that salvation is the direct result of having recognised Jesus Christ as Lord. He then asked himself: where do we then get the idea from that one only needs to confess Christ as Saviour? Why do we postpone the confession of his lordship for a subsequent experience?" (Swindoll 1981:51). For Himitián this was the weakest part of Christianity: "We tend rather to argue and reason with the Lord than to obey him without reserve. With such an attitude we are not recognising him as Lord... The consequence of this lack of submission is evident. The Word of God is not taken seriously; God's orders are disobeyed; his right to govern our lives is questioned" (Swindoll, p.53). Taking this argument a bit further, Himitián understood that the lordship of Christ is also vital to understanding fully the concept of God's kingdom, for it makes no sense to speak of a King if we do not show absolute obedience to Him. He then began to preach on this Gospel of the Kingdom in different parts of the country, speeches that in 1974 took the form of a book entitled: *Jesus Christ is the Lord*. Juan Carlos Ortíz, on his part, had begun to develop the topic of discipleship that would complement the doctrinal trilogy of the charismatic movement (Swindoll, p.65). Ortíz began by testing the materials in his own church with a select group of men that he wanted to train to become leaders of the congregation. Week after week he taught them what discipleship was about in connection with the body "joints" and "ligaments" that the apostle Paul mentions in Ephesians 4:16 and Colossians 2:19. Ortíz (1975a:73-75) used this analogy to

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<sup>137</sup> Guillermo Cook (1973:90-101) summarises the three theological essentials of the movement as being the lordship of Christ, discipleship, and reflection on the praxis and Scriptures. See also Berberían (1986:70-73) and Saracco (1988:16-17).

describe the dynamics that should exist between members of the church. Then he related it to the authority and submission of discipleship, from where he deduced that every disciple must be subject to his or her pastor/leader at all times and had to consult with him about any decisions he or she was about to take (Ortíz 1975b: 36). The theory behind this teaching was that if they submitted to each other, then they would be mutually protected from doctrinal errors and from acting contrary to the will of God. This type of discipleship then was made practically mandatory for the charismatic churches, where pyramidal structures of authority and leadership were established, and believers were asked to submit, without questioning, to those who had been placed above them as their teachers.

Meanwhile, in the early '70s, the Renewal Movement of England was experiencing some changes where its leaders —Arthur Wallis, Bryn Jones, Graham Perrins and others— were also trying out new ideas on apostolic leadership and church government. In the United States something similar was happening. Charismatics linked to Christian Growth Ministries —Don Basham, Charles Simpson, Bob Mumford, Derek Prince, and Ern Baxter— had just implemented the discipleship techniques that they called “shepherding”. Thus, it is fair to say that Juan Carlos Ortíz’s teachings served to develop this technique that became the charismatic trademark on both continents.<sup>138</sup>

## **B. Similarities to and differences from Classic Pentecostalism**

As the charismatic movement grew and expanded all over the world, its similarities to and differences from pentecostalism soon became evident. A first difference has to do with the theological tendency of these movements. Peter Hocken (1981:42) has said that “the theology of the charismatics highlights the renewal of the Church, and the revival theology of pentecostals emphasises evangelism in the light of the soon return of Christ.” Certainly, in Argentinean charismatic leaders’ minds, the renovation and restoration of the Church was a major priority. In Swindoll’s

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<sup>138</sup> Taken from Tillin 1997:5-7. Today Juan Carlos Ortiz ministers at the Crystal Cathedral in Los Angeles, California, and takes no further part in the Latin American Charismatic movement.

words (1981:221): “the present world pouring of the Holy Spirit is a sovereign work of God, who has determined an irreversible restoration process of the Church,” due to her lukewarm state, failure, and even division manifested in the hundreds of existing denominations today.

This vision clearly contrasts with the perception of early pentecostals who understood that their mission was to convert the whole world before Christ's return to earth. Even glossolalia was seen within this concept, since “Parham and others believed that the supernatural gift of modern languages would make possible the evangelisation of the entire world” (Petersen 1996:11).<sup>139</sup> This utilitarian notion of glossolalia as a possible instrument for evangelism influenced the pentecostal eschatology, for it was said that the coming of Christ would be speeded up if nations were quickly evangelised.<sup>140</sup>

Second Wavers did not share the same eschatological enthusiasm perhaps because they saw the gift of tongues in a different context,<sup>141</sup> and because they came from middle class sectors where attention was more focused on mega churches and ministries and success in the present life. First Wavers were poor and saw with more expectations the coming of God's kingdom, which would bring the new “land of milk and honey” that would make life here and now easier for them.

A second difference had to do with the way in which they conceived their spirituality. Old time pentecostals favoured what Frank Macchia (1996:39) calls a “theophanic” spirituality, while charismatics preferred a christological spirituality. The first emphasised the extraordinary and almost unpredictable irruption of the Holy

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<sup>139</sup> Apparently, “tongues” for early pentecostals were unlearned languages that an individual could speak by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This showed that God had restored this apostolic gift to its original purpose as recorded in the book of Acts chapter 2.

<sup>140</sup> This concept has also been present in the most conservative sectors of evangelicalism.

<sup>141</sup> Tongues for classic pentecostals are the “initial physical evidence” that authenticates the believer's personal encounter with the Holy Spirit. For an elaboration on this point, see the statement of the Assemblies of God in *Where We Stand: The Official Position Paper of the Assemblies of God* (p145-156), Gary B. McGee *Initial Evidence: Historical and Biblical Perspectives on the Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism*, and Vinson Synan, *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origin*. Charismatics do not follow this line of thought for they prefer to see glossolalia as one of the many spiritual gifts. The same can be said of the Third Wavers who do not regard glossolalia as the initial evidence of an encounter with the Holy Spirit.

Spirit in people's life. In pentecostalism, "Spirit baptism is neither a manifestation nor release of the indwelling Spirit bestowed at conversion, but rather an experience that comes from above, not from within" (Macchia 1996:37). Thus, the third Person of Trinity became a vivid reality for the individual because He is the one who marked his or her initiation into the community and at the same time empowered them for gifted service. The Christological approach of charismatics focused on the abiding work of Christ through the Holy Spirit (Saracco 1988:15), where the Spirit demonstrations are to reveal the sovereignty and lordship of Christ.<sup>142</sup> This Christ-centred pneumatology is at the same time church-centred, for charismatics understand that the operation of the Spirit will only be fully and properly expressed and released in effective service within the local church. This Christological emphasis points towards a meaningful understanding of sanctification where the pneumatic endowment is meant to empower people for a committed and corporate fellowship.

A third difference had to do with ethics. As Macchia (1996:45) puts it, the most deeply felt challenge of charismatics to pentecostals is to be found "in the area of personal holiness, since for pentecostals purity precedes power." Macchia observes that the lack of code of dress and conduct among charismatics has confused and repelled pentecostals who have traditionally seen smoking, drinking, dancing and the wearing of jewellery and make-up as signs of worldliness that Christians should avoid. The radical ecclesiastic subculture developed by pentecostalism clearly contrasts with the flexible character of charismatics who prefer the "friendly-evangelism" approach. In a way, they view pentecostal taboos as mere "cultural baggage" that is not essential to the work of the Spirit. Furthermore, the fact that many of them come from a middle-class background is a clear indication that their social preferences will be in accordance with those of this sector that rarely would take pentecostal practices seriously.

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<sup>142</sup> Unlike Himitián or Ortíz who developed a theology of the kingdom and the lordship of Christ to consolidate the Renewal movement, Latin American pentecostals have written relatively little on pneumatological theology to strengthen the pentecostal experience. Recent studies tend to interpret the pentecostal spirituality from a sociological and anthropological perspective rather than from the very person of the Holy Spirit who is the agent of changes and supernatural demonstrations in the church as they claim.

### C. The Word of Faith Movement

Another aspect of charismaticism that deserves our attention focuses on two movements that are of particular interest for our study. One is the *Word of Faith*, and the other, the *Restoration of Praise and Worship*. Both movements have provided not only the core teachings for neopentecostalism but have also lent themselves to a new range of spiritual manifestations that now identify the new churches.

The Faith movement, also known as Word of Faith, is generally identified with some American TV preachers related to the Positive Confession and Prosperity Gospel movements. Though traditionally Kenneth E. Hagin has been pointed out as its founder, scholars like Dan McConnell (1988) assure us that Essek W. Kenyon should be given credit for it. Kenyon was a Methodist minister who at the turn of the century established the Bethel Bible Institute and later, in 1931, began a broadcast programme called Kenyon's Church of the Air where he made his ideas known. It was the taped transcripts of this broadcast which eventually became the basis for many of his writings. Several phrases coined by Kenyon have been popularised by present-day faith teachers, such as "what I confess, I possess."<sup>143</sup>

At Kenyon's death in 1948, apparently Kenneth Hagin used his works to formulate a new theology, claiming it was the result of God's vision and revelation to him. Years after, in the beginning of the 1970s, Hagin created the Bible Training Centre RHEMA in Tulsa, Oklahoma, that has been exporting his teachings over the years, teachings which conservative evangelicalism will hardly accept. Evangelicals say that any new religious movement must bear the scrutiny of two criteria: biblical fidelity and historical orthodoxy. Regrettably, Word of Faith may have difficulties in passing such a scrutiny for its biblical base would seem to rest only in the particularity of the hermeneutic of its leaders, and not in generally accepted Christian theology. The historical roots of this movement allegedly lie in the occult, and most recently in the Mind Science cults, since there are indications that Kenyon was

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<sup>143</sup> I am indebted to Dr. Lars Wilhelmsson of the Alliance Theological Seminary in Nyack, New York, for this input. See also Dale H. Simmons, *E. W. Kenyon and the Postbellum Pursuit of Peace, Power, and Plenty*. 1997.

strongly influenced by some very active metaphysical groups of the late nineteenth century (Howerter 1997:1).

Word-Faith leaders claim that words have creative power. What you say determines everything that happens to you. Your “confessions,” that is, the things you say, especially the favours you demand of God, must all be stated positively and without wavering. Then God is required to answer. The Positive Confession movement today, also known as the “name-it-and-claim-it” gospel, says: “Believe it in your heart; say it with your mouth. Then you can have what you say.” Here lies the principle of faith. The vital key is confessing, or speaking aloud, and thereby releasing the force of faith, allowing tremendous things to happen. So that what one says determines what is going to happen to you.<sup>144</sup>

Positive Confession has also been the favourite theme of well-known American preachers Norman Vincent Peale and Robert Schuller. Peale's techniques developed in his *The Power of Positive Thinking*,<sup>145</sup> and Schuller's prosperity theology of his *Positive Mental Attitude*,<sup>146</sup> are also based on the same principle.

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<sup>144</sup> Paul Yong-gi Cho elaborates this theory in his books *The Fourth Dimension*, 1979; and *The Fourth Dimension (volume two): More Secrets for a Successful Faith Life*, 1983.

<sup>145</sup> *The Power of Positive Thinking* (1952) has been translated into forty languages and sold over 15 million copies worldwide. Peale offers the essence of his profound method for mastering the problems of everyday living, such as how to eliminate that most devastating handicap---self doubt, how to free yourself from worry, stress and resentment, how to climb above problems to visualise solutions and then attain them, and so forth. Simple prayerful exercises that you can do every day, throughout the day, to reinforce your newfound habit of happiness. Eliminating all the negative thoughts that prevent you from achieving happiness and success.

<sup>146</sup> R. Schuller is senior pastor of Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California. According to the February 1999 Nielson Ratings, his internationally televised the Hour of Power is the most watched religious programme in the United States. What began in 1970s with one only station in Los Angeles, today The Hour of Power is transmitted in all the United States and Canada through 181 television stations, and to another 154 countries around the world. Schuller's message is simple: “If you can dream, you will achieve it.” He is the author of more than 30 books, including five that have appeared on the New York Times best-seller list. Some of his books that deal with positive thinking are: *Move Ahead With Possibility Thinking* (Introduction by Norman Vincent Peale), *Peace of Mind Through Possibility Thinking* (1977), *Living Positively One Day at the Time* (1981), and *The Be Happy Attitudes: Eight Positive Attitudes that Can Transform Your Life* (1985).

Some argue that the prosperity gospel ignores the theology of suffering which has been essential in Christian thought. “Charismatics tend to emphasise good feelings and happiness as a way to prevent the cross,” asserts Brazilian sociologist Sumio Takatsu (1984:74). This may be true, but we should also bear in mind that “name-it-and-claim-it” teaching in Latin America does not necessarily assume theological dimensions but rather more pragmatic connotations. Since suffering has become part of people's ethos, for it is rooted in injustice and economical depression, we could then presume that what people care for is a more direct way to access God who ultimately is the only hope they have. Prosperity Gospel, being more functional than doctrinal, could have a motivational effect in people's minds. Traditionally, Latin Americans have shown an almost stoic and pessimistic spirit that has made them remain in a world of failure and frustration. In the midst of a hopeless future due to the apathy and impotence of authorities and governmental organisations to solve the most critical aspects of life, multitudes are now turning to new religious leaders who offer them the way out of the social and economic stagnation in which they find themselves. Perhaps the greatest deviation that faces prosperity gospel in the region is not just doctrinal but ethical, for it has propitiated the development of a big sacred market that unscrupulous religious leaders are taking advantage of to establish their monopoly in neopentecostal circles.

#### **D. Praise and Worship Restoration Movement**

Worship has been the other area in which the Renewal movement has made a visible contribution. Charismatics introduced to the church new formats of worship service with new musical styles and liturgical dance that simply astonished churched and unchurched people alike. Charismatics stopped worship being a weekly religious routine, making it an enjoyable and uplifting spiritual experience where people gathered to celebrate God. For British Charismatic leaders like David Watson, this concept of worship had been clearly expounded in Romans 12:1-2, where the apostle Paul says that worship involves both soul and body.<sup>147</sup> Worship seen in this context makes liturgical dance an expression which carries no shame in the same way that

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<sup>147</sup> Quoted by Takatsu (1984:73).

Miriam used it after the crossing of the Red Sea and David while bringing the Ark back to Jerusalem.

But certainly, it was in the creation of new choruses and songs that “this great spiritual freedom and creativity” of the charismatics influenced classical pentecostals (Macchia 1996:46,47).

The anointed singing is something that was lost from old-time Pentecostals. Indeed, at time when well-worn hymnals and camp-meeting favourites were losing their appeal for many Pentecostals, the Charismatic flurry of new choruses came as a breath of fresh air... Glossolalia prayers, which have tended to be individual and spontaneous among Pentecostals, became harmonious group songs among the Charismatics... The transformation of tongues into a form of “liturgical” prayer has both fascinated and repelled Pentecostals.

For Latin American Evangelical churches in general, it was not a problem to quickly incorporate the new hymnology into their songs’ collection. Yet, they were more cautious about introducing dances and copying the Charismatic Sunday service formats. No doubt, the '60s traditional style —three hymns, prayer, special music and sermon— was in serious need of renovation. Renewal leaders knew the importance of worship church's life and committed themselves to make it relevant once again. Speaking of the Argentine experience, Swindoll (1981:98-99) says:

We did not regard the time of praise as a mere psychological preparation for the auditory to hear the word of God. Neither was the service programmed and led by a musician or special singer. We learnt that when believers are filled with the Holy Spirit, they normally overflow with a desire of praising and expressing their love and gratitude to God. Therefore, our meetings were times of spontaneous and open adoration... Worshipping God requires an unhurried approach to the throne of Grace, a sensitive opening to the soft breeze of the Spirit, and a wide participation of everybody. To accomplish this goal we need time. Those who keep an eye on their watches are not worshipping.

Soon, charismatic choruses from Argentina began to make their way in the continent. Compositions of Jorge Himitián, the Movement's musician (Swindoll 1981:49-50),

became the favourites for evangelicals. Looking at the lyrics of the new songs, one thing was clear: the testimonial element that had characterised old and traditional hymns of the 1950s and 1960s was absent. Their theme rather focussed on holiness, prayer, lordship of Christ, and Psalms that now were sung to different tunes.<sup>148</sup> As one would expect, this change entirely harmonised with the charismatic objective that was to renew the church from inside, something which would only be achieved by renewing the believers first (Swindoll 1981:106-107).

Liturgical renewal followed closely the teachings of the Latter Rain Movement that, as previously said, had the restoration of worship as one of its goals (Melton 1989:46-47). David Fischer (1992:12-13),<sup>149</sup> a modern interpreter of the restoration movement says:

King David established a new order of worship by putting the Ark of Covenant in the tabernacle on Mount Zion, and creating a new priesthood of singers and musicians to worship and praise God before the Ark continually (1 Chronicles 15-16)... Service in the Tabernacle of David was characterised by singing, joy of dancing, joyful clapping, acclamations, adoration with instruments and prophesying new songs of the Lord. Service in the tabernacle of Moses kept ancient rituals as the lighting of candelabras, burning of incense, putting the bread, and so forth. During the reign of King David, God said He had rejected the ceremonial of Tabernacle of Moses and chosen instead the praises and prophetic worship of David's Tabernacle... King David received a prophetic revelation from the New Testament in which God wanted the sacrifice of praise (established by David), rather than the sacrifice of animals (established by Moses) [Psalms 50:13-14; 51:15-16; 69:30-31; Hebrews

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<sup>148</sup> Guillermo Cook makes an interesting comparison between the use of renewed music and classic hymns in Evangelical churches of San José, Costa Rica, in his *Análisis socio-teológico del Movimiento de Renovación Carismática con referencia especial al caso costarricense* (1973).

<sup>149</sup> David Fischer has hosted the International Worship Symposium for more than a decade. He has travelled throughout the world introducing congregations to the restored worship of David's Tabernacle. He is the founder of Living Word Institute of Worship and is president of Living Word Bible College. Fischer is currently senior pastor of Living Waters Christian Fellowship in Pasadena, California. Taken from <http://zionsong.com/wslinks.html> (accessed 10 August 1999).

13:15]... God let David and the priesthood of worshipers know this New Testament particular because David loved Him.

David Fischer is not alone in this way of conceiving worship. Steve Griffing, another Worship Symposium leader, reaches the same conclusions by using passages as diverse as Deuteronomy 12:1-14 and Judges 21:25. For Griffing,<sup>150</sup> Deuteronomy deals exclusively with worship in the promised land. Especially, he takes verses 8 and 9 —*Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes. For ye are not as yet come to the rest and the inheritance, which the Lord your God giveth you*—<sup>151</sup> where he sees that those who would enter the promised land must live and worship under a different law from that of the wilderness. Comparing verses 1 and 8 we see that this change required God's people to set aside their own personal, private judgement concerning worship in favour of a universal liturgical law. Likewise, verse 9 implies that this change must take place in order to bring about and maintain the rest and dominion “which the Lord your God is giving you.” Hence this inheritance and rest cannot be fully realised individually. It must be experienced corporately. This eliminates spiritual “competition” since even the most spiritual worshipper cannot enter the land without the rest of the community. Taking the same argument a bit further, from Judges 21:25 Griffing elaborates two principles for the church to learn. Firstly, it would require a kingdom to bring about biblical worship for, ultimately, all worship is governmental. Secondly, this kingdom became a reality under David, who also instituted worship that was based on the Word and consisted of the Word. (1 Chronicles 15:13; Psalms 119:48, 54; Col. 3:16). If these things were “written for our admonition,” concludes Griffing, then we should be able to extract from this text principles of worship which are characteristic of a people who are living in the fullness of God's inheritance. Therefore, this is a prophetic passage, not merely a regulatory law.

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<sup>150</sup> Taken from his sermon outline *Worship in the Land of Promise: The Liturgy of the Land*. In <http://zionsong.com/wsart-griffing-litland2.html> (Accessed 10 August 1999).

<sup>151</sup> All Bible quotations are from the King James authorized version unless otherwise indicated.

For restoration theologians, prophecy is vital in their teaching. Fischer (1992:19,21) states that worship restoration had already been prophesied in Amos 9:11 —*In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old.* Furthermore, Fischer says that the apostle James' words in Acts in 15:16 —*I will build again the tabernacle of David*— are the fulfilment of the Amos' restoration prophecy referred to the church.

For Peruvian Old Testament scholar Moisés Chávez,<sup>152</sup> Fisher's interpretation of Amos 9 relies on questionable exegesis of the text. Amos 9:11 does not deal with worship restoration but with the Messiah. Chávez draws attention to the fact that the King James version, as well as the Spanish Reina-Valera, has rendered the Hebrew *sukáh* as “tabernacle” that makes us think of the tent that Moses erected in the desert. Chávez affirms that the Latin word *tabernaculum* —rightly used by both The King James and Reina-Valera— literally means “small cabin” which exactly corresponds to *sukáh*. Thus, it would be wrong to say that Amos is either talking about the tabernacle of David or Moses as the centre of worship. What does Amos then mean in this passage? Chávez goes on to say that “God had promised David to raise him up a “house” (*báyit*), a Hebrew word that could have two meanings: building or palace, and “dynasty” or “reigning family”. In the days of the prophet Amos and Jeroboam II, king of Israel, the dynasty of David was very weakened. His son Solomon's empire had been broken up, the kingdom had split into two and the territory of Edom, traditional enemy and immediate neighbour of Judah, subjugated by David, was no longer under the control of the house of David. It is such a state of the royal “house” of David that Amos describes with the word *sukáh*, “cabin”, “humble shack,” deprived of all of its glory and in the process of collapsing completely... What Amos is then actually prophesying here is the emergence of the Messiah, the anointed King of the royal “dynasty” of David, which had its fulfilment in the birth of Jesus... The royal family of David that in the days of Jeroboam II the prophet compared to a collapsing small cabin (the verbal form *nofélet* translates better as “falling” rather than “fallen”), was totally destroyed in the time of the Roman empire

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<sup>152</sup> Taken from his work *El meneío del Rey David* (49-50). Moisés Chávez was the chief editor of the 1987 Revised Reina-Valera Spanish version.

when Jesus was born... Evidently, David Fischer did not examine the original text of Amos' prophecy. Had he done so, he would have realised that Amos did not use *óhel*, tabernacle-tent of David, but *sukáh*, "shack". Therefore, there is not even a minimal reference in this passage to any worship structure restoration for our days.

Nevertheless, in Latin America Fischer's teachings are accepted and contextualised by Costa Rican Rony Chaves in his *El Tabernáculo caído de David*. Chaves was very influenced by the restorationist movement of Fischer while in the United States, and now leads the *Centro Cristiano de San José* in Costa Rica, a neopentecostal church of thousands of members.

Restorationists take very seriously not only biblical prophecies but also personal prophetic revelations they receive themselves, which are regarded as vital to understanding the direction in which the movement should go. César Miani (1995), leader of "Tabernacle of David", Praise and Worship Ministry, says for instance that in 1992 in San Francisco, California, he received from God a very special vision to bless Peru. He said that a "music ministry" would be raised where Christian professional musicians would contribute in seeking excellence at a new biblical worship level. In Miani's words:

This interdenominational ministry would be encouraging fresh anointing and new wine in Praise and Worship as part of the great revival that God has for this country. Additionally, by using the Word and musical techniques, it will train psalmists, musicians, percussionists, singers and instrumentalists to benefit the Church in Peru... The Tabernacle of David Ministry, in its projection to the "gentiles", will go out to evangelise and win the lost souls with music that is acceptable to the world, that is to say music with modern technological features in audio, mixers and contemporary sounds, but having above all God's anointing that will touch the hearts and have the Holy Spirit ministering to people's needs. This ministry began with the blessing of God on 30th December 1994.

It would seem that Miani's words have echoed in Peru ever since, for music in Evangelical churches has radically changed in recent years. Christian artists now fill

coliseums and stadiums, and sell thousands of cassettes, CDs and videos through churches and Christian bookstores, generating a millionaire enterprise that not too long ago was simply unheard of.<sup>153</sup>

### 3. THIRD WAVE: NEOPENTECOSTALISM

#### A. A new start

The Third Wave came into prominence during the period 1981-85, when John Wimber taught his controversial “MC510 The Miraculous and Church Growth” course at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, which enrolled 2800 students but was discontinued because of its focus.<sup>154</sup> Many however were strongly influenced by Wimber’s teachings.<sup>155</sup> His classes combined lectures with real demonstrations of supernatural phenomena such as healing, casting out of demons and other manifestations carried out in his classroom. Missiologist and church strategist C. Peter Wagner, Wimber’s assistant in the course, was among those who saw the signs and wonders theory relevant for today. Afterwards he wrote in *The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit* (1988a), that many scholars regard as the theological manifesto of the

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<sup>153</sup> This has not been limited to the urban Spanish speaking world. In the ‘80’s a profound renewal of Christian autochthonous melody and instrumentation caused dramatic church growth in the Quechua/Quichua world of the Andes too.

<sup>154</sup> See C. Peter Wagner, *Signs and Wonders Today: The Story of Fuller Theological Seminary’s Remarkable Course on Spiritual Power* (1987).

<sup>155</sup> Some key figures of the movement were definitely influenced by Wimber’s course, namely Charles Kraft who later wrote a series of books on deliverance ministry —*Defeating Dark Angels: Breaking Demonic Oppression in the Believer’s Life* (1992)— and the late British psychiatrist and well-known evangelical author John White, who was instrumental in the development of the Vineyard in England. For an account on his own experience with Wimber see the interview *Supernatural Ministry* in <http://www.pastornet.net.au/renewal/journal10/c-white.html>.

Vineyard Movement that agglutinates most of the representative congregations associated with the Third Wave.<sup>156</sup>

It was probably Peter Wagner in 1983 who first coined the term “third wave” to designate the movement that emphasised the contemporary *charismata* of the Spirit in the same line of classic pentecostalism and charismatism. In his own words (1983:1-5):

I see historically that we're now in the third wave. The first wave of the moving of the Holy Spirit began at the beginning of the century with the Pentecostal movement. The second wave was the charismatic movement that began in the fifties in the major denominations. Both of those waves continue today... I see the third wave of the eighties as an opening of the straight-line evangelicals and other Christians to the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that the pentecostals and charismatics have experienced, but without becoming either charismatic or Pentecostal. I think we are in a new wave of something that now has lasted almost through our whole century.

Yet although the supernatural phenomena identified by the Third Wavers are not uniform, however some common features may be pointed out as characteristics of several evangelical segments that favour the movement, among them the Vineyard,<sup>157</sup> Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship,<sup>158</sup> A.D. 2000<sup>159</sup> and others. Ultimately, it is fair

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<sup>156</sup> John Wimber founded in 1978 the Vineyard Christian Fellowship, which has 450 congregations in the U.S. and 250 more around the world. Wimber, who had been a keyboard player with the Righteous Brothers, went on to become an international conference speaker, worship songwriter, best-selling author and spiritual leader to the worldwide Vineyard movement. He was also the senior pastor of the Anaheim Vineyard Christian Fellowship for 17 years (1977-1994). He suffered a massive brain haemorrhage and died on November 16, 1997, while recovering from triple bypass surgery. He was 63. For a critical analysis of the Vineyard Movement, see Martyn Percy's work *Words, Wonders and Power* (1996).

<sup>157</sup> International network of churches affiliated to the movement founded by John Wimber.

<sup>158</sup> It was in January 1994 that an allegedly outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place in Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship, Canada, led by John & Carol Arnott. The movement, known as Toronto Blessing for its manifestations such as holy laughter and growls among the followers, has spread around the world with unusual acceptance even in non-charismatic and pentecostal circles.

to say that there is no one organisation or church that may represent the entire Third Wave movement (Ma 1997:189-90).

## **B. Main doctrinal postulates**

Bearing all this in mind, let us glance at the main theological postulates and doctrinal emphases that emerge from the Third Wave.<sup>159</sup>

- The baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs at conversion rather than as a subsequent second blessing as classic pentecostals and charismatics claim. Following the line of the Holiness Movement doctrine, Third Wavers are more likely to talk about multiple fillings of the Spirit after conversion.
- Speaking in tongues is valid for this age but not as the physical evidence of being baptised in the Spirit.
- Ministry under the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit is the “entrance gate” into the Third Wave movement. This “anointing” is to be found in a group context rather than as the individualistic experience emphasised in the other two waves.
- Power evangelism is the distinctive trademark of the movement. The miracles that Jesus and the apostles performed can be and must be performed by the church today to highlight the Gospel.
- Supernatural practices —such as uncontrollable shaking or laughter, collective fainting, tingling sensations indicating healing taking place during prayer; trance-like euphoric states of “worship”, “words of knowledge,” “discerning of spirits,” “personal prophecy,” and the like—are to be desired and pursued.

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<sup>159</sup> The A.D. 2000 & Beyond Movement is a global, informal network of Christian missionary agencies, denominations, churches and individuals committed to world evangelism.

<sup>160</sup> For this section I am using Peter Wagner's article “Third Wave” (1988b: 841-843), and my own observations of the movement.

- “Power encounters” is another major doctrinal teaching. There are two major divisions in the dynamics of power encounter: “lower level” and “higher level”. The former is summed up as a deliverance ministry for individuals, and the latter as a more “strategic power encounter” aimed at defeating evil cosmic powers, which are associated with ideas of territorial spirits, spiritual mapping, and warfare.
- Within the Latin American context, the so-called “spiritual warfare,” the concrete demonstration of “power encounters,” is much wider than the one outlined by Peter Wagner and other American authors. Essentially, it defines the way in which neopentecostals conceive their physical and emotional life, their condition and role in society, and their relationship to other religious groups including the evangelical. From this worldview, diseases, be they physical or emotional, are caused by Satan who seeks to destroy human beings. Likewise, poverty and social hardship come from Satan as well, for he does not want the children of God to prosper. Thus, they oppose and combat all religious groups that, according to them, are not fighting back the demonic powers but rather are contributing to strengthening them. The Afro-Brazilian groups, non-Christian cults, traditional Catholicism and conservative evangelicals that do not believe in the supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit, are to be found among their target groups. In this neopentecostal worldview, healing prayers, prosperity gospel, the “taking over” of radio networks, TV channels and large public premises, makes sense because now the Church is reclaiming what Satan stole from God's children.
- The imminent return of Christ for the Church does not figure to the same extent as it does in classic Pentecostalism. Here post-millennialism is favoured over pre-millennialism. The Church is now being restored to its pristine purity, being made fit for her bridegroom. Christ will only come back for a church that is pure and spotless. For example, Wimber considered his “Fellowship” to be in the vanguard of this work. Historically, this teaching is referred to as “restorationism”.

Critics of the Third Wave are reluctant to accept the “methodologisation” of the Holy Spirit manifestations as proposed by Wimber and his followers. The problem with the “signs and wonders” phenomenon is not that the gifts of the Spirit are still operable today, but that the gifts can be manifested merely through their particular methodology. The idea of becoming an expert in signs and wonders by following — at its crudest— the instructions of a handbook has certainly bothered conservative evangelicals. By taking, for example, “spiritual liberation” some argue that neopentecostals have taken this practice to unthinkable extremes. In order to achieve a healing one must “interview” the subject, often taking him or her back into the past to relive circumstances (inner healing) that may have led to their problem. Casting out demons is then perceived by them as a process that might take days or even years. This methodology of interviews and questions makes one wonder whether this is more of a psychological therapy practised by amateurs than a direct intervention of the Spirit in people's lives. Old-time pentecostal preachers would not bother with the technique. They would just claim the blood of Jesus and command the evil spirits to leave. In the end, classic pentecostals would say: “this is what Jesus and the apostles themselves would do.”

### **C. Decline of Spiritual Mysticism**

The neopentecostal movement presents itself as a renewed and contemporary business-oriented kind of movement, eager to conquer the masses through very ambitious programmes they pursue with zeal and passion. Its leaders have decided to function as truly trans-national organisations keen to occupy new social spaces that neither pentecostals nor evangelicals had access to before. At the same time, they were ready to adapt their message to the demand of the sectors they have carefully targeted. Unlike classic Pentecostalism that did not expect the believer to establish a serious commitment to society although it supposedly propitiated the social integration of its members, neopentecostals expect the faithful to reclaim the grounds they say they lost to Satan. Neighbourhoods, cinemas, radio and TV stations, publishing houses, sport arenas, and the like are now being repossessed by them. Old-time pentecostals would have not dared to try this in part because their ascetic belief in a dualistic world would have prevented them doing so. The Advent of

Christ with its dichotomy between the material kingdom and the spiritual kingdom, played an important role. Immersed in this apocalyptic cosmology, pentecostals have always tended to separate themselves from worldly things. “Do not do this” or “do not do that” has been the golden rule for the pentecostal ethic, a rule that also applied to the public sector, e.g. true believers “do not participate in politics” or “do not do business with unbelievers”. Concepts like this have kept classic pentecostals from playing a high profile in the community, a situation that have now definitely changed thanks to neopentecostalism.

Being a pentecostal, therefore, implied severe sacrifices. The price paid in exchange for spiritual comfort, certainty of salvation, healing and participation in the church, was quite high. The “new birth”, as in Puritanism, made the individual live a monk-like style of life, for the promise of heavenly salvation was always followed by a strong rejection of the world and everything that was in it. However, in the two last decades, with the rise of neopentecostalism, this worldview has changed. neopentecostals would seem to have transformed traditional pentecostal conceptions concerning the believer’s behaviour in the world. Thus, to be a Christian is the only way to remain free of the Demon’s attacks, and to reach financial prosperity, health and success in any enterprise one may get involved with. “To have an encounter with Christ”, therefore, corresponds in the neopentecostal vision to enjoy a prosperous and happy life, and being certain to count on the effective divine intervention in all and any circumstances, satisfying material interests and ambitions.

Neopentecostalism, like traditional pentecostalism, also takes the battle against the Devil, the flesh and the world very seriously. Fighting the Devil constitutes the feature that distinguishes it most. However, when one is about the combat the flesh and the world, some distinctions between the two streams of pentecostals are clearly differentiated. Neopentecostals, especially those of the middle and professional class, coexist very comfortably with the diverse pleasures of this world such as going to the cinema, buying CDs, wearing designer and/or provocative clothing, going to the beaches, swimming pools, shopping centres, and even working as artists, models or

athletes.<sup>161</sup> They view theology with reticence but do not discard modern medicine and formal education as useless things or demonstrations of lack of faith in the power of the Holy Spirit as their predecessors did. In their increasing interest for telling everybody about the new faith, the apocalyptic fervour of neopentecostals has certainly cooled off, though not to the point of forgetting the Second Coming of Christ, the time when there will be a rapture to heaven to live eternal life with God. They would still believe in it, but heaven for them is no longer that escape from the hardship of life and its suffering. Perhaps they now feel there is still too much work to accomplish in this world.

Since their understanding of the Christian life is not pessimistic, the neopentecostal believer views sanctification not as a process of withdrawing himself or herself from the world, but rather as a confrontation with the forces of evil. From that viewpoint comes their audacity to conquest areas for them still not reached, to participate very actively in spheres they intend to win for the Lord, and to launch very aggressive missionary and evangelistic programmes around the world. By taking the spiritual warfare as the latest revelation of God Himself, they are willing and ready to take ownership for God of those things that the Devil once stole from Him and had control of them for so long. In short, neopentecostals do not fit the analysis made by D'Epinay, Willems and others as they said pentecostals did not participate enthusiastically in society, kept themselves segregated from the rest of the community, rejected and combated the pleasures of the world, and adopted sectarian and ascetic behaviours. It is fair to say that although the neopentecostal intends to be liberal especially in areas of personal ethic and sanctification, he or she still shows a number of marks that would make them "sectarian" for many. This believer, above everything, is permeated of a warlike and triumphant spirit that would be hard outsiders to for outsiders. By claiming the name of Jesus and the authority granted to

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<sup>161</sup> Some churches are beginning to face unusual behaviour of their members, which are difficult to deal with. Two female Brazilian singers, both baptised and members of an evangelical church, posed naked for the magazine *Sexy*, issues of July and August 2000. Simony (23) and Gretchen (41) said they do not see any problem with posing nude for the magazine. "I always ask for God's guidance in anything I do. If this had not been God's will, I would have not signed the contract with the magazine", Gretchen stated in an interview. This is the second time she has done it after her conversion. Taken from "Cantantes evangélicas posan desnudas para revista masculina." *ALC*, 31 August 2000.

them by Him, neopentecostals are not afraid of facing Satan himself. They view themselves as receptacles of God's promises and know they are 'more than conquerors in Christ,' as the apostle Paul affirmed. Thanks to the way they have inserted themselves in contemporary society, the number of converts from the middle class, people from a wide variety of professions and executive jobs, athletes, artists, models, singers and politicians continues to rise. These individuals now know they would not have to quit their career if they decided to get baptised to follow their new faith, something that might have happened within the traditional Pentecostal Church. The next graphic, Chart 8, summarises the main differences between the three waves.

#### **D. Its presence in Latin America**

Despite the controversies the movement has raised, it cannot be denied that its impact in other regions of the world has been much greater than on North American soil. Latin America, for example, in the last twenty or more years has seen a notable increase in the number of independent churches that in no time have become not only congregations with thousands of members, but also large trans-national corporations worth millions of dollars. Traditional churches have also experienced a spiritual revitalisation after implementing some of the neopentecostal practices, although this has brought disruption to historical denominations that have seen congregations depart to join the Third Wave movement.

In looking at the three "waves" in historical perspective, one thing is clear: the signs and wonders and the other practices taught by Wimber and Wagner, were also taking place in the Latin American continent from the early 1970s onwards. The Groups of "Divine Cure" of Brazil —mainly "God is Love" and the "Universal Church of the Kingdom of God"— were already operating with great success, having the message of prosperity and inner healing as the core of their discourse. At the beginning of the '80s, Restorationist churches in Central America had also begun to propagate the need for a spiritual revival in the whole region. At the same time, in Argentina, the lay pentecostal preacher Carlos Annacondia had launched a serious spiritual warfare through his tent crusades where he prayed for the sick, made hundreds fall fainting to the floor, and allegedly freed many who were demon possessed. [Refer to Chart 7].

**DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE “THREE WAVES”**  
[Chart 8]

	<b>FIRST WAVE PENTECOSTALISM</b>	<b>SECOND WAVE CHARISMATIC RENEWAL</b>	<b>THIRD WAVE NEOPENTECOSTALISM</b>
Church Building	Store-front and small-tent-meeting places located in marginalized sectors of town.	Most “second wavers” stayed in their own churches. Those who left met in houses and rented facilities.	Cinemas, theatres, shopping centres, sport arenas and gigantic-tents located in strategic areas of town.
Adherents Socio-economic Level	Working class and urban poor with little or no education. Migrants.	Suburban middle and professional class.	All socio-economic levels with predominance of middle-sectors, including people from show-biz, entertainment and sport industries.
Leadership	Little theological training. Exercises autocratic power reflected in the “ <i>pastor-patrón</i> ” (pastor-feudal lord) figure.	House church leaders were mostly lay people highly motivated for service. The “office” or “ministry” was more important than the individual who held it.	Favours the authoritarian vertical structure, which comes in the form of business-like centralised ecclesiastical government led by bishops, apostles and prophets. Most leaders have no formal theological training. Usually, as they get older or pass away, a family succession comes about either through the wife or son of the deceased.
Theological Roots	Pentecost theology.	Renewal theology.	Restoration and prosperity theology.
Salvation	Individualistic and eschatological. Longing for going “home”, leaving the hardship of life behind.	Expectation of God’s kingdom established here and now.	Not eschatological but rather pragmatic: God saves us here on earth from sickness, poverty and Satan’s power.
Sanctification	Centres on “theophanic spirituality” which emphasises the personal in-breaking of the Spirit in ways that are extraordinary, unpredictable and radically new. They are evidenced by glossolalia and other supernatural manifestations. This post-conversion infilling of the Spirit brings victory over sin, and power for service.	Focuses on “Christological spirituality”, which is the abiding presence of Christ through the Spirit in the Church, working in believers through the sacraments or the baptism in the Holy Spirit evidenced by glossolalia. The Spirit baptism is a release or actualisation of the indwelling Spirit in the lives of believers.	“Pneumatological spirituality” expressed in power encounters, which takes the form of inner healing and deliverance of evil spirits. This is evidenced by falling backwards (“slain in the Spirit”), holy laughter, and other manifestations. This experience empowers the believer to overcome Satan’s attacks.
Healing	Comes from faith and prayer and does not require holy water, scapulas and pilgrimages to holy places. The Bible —not a pantheon of saints— is all what a believer needs for help.	Comes from prayer and/or sacraments.	Performed by anointed preachers who have “word of knowledge” to discern God’s will to heal particular individuals.
Second Coming of Christ	Hopes for the imminent Second coming of Christ. The quicker we evangelise the world the sooner Christ will come back for His church.	Renewal language was not normally accompanied by awareness of the Second coming due to its emphasis on the renewal of the Church.	The Second coming is not much heard about because they are too busy battling Satan and his demons.
Personal Ethics	“Purity” precedes power. Signs of worldliness are traditionally associated with personal vices as smoking, drinking, dancing and the wearing of make-up and jewellery. Consequently, they have gained a reputation for sobriety and honesty. A Pentecostal could be recognised just by the way he/she looked or behaved.	Its lack of code of dress and conduct reflected their middle-class background and social preferences. They viewed pentecostal taboos as mere “cultural baggage” that was not essential to the work of the Spirit.	Power precedes “purity”. Neither dress codes nor worldliness restrictions are expected from believers. A neopentecostal can easily pass by a non-believer because they have immersed themselves into the world in order to win it for Christ.
Ecumenism	Was not too open to fellowship with traditional denominations to which they considered “cold” and ‘dead”. They hold now ecumenical dialogue and relationships with mainline protestant churches and even the Roman Catholic Church.	Since it started within the Roman Catholic Church, it was always open to other denominations.	They do not believe too much in the relevance of denominations, therefore their relationship with them limits itself to conferences, concerts and other activities they organise.
Worldview	Socially isolated. Pessimistic attitude towards the world. The world is a calamity coming to an end and there is nothing one can do about it.	The world is the place where God has put the Church as an instrument of change and renovation.	The world is a battlefield where God’s forces are fighting the devil. In this spiritual warfare the Church is called up to take back what Satan has robbed the children of God: cities, properties, health, wealth, and so forth.

Thus, it may well be said that the same phenomena began sweeping the three Americas at almost the same time. Perhaps, what differentiated them was the fact that North Americans immediately made it known all over the world, while in the South there was less diffusion of these happenings. In this sense, it is worth noticing that Wimber's "signs and wonders" did not play an influential role in Latin America, for churches there were already experiencing equal or greater miracles within the context of the Latin American culture.<sup>162</sup>

However, an interesting interaction between the two movements was seen when the founder of the so-called "Toronto Blessing", John Arnot, went specifically to Buenos Aires in 1993 to seek a special anointing from Claudio Freidzon, who was and is a well-respected neopentecostal leader and who himself had received the anointing from the Palestinian-American preacher Benny Hinn. As soon as Freidzon prayed for Arnot, he returned to Canada and "Toronto Blessing" exploded.<sup>163</sup> We are therefore faced with an international and intercultural movement whose beginnings have not been limited to a single place, as happened with classic pentecostalism and charismatism, but a phenomenon that would seem to have its roots in both hemispheres, North and South.

In the next chapters we will see then the rise and development of this movement aiming to understand its ecclesiological identity and insertion into the evangelical community. In order to accomplish this, we will deal with the Restorationists of pentecostal breed, and the Renewed Communities of charismatic orientation. I will not touch the groups of *Cura Divina*, because as I stated in chapter one, we would just cover the neopentecostal faction within the evangelical sphere, leaving *Deus é Amor* and *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* outside the scope of acceptance of traditional denominations and the classic Pentecostal Church.<sup>164</sup> Briefly, I will

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<sup>162</sup> Similar conclusion may be drawn from African and Southern Asian countries where a spiritual awakening took place with features that resembled those of the Third Wave.

<sup>163</sup> It has just been as of this decade that authors like Peter Wagner, Charles Kraft, Ed Silvano, Héctor Torres and other neopentecostal figures mainly from North America, began to quote the Latin American case to prove their theories on spiritual warfare and revival were right.

<sup>164</sup> Divine Cure groups have no fellowship with either CONEP or FIPAC. See Chapter 3, pages 67, 73 and Chart 6.

attempt to summarise the arguments evangelicals use to set themselves apart from these Brazilian groups.

Firstly, evangelicals refute the follow-the-earthly-leader approach *Cura Divina* churches like to emphasize, instead of delivering a message that encourages people to search for spiritual meaning as older creeds do. The offer of a *caudillo* type of leadership, common in Latin American, with rigid and kind of secret hierarchies that demand their followers' blind obedience, creates a personality cult for their founders who wield absolute authority. Evangelical leaders find hard to accept this, and insist on some rights that people who join these groups must have. For example, they say that followers should not be financially ruined when they become involved with them, and that they can walk away from them at any stage, uninhibited. Evangelicals believe that if these rights are not guaranteed, the line that separates sound biblical teaching from modern vendors of unholy snake oil to the naïve masses will be crossed.

Secondly, evangelicals perceive these groups as cultish because of their syncretic beliefs and practices. Though classic pentecostalism in its days exhibited peculiar rituals unseen in traditional denominations, Groups of Divine Cure have allegedly raised syncretism to new heights. "Borrowing from Roman Catholicism and the African-Brazilian religions of *Candomblé* and *Umbanda*", Chesnut (1997:39) affirms that *Deus é Amor* church,<sup>165</sup> for instance,

recovered the thaumaturgy eliminated centuries ago by the Protestant reformers... Not only did pastors expel demons from their human hosts but also invoked the "evil spirits" of Umbanda such as *Tranca Rua* to be then collectively exorcised by the frenzied congregation. Visual imagery in the temple also broke with the extreme austerity of classic pentecostal houses of worship.

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<sup>165</sup> It was in 1962 that David Miranda left *Brasil para Cristo* to begin *Deus é Amor*, his own church in São Paulo. Mixing the ascetic ethos of several pentecostal churches, Miranda came up with the Regulation Handbook of Members, which is a compendium of draconian ecclesiastical laws dictating personal behaviour both outside and within the church, dress codes, and relation between the sexes. This handbook regulates *Deus é Amor* church in every country where it operates, making it difficult to fit in the evangelical world, which perceives this group as a cult-like movement.

In observing the practice of *liberación* —exorcism— as the preacher leads the ritual by stomping his feet and raising his hands followed by the congregants, one can notice that they are not chasing away ordinary demons but spirits of the *Umbanda* pantheon and other unclean spirits depending on the region the church finds itself. Before liberating the individuals from their demonic invaders, the preacher commands the demons to identify themselves. Evasive at first, the spirits eventually surrender to the greater power of the preacher, giving away their identity which often times corresponds to local devils. The dramatic display of such a power simply awes the congregation. The preacher has demonstrated everybody that they are spiritually well protected in the church and thus encouraged to remain in it. For evangelicals, the whole exhibition plainly shows the appropriation of pagan ceremonies where shamans fight other spiritualists and evil spirits to win over people's confidence. Neither the methodology nor the intention of the preacher seem to be justifiable, because they might unintentionally be exacerbating the world of superstition still so appealing to vast regions of Latin America.

But God is Love church is not the only one accused of superstition. The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG)<sup>166</sup> has also been held countable for the same sin and even profiting by it. Allegations that UCKG leaders had marketed “holy oil”, supposedly from the Mount of Olives in Israel, and Dead Sea salt, proved to be true. Laboratory analysis of these two substances exposed the “sacred oil” as common Brazilian soybean oil and the Dead Sea salt as the same salt with which people season their food. No doubt, the selling of supposedly sacred objects and the power is conferred to them, have made the UCKG church look suspicious to main denominations. This has led evangelicals to distance themselves from Bishop Macedo's church, and state that UCKG practices and beliefs do not comply with evangelical orthodoxy.

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<sup>166</sup> Edir Macedo, a former employee at the Rio de Janeiro state lottery, left his job in 1977 to found the *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* in a former funeral parlour. Soon it became the nation's fastest growing church thanks to its threefold emphasis: exorcism, healing and prosperity. Now, the Universal Church is not only the largest neopentecostal group in Latin America claiming millions of followers, but by far the richest as well.

Lastly, evangelicals also view Groups of Divine Cure as foreign movements that bring tested recruitment methods adopting a “pseudo-indigenisation” type of scheme, meaning that foreigners remain in control, but stay behind the scenes with a marketing strategy that make traditional denominations look like old fashion small front stores. As a result, nationals do what they are told, having little participation in decision making at high levels. But what is even more disturbing for evangelicals is the fact that for these movements, it is the consumers’ needs what matters rather than the Gospel’s message. Simply put, they employ a consumer-oriented tactic that seeks to provide clients with “sacred goods” adapted to their desires. This market strategy easily ends up in monopoly or consortium that manipulates the masses for its own benefit. And soon it is the institutional growth, financial and political power what define the agenda rather than doctrinal and ecclesiastical issues that pertain to the nature of the church.

For Peruvian evangelical leaders (CONEP 1986:08), the groups of *Cura Divina* are not “identified by the same historical background, similar doctrine and same organisation” as the other denominations under CONEP’s umbrella are, and therefore they cannot be regarded as part of the evangelical constituency. Church leaders of the region, including Brazil, would endorse similar statement. For the reasons seen above, I will not then make more references to these groups since this investigation only deals with neopentecostal churches linked to the evangelical world.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> For an in-depth study of God is Love and the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God churches, see Paul Freston 1994a, Harold Hernández 1994, Andrew Chesnut 1997, Leonild Campos Silveira 1995 and Ricardo Gondin 1996.

# **PART THREE: THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS UNDERSTANDING NOPENTECOSTALISM IN PERU**

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## **CHAPTER 5**

### **PERU IN THE “PROPHETIC MAP”**

#### **1. BEGINNINGS**

Neopentecostalism in Peru presents itself as an assorted mosaic of churches as we have seen in chapter two. The first neopentecostal traces go back to the early '80s when the Restoration movement tried to enter Peru. Architect Humberto Lay, senior pastor of Emmanuel Church, a renewed church affiliated to the Assemblies of God in Peru, quotes Rony Cháves telling his story about the beginnings of his work in that country.

Six Costa Rican ministers, from different churches and organisations, decided to make a missionary trip to Peru in the 1980s. Our intention was to give leaders God's missionary vision for today and teach them the Word. At the time, churches in Lima were sealed tight, so God sent us to the Peruvian Amazon region, specifically Iquitos, the port on the Amazon River. There we first taught these glorious topics on the Holy Spirit. The city was touched in less than 20 days... Three years after our first trip... Lima began to open up to the Restoration, and ministers from our team (Edgar Mendoza, Alvaro Pérez and Jaime Yupanqui) were invited to share this blessed message with hundreds of Christian workers... Months later, our praise minister went to Lima and found that the opening and the spiritual hunger were huge. The capital city was beginning to be impacted by God. The same minister, Edgar Mendoza, was invited again to spend 30 days in January of 1992. He visited several important cities across the nation, including Lima, of course. The results were great. The Holy Spirit touched the heart of a wide sector of the Peruvian ministers... We have heard these Peruvian brothers... have begun to work hard. The job will not be easy,

but the Lord will be with them; and I am sure of one thing, Peru has awoken and very soon the Christian Church will be restored.<sup>166</sup>

It was Rony Cháves through his *Avance Misionero Mundial* ministry, who most contributed to Peru being located on the international “prophetic map”, as he presented it in the First International Conference of the Word, held in July of 1993 in Puerto Rico. Oscar Amat y León (1996:39-41), who has carefully studied the connections of Cháves with Peru, refers to one of Rony's works where he elaborates his views from an apocalyptic perspective:

Here it is a part of the prophetic plan in which the Holy Spirit will be involved in the coming years... The Holy Spirit will be raising a leadership of prophetic and apostolic character. These men and women will be part of an army with a double portion of the Spirit. They will be given an anointing like the one during the first years of the Church. God will use them to perform signs and wonders among people... They are the potential fathers of the church in America. To them God has given authority to unleash the “truths of the present time” in their own nations... The Lord, through his Holy Spirit, has revealed to us that we should work building up the leaders of each nation in prophetic teaching and anointing to renew His children. Several launching platforms for God's work have been getting ready in America. Some are larger and newer than others. These are Guatemala, Costa Rica, Colombia, Peru, Mexico and Puerto Rico.<sup>167</sup>

Once Rony had the “prophetic plan” as his reference framework, he immediately carried out some activities in Lima in order to consolidate his apostolic presence among neopentecostal churches, making even some attempts to approach the conservative evangelical sector but with little success. The “*Conferencias del Ministerio Avance Misionero Mundial*”, was the first, and was held in *Las Arenas* coliseum in Lima, 18-20 of August 1994. Then two more followed the next year 1995: the “Third Interdenominational Conference of the Word of God with Rony Cháves”, 23-28 of January, that had the Restoration of Family as its main topic; and the “Ministry School for Intercessors for Peru,” 9-11 of March. As some

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<sup>166</sup> Quoted by Lay in his conference “La doctrina de la Restauración de todas las cosas” (p.11-12)

<sup>167</sup> Amat quotes Cháves' work “El plan profético para el avivamiento de América” (1993:23-24).

noted, these and other events thereafter were meant to carry out the fulfilment of the prophetic plan whose core was the renovation of the church by means of a spiritual revival. Rony Cháves himself said in an interview conceded to a local charismatic newspaper: “Christians' eyes from all over the world are now on you. The construction of God's Kingdom in America is definitely taking place in Peru. And for what we see, in the last 10 years the church has grown very much here.”<sup>168</sup>

Despite all the publicity that Rony Cháves and his team displayed, apparently other neopentecostal leaders did not share the same “restorationist” optimism. On the contrary, some were rather saying that Peru was far from being a spiritually renewed nation. “This country has neither seen the power of God yet, nor knows who God is,”<sup>169</sup> stated Ron Haus in a meeting with local ministers during the Healing and Miracles Crusade with Benny Hinn that was held in Lima, 6-7 October 1995. Haus, who represented the controversial evangelist Hinn in Peru, was undoubtedly referring to the fact that his crusade had not received the support of all the evangelical churches of Lima, something that he interpreted as a division in the evangelical world, which plainly contradicts the spirit of unity that a revival brings about. Reportedly 40,000 completely filled the facilities of *Alianza Lima* football stadium, and hundreds more who did not get seats, had to remain outside.

Pastor Lay, a well-respected leader within the pentecostal-charismatic community, had also expressed some objections to the doctrine of Restoration. For him, this was a “post millennialist” teaching for it outlined that Christ will not return until all things, including the Church, have been restored.<sup>170</sup> According to Lay, Chaves’ hermeneutics failed in applying to the church prophetic passages that are meant for Israel. “The Tabernacle of David, Hebrew ways of worship, Hebrew music, Hebrew symbolism, everything is Hebrew because the Church has been mistaken for Israel,” said Lay in the radio programme *Una cita con la Biblia* aired by the evangelical Radio del Pacífico in Lima.<sup>171</sup> In his view what the

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<sup>168</sup> Cháves (1995), “Tú eres el hombre de Dios para el país” (p.3).

<sup>169</sup> In “Hagamos un altar de adoración y pidamos que descienda el poder de Dios sobre el Perú” (Haus 1995:9).

<sup>170</sup> It is interesting to note that after the revivals of the nineteenth century, post-millennialism was also to the fore. See, for example, Bebbington (1989:62-3, 81-2, 84, 216, 264)

<sup>171</sup> In “La doctrina de la restauración de todas las cosas” (p.16,17).

Peruvian church needed was a new wineskin to contain all the reforms God was bringing about for the church. Definitely, the Restoration movement was not in Lay's mind, as it was made known later on. Now pastor Lay has endorsed the "Apostolic Church" paradigm proposed by Peter Wagner and Pablo Deiros,<sup>172</sup> which for him fits perfectly the scheme of the church for the twenty-first century.

Lay says that this new paradigm goes in accord with the change of attitude evangelicals have to face. "Instead of giving a kind of 'spiritual' explanation for the lack of growth in our churches —whether witchcraft activity, idolatry and so forth— we should recognise that internal and institutional factors very often hinder the growth of a church."<sup>173</sup> The internal factors have to do with the inability to offer the right atmosphere and message for today's people. The institutional factors deal with church structure and organisation, which lead us to the concept of ecclesiastical authority that Lay explains it like this.

Every form of church government we find today is related to the concept of authority pertaining to the particular time churches operated. For example, the Anglican Church was born in times of the English monarchy, therefore this church has a vertical type of authority. Most of modern denominations were founded when democracy was in place, therefore we inherited this form of democratic government in our churches where officers are elected. But some times these forms of government which come from the social and political context of the age do not correspond with what the Bible says about authority. In the Bible we read that Christ rules over the Church through spiritual gifts and ministries the Holy Spirit. But, what happens when the pastor has a vision from God for his church but he has his denominational straightjacket on? We see that the largest congregations today grow outside denominational structures... So, we don't need to look back seeking methods, strategies and longing for the bygone blessings... What we need is new wineskins for the new wine the Lord is pouring today. The Holy Spirit is now working in a different manner and it is here, in this context, that we see the raise of the so called "new apostolic churches".... God is restoring the worship and the ministries

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<sup>172</sup> Peter Wagner deals very extensively with this subject of "apostolic churches" in his book, *Earthquake in the Church* (1999).

<sup>173</sup> Humberto Lay, "El nuevo paradigma de las Iglesias Apostólicas". Lecture during the Fourth Module in the *Facultad Teológica Latinoamericana Alianza* (FATELA). Lima, 29 August 2000. (Recorded transcript, p2).

of prophet, apostle, evangelist and teacher, which were forgotten for so long.<sup>174</sup>

Though the rationale behind these theories lay in the valid desire of seeing churches grow, it would be difficult to ignore that beyond this noble purpose the notion of authority is shaping this new model. Authority conveys the idea of control, and control is a hot issue in neopentecostal circles. To what extent does a pastor of a church with thousands of members need “apostolic” authority not only to carry out divine oracles but also to deal with earthy people who necessarily do not agree with him? Is the “apostolic” authority, perhaps, the way some pastors use to free themselves from boards and committees to which they are accountable? In a sense, the Restoration movement would pursue the same goal inasmuch as it also believes that the five ministries of the New Testament — prophet, apostle, evangelist, pastor and teacher— are meant for today. However, it would seem that the new “apostolic church” paradigm is gaining momentum among the neopentecostal world that sees in this model the form to support powerful and rich machineries commanded by single persons.

## 2. BORN TO BE DIFFERENT

Some studies done on neopentecostalism would seem to indicate that this movement emerges in the continent when nations are facing critical conditions. Basically, the new churches appear on the scene during the 1970s, coinciding with serious economic crisis that struck many countries.<sup>175</sup> British sociologist Paul Freston, speaking of this movement in Brazil, locates it within the “third wave” period that starts in the early 1970s when the so-called “Brazilian economic miracle” begins to decline (Freston 1995a:298).<sup>176</sup> In Argentina it is in the decade of 1980, right after the Falklands war that brought

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<sup>174</sup> *Ibid*, p3.

<sup>175</sup> Phillip Berryman says that neopentecostals emerged in the 1960s (1996:169), and Argentine historian Pablo Deiros (1994:113) refers to the 1980s as the decade of their development.

<sup>176</sup> Freston (1995b) analyses the Brazilian Protestantism history following a “three waves” scheme. The first one goes back to 1910, when Assemblies of God and Christian Congregation arrived in Brazil. The second one refers to the growth and development of these churches that takes place during the 1950s. And the third wave came after 1970 when the country experiences its worst economic crisis and sees the blooming of new pentecostal groups.

the country into depression, when pentecostal-type groups start growing dramatically, according to sociologist Floreal Forni (1993:13)

In 1979 it was verified—in the office of Cults Registration that tends to underestimate small churches—the existence of 596 Pentecostal churches in national territory; today they number 1,726. But the great expansion—at least in the Registration office—took place between 1985 to 1990 with the addition of 728 more.

The Peruvian experience would seem to confirm the same pattern for we see, once more, that these groups became very active during the 1980s in the midst of the worse economic crisis in the nation's history (Amat 1996). For Peru, the '80s are very significant in many respects. Firstly, because it was in 1980 that this country returned to democracy after thirteen years of military government, one of the most difficult episodes in its Republican life.<sup>177</sup> As people were full of hope looking ahead into this new period, the terrorist Maoist group *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) began its deplorable actions in the southern central highlands of Peru, Ayacucho, that led the nation to the worst crisis in its modern history.<sup>178</sup> After twelve long years of devastation and death, in September 1992 the authorities captured its leader, Abimael Guzmán, a PhD university professor from the San Cristobal University of Ayacucho. The results from the terrorist/military struggle were terrible: officially, more than 30,000 persons had died, including a large percentage of children, women and elderly people; massive social displacement from rural areas to the cities; the government had spent out 20 billion dollars in damages to roads and infrastructure, a sum that would almost match the foreign debt of the nation; and the political, social and economic

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<sup>177</sup> Sociologist José Matos Mar offers a concise analysis of the years of military government in his classic *Desborde popular y crisis de Estado* (1988:38-68).

<sup>178</sup> Experts would agree in affirming that *Sendero Luminoso* is not a guerrilla movement, as it is designated in American and European circles, but a terrorist faction that used terror to intimidate the country. Although this group started off in rural areas, soon it was evident that they were aiming for a stronghold on the big cities, especially Lima, where they eventually concentrated all their power. While guerrilla is an armed group that is supported by the people to defend their rights against abusive dictatorial systems, terrorists are plain criminals, self-proclaimed saviours that have neither scruples nor objections in putting car-bombs and dynamite in public places, murdering children, women and innocent men whom paradoxically they claim to represent. *Sendero Luminoso*'s actions match those of the Irish *IRA* and the Basque *ETA*, groups that the international press would hardly call guerrillas. However, it should be pointed out that many rural communities suffered indiscriminate death at the hands of the so-called military "forces of order".

instability had reached its lowest point the real magnitude of which might have not been fully perceived yet.<sup>179</sup>

Secondly, because no Peruvian will be able to forget the terrible crisis during 1985-1990, when the oldest political party, APRA (*Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana*), finally managed to come to power. The country went through a period of international isolation due to the policy of non-payment of its foreign debt. This was combined with a brutal inflation that in 1990 alone reached 7,650%, the highest in its history, and which caused unemployment and poverty to reach unsuspected figures forcing more than half a million Peruvians flee to other countries to survive. It was during these years that people found themselves doing all kinds of business and marginal jobs to support their families. Thus, the “informal economy” was consolidated and proved to be one of the driving forces of the Peruvian economy years later.<sup>180</sup>

It is in this particular context that neopentecostal and neocharismatic churches began to flourish.<sup>181</sup> As theologian José Míguez Bonino has rightly pointed out, this phenomenon deserves close attention because it emerged in a special historical moment of the region that made it different from classic pentecostalism. He affirms:

The difference between the new breed of last decade's Pentecostalism and Creole pentecostals is of qualitative order. New pentecostals are part of another social dynamic closely related to the conditions and social stratification generated by the application of economic and social policies linked to

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<sup>179</sup> For an account of the terrorist impact on Peru, see: D.S. Palmer, *Shining Path of Peru* (1992); S. Strong, *Shining Path, the World's Deadliest Revolutionary Force* (1993). Here we must record the efforts done by the National Evangelical Council of Peru (CONEP) in helping to relocate hundreds of families affected by terrorism. Most of the publications of that period generally emphasise the work of the Catholic Church in the pacification and reconstruction process of the country, but say very little of the role played by CONEP's commission *Peace and Hope*, which worked re-locating families, creating jobs, and defending those who had been put in jail unjustly. See the bulletins *Peace and Hope* 1984-1987 (CONEP archives), and John Maust's book, *Peace and Hope in the Corner of the Dead* (1989).

<sup>180</sup> Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto was one of the first scholars to draw attention to the informal economy phenomenon. See his *The other Path, the invisible revolution in the Third World* (1988).

<sup>181</sup> Neocharismatism is basically a middle-class movement that started in historical churches, Catholic and Protestant, when their members had an ecstatic experience with the Holy Spirit. Unlike traditional charismatics who remain in their church in order to “renew” it, the new ones tend to form totally independent churches, of modern and informal type, which seek to draw mostly those of their own class.

'neo-liberalism'. They have another rationality, which is more in tune with the use of the media created by the 'technological mind' and which is used to forge new conditions that are different from those of the popular social creation in Creole pentecostalism. Consequently, this generates another type of adherence, more related to the 'consumption of religious goods' than to the active incorporation into an intentional subject. Therefore, I believe this requires other methods of research and other theological clues. (Míguez 1995:58-59).

This "other rationality" that Míguez mentions has much to do with the "other logic" of Parker's theory. Therefore, we cannot apply the same classic pentecostal model to this new generation of pentecostals because they move with other logic. By model we mean the codes of behaviour, type of organisation, practices and rituals that have identified the traditional pentecostals for almost one century. The fact that neopentecostalism is rooted in other logic would explain their demand for the consumption of all kinds of sacred products, as well as their rejection of the old dress codes that characterised their predecessors in years past. The life of austerity and even asceticism that accompanied pentecostals in the past is not seen in the members of these new groups. In the midst of a consumerist society that worships physical beauty, as we have already pointed out it is not unusual then to see neopentecostals wearing designer clothes and make-up, products before considered as sinful.<sup>182</sup>

This shift of mentality and external appearance is also perceived in the names and architecture of their church buildings. Neopentecostals prefer being known as Centre, Community or Ministry, in contrast to a nomenclature of biblical particularities such as Horeb Rock, Upper Room, Heaven's Door or Rock of Salvation.<sup>183</sup> Their places of meeting have also changed. They are no longer humble constructions located in the worst sectors of town, but ex-cinemas, fancy

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<sup>182</sup> In Brazil, where evangelicals and pentecostals make up]the largest church in the region, a Christian company, *Beleza Crista* (Christian Beauty), has launched 180 products of its "Christian line" to the market. There are hair oils and creams, skin lotions and gel, and shampoo for both adults and children. Containers and boxes carry Scriptures, but *Beleza Crista* states that neither the name of God is misused nor Christian symbols are taken out of their context. Taken from *ALC*, 5 January 1999.

<sup>183</sup> During the flourishing of Brazilian pentecostalism in the '60s, pastors and church leaders were forced to use their imagination to call their churches by extravagant names, for example, the "Howling God Pentecostal Church", the "Blue Flame Church", "Doctrine without Customs Assemblies of God Church", the "Last Boat for Christ Pentecostal Church" and "Jesus is Coming and You Are Staying Pentecostal Church". Taken from "Iglesias con nombres extraños proliferan en Brasil". Taken from *ALC*, 25 January 1999.

tents, conference rooms in luxurious hotels, and large units in shopping malls. We are, no doubt, dealing with that “other religiosity” which Fuenzalida talks about. This kind of “new religion” is more in tune with the post-modern world than with traditions of the established churches. This contrast, a rupture from old-fashioned ecclesiastic patterns is leading us to think of other forms of doing church today.

### 3. NEOPENTECOSTALISM'S DISTINCTIVE BIRTHMARKS

Studies done on these new churches have mainly dealt with their origin and organisation, in an attempt to shed light on the deeper significances that followers may not be aware of. In this regard, the works of Douglas Texeira Monteiro (Texeira 1979) and the liberationist theologian Rubem Alves (Alves 1979) should be considered as pioneers in this field. These authors studied the entrepreneurial character of some neopentecostal churches in Brazil and discovered that their success in large part is due to their capacity for selecting and attending to their list of “clients”, in seeking to satisfy their consumerist impulses for spiritual goods. In another research done in Brazil too, Paul Freston studied *The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God* (Freston 1994), which is considered the largest and most powerful church of the neopentecostal movement. This church was founded in 1974 and presently has hundreds of thousands of members, owns radio and TV stations, a publishing house, banks, a professional soccer team, and carries out intensive missionary work in various parts of the world.

In Central America, the German theologian Heinrich Schäfer published *Protestantismo y crisis social en América Central* (1992), where he makes some remarks on Guatemalan neo-Charismatic churches like *El Verbo*, *Elim*, *Shekinah* and *El Shaddai*, one of these being the home church of former Guatemalan president Efraín Ríos Montt. These groups focus their work mainly on the middle and upper classes. The Argentine sociologist Hilario Wynczyk (1993), charismatic himself and member of the Lutheran Evangelical Church of Rio de la Plata, made an interesting study the pentecostal preacher Carlos Annacondia whom some regard as the father of the Argentine religious revival of the past decade.

In the case of Peru there are three works on this theme. The first is by the anthropologist Harold Hernández from the Catholic University of Peru, who carried out an interesting study on the *Dios es Amor* (1994) church, one of the most hermetic groups in Lima. The second is by sociologist and pastor Oscar Amat y León (1996), who did a study on evangelical Charismatism in Peru, paying special attention to its missionary proposal for the next years. The third is by Martín Ocaña (1998),<sup>184</sup> who has analysed the *Comunidad Agua Viva* which is the largest neopentecostal church of Peru. All these authors have made ground-breaking work in this area where the ethnographic research plays a very important role.

From the outcome of these studies and some others (Frigerio1994), we can draw certain characteristics that are common ground to these groups:

- 1) Church leaders are individuals bestowed with great charisma on whom people confer special powers, either because they pray for healing or exercise authority in the spiritual realm —driving out evil spirits, making people faint by touching them or simply pointing at them.
- 2) No rigid confessional commitment is demanded from their constituency, and no dress codes are imposed either. Yet tithes and pledges are strongly encouraged.
- 3) Worship service is carried out in a festive atmosphere, where lively modern music and uplifting speeches stimulate the audience's participation.
- 4) Rites of physical and inner healing are performed in every service. They are important elements of their world view and that is why services are broadcast so that everybody can be aware of them.
- 5) Spiritual warfare is an on going activity that goes hand in hand with faith healing. Neopentecostals are engaged in a war against demons that have control of people's lives, properties and even towns and nations.
- 6) Economic prosperity is one of their favourite topics for sermons. It is affirmed that poverty is not what God wants for his children, therefore people should desire and claim the riches that God has for them.

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<sup>184</sup> Author and member of the Latin American Theological Fraternity and former director of Sicuani Theological Centre, Peru.

- 7) Spectacular manifestations of the Holy Spirit are expected to happen. These could be in the form of speaking in tongues, falling in ecstatic state, or receiving visible signs of divine unction expressed in diverse manners, for example, holy laughter, collective fainting, golden fillings, haloes, shining faces, and so forth.
- 8) Leaders make an extensive use of modern communication equipment. Churches own recording studios, video cameras, publishing houses, and have also demonstrated that the mass media culture can also be part of the church as is shown through their TV-like services.
- 9) Churches are run in business-like style where a huge amount of money circulates. This money comes from donations, real estate, and other businesses that run parallel to the church, like cafeterias, gift and book shops, and informal sale of cassettes and videos of sermons and conferences.

#### **4. NEOPENTECOSTAL APPEALING MESSAGE FOR *LIMEÑOS***

If we were to summarise in a sentence the main emphases of neopentecostal churches they would be without hesitation: physical and inner healing, spiritual warfare, and economic prosperity. What then has happened to the four doctrinal pillars that always identified classical pentecostalism: Christ our Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer and coming King? (Dayton 1991a:9s)<sup>185</sup> They may still be there but have now no prominence. It would seem that the glossolalia as a distinctive pentecostal trademark; the pietistic and almost ascetic life that characterised old-time pentecostals; and even the apocalyptic discourse of the imminent return of Jesus Christ to the earth, have been practically left behind.

Interestingly, this new message may be one of the key factors to understanding the tremendous success which the new churches are having in Lima. The neopentecostal discourse would seem to appeal to the snobbish character of the *Limeño*, who tends to follow all kinds of novelties without giving them,

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<sup>185</sup> Curiously, this “fourfold pattern” as Dayton calls it, is also the motto that has distinguished the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) from its foundation in 1887. It was its founder, A.B. Simpson, who coined the term “Fourfold Gospel” to speak of Christ as Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer, and coming King. (Niklaus 1986).

necessarily, too much thought.<sup>186</sup> Its symbolic speeches, that promote social and economic prosperity, good health, and a ticket to ride in a demon-free zone, is attractive to the middle-class who can easily identify with this type of message. This halo of success displayed by neopentecostal leaders (designer clothes, and expensive watches and cars), who appear to move in an anxiety-free kind of atmosphere, is perceived by others as signs of divine blessing available for anyone. This is the new reality that identifies neopentecostalism and, at the same time, separates it from classic pentecostals.

In conclusion, modernity tried to exclude the supernatural from the world, either by ridiculing religion or scientifically explaining what only faith could conceive. Yet, the most visible example of the spirituality survival in Latin America is this religious explosion the end of which, if it ever happens, no one can predict. Like it or not, thousands of people are finding God not necessarily in the traditional churches, but in these popular expressions of religiosity. The monopoly of truth is not any more in one particular church or denominational sector. The parameters of the official religion have been broken and each individual must decide according to their conscience. Perhaps it is better this way, for as the Gospels say: "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going." (John 3:8).

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<sup>186</sup> Peruvian journalist Rafo León makes a bitter but accurate statement when talking about the middle-class of Lima. He affirms that *Limeños* "maintain their self-identity on their ability to obtain goods and the right contacts, and on the manipulation of their own miseries." Then he adds that *Limeños* "love to imitate successful models without reflection and with no capacity of synthesis either." In "En el umbral del nuevo limeño". *Caretas*, No 1551, 21 January 1999.

## CHAPTER 6

### NEOPENTECOSTAL ECCLESIOLOGICAL WORLDVIEW

The Christian Centre of San José is located in a large corner premises, close to the main square of a middle-class sector in the capital city of Costa Rica.<sup>187</sup> Its glass facade gives it the appearance of a commercial building and not of a church. The design helps to diminish people's prejudices against evangelical church buildings, for their see-through walls do not hide anything from passers by. The two-storey building seats about 800 people, but on the night visited there were around 600 present. The front platform resembled a theatre stage with backdrops and colour lights, and would seem to anticipate the beginning of a theatre or music show.

Unlike other pentecostal-charismatic churches, there are no ushers at the door to welcome you—at least there were none that night. There was no fixed dress code. By people's appearance and cars parked out in the street I deduced this to be a middle-class congregation with a great percentage of under forties. I looked for the Sunday bulletin or any other church brochure but there was nothing available, and nobody seemed to know where I could acquire one.

The service began at 6:00 p.m. with songs of praise and spiritual warfare. After few minutes, the song leader requested people to come forward to pray. While the congregation bows, the musicians continue playing and a group of young dancers, boys and girls, join them in the platform to accompany the songs with choreographic movements and banners. The use of colour lights makes the service more vibrant, especially during the time of "spiritual songs", that is to say, singing unto God "in the Spirit". The choreographic group then brings in a gigantic tulle canopy that is extended throughout the platform at head height to be used in a liturgical dance. As they swing with the rhythm and music beats, they also wave the tulle each time the leader shouts: "Higher! Lower!" while the drummer creates an expectant atmosphere with his gong.

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<sup>187</sup> I visited this church on Sunday 27 of September 1998, for the evening service at 6:00pm. Its senior pastor is the apostle Rony Chaves.

After 30 minutes or so, Rony Cháves comes up to the platform. He is dressed informally, wearing a colour stripped shirt with no tie. Everybody becomes excited, clapping and whistling at him as it were in a rock concert. Suddenly, someone in the congregation sounds a blast on a horn that echoes round the premises. I look around trying to spot it, and realise that no one else seems startled. It must be a usual occurrence, I think. While Cháves greets the people and explains the meaning of praise, some begin to laugh and others begin to fall to the floor. Rony then says: "I do not need to touch people for them to fall under God's power. Do you believe it?" People shout "Amen!" Then, Cháves starts calling names out loud: "José, María" and others, and the Joses and Marias fall down in their seats —I must confess not having seen anything like it before. People hysterically applaud this demonstration of power, while Rony continues calling out more names. I approach the platform and see many people lying on the floor in a state of unconsciousness, and others who cannot stop laughing. On the platform, some of the dancers are falling too, including the song leader who is frantically spinning with her open arms —I ask myself how much longer she can be like this without falling. After some minutes, she finally collapses and Rony shouts "Hallelujah! Don't worry, she's all right. Our female dancers know they should wear long slips underneath."

"Now it's prayer time," Rony says —it is already 7:10 p.m. People start praying aloud rising their hands, and others weep. The mood is ready for another song and a young man steps on to the platform to take the place of the song leader who remains on the floor. He leads the old classic hymn *Holy, Holy, Holy* that now has a new contemporary rhythm although keeps the same tune and words. I notice that in this church there are no hymnbooks neither printed copies of the songs nor overhead projector —worshippers must know all choruses by heart. Since I know the hymn I have no problem in singing it, but that was not the case with the previous choruses. The person next to me is not singing, so I ask him if it is his first time in the church and replies affirmatively. The hymn is repeated several times and now it is 7:25 when the song leader ends it. As people take their seats, I notice that there are many still laughing on the floor. At this point, some men go up to the platform to help raise the girls who had fallen down. They hardly can stand on their feet, can barely walk, and look dazed. Now it is Rony Cháves who bursts in uncontrollable laughter. He sits on the steps of the platform because he cannot longer stand. The whole congregation also laughs along with their pastor. Suddenly, someone falls to the floor laughing, and Rony, pointing out at him

says: “it is the first time he’s fallen”, and another person moves quickly to take a picture of him. All shout: “Hallelujah!”

Once Rony has stopped laughing, he announces the “collection” time. “It is better now when everybody is half drunk for they will not even know how much are giving!” adds Cháves. Then, he asks for the money pledged in the morning service. There are pledges of 5,000 and 10,000 colones.<sup>188</sup> He urges people to bring them to the altar along with their offerings and tithes. Many rise and come forward handing the money to Rony.

“We’ve got a special visitor tonight,” he announces. It is an American preacher who comes up to the platform. His translator, a man who used to be a member of this church but living now in New Jersey, United States, stands next to him. The translator says the American is here because he wants Rony to anoint him. Before praying, Cháves requests the congregation to pray with him and people at once raise their hands pointing to the man who is at the front. Two ushers stand behind the visitor—I assume they are there to hold him in case he is “slain in the Spirit.” Rony starts praying, almost shouting, and claiming God’s promises for this man. The translator translates all simultaneously. Rony touches the preacher’s forehead and he stumbles but does not fall. Rony tries again, but nothing happens. Rony insists no more, but says to him: “In the name of Jesus, I grant you the creative anointing, so that you will regenerate missing organs in those who come to you for prayer.” Everybody says “Amen!”—This is another new thing for me. I had never heard of an anointing such as this. Rony ends his prayer. The American gives him a big hug, thanks him and stays at the pulpit to preach.

It is almost 9:00p.m. I go to the entrance of the church and see many people standing there and more outside the building. They seem to be visitors and passers by who stopped to have a look at what was happening inside. This is understandable as the service could not to be said to be boring. On the contrary, I would say it was very dynamic and emotional. Even strangers not familiar with a pentecostal service would agree that there was something unusual here that night that is not generally found in the catholic mass or traditional evangelical service. At least this was the comment made by the person sitting next to me. As I listened to Cháves I thought this could be one of the reasons why so many people feel attracted to this type of church in Latin America.

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<sup>188</sup> 1 pound sterling = 400 colones

## 1. THE NEED OF A NEW CHURCH PARADIGM SHIFT

Third Wavers claim that time has arrived to change our western worldview to that which incorporates reliance upon supernatural influences, and may help us believe in the spiritual spheres that affect people's lives. In American conservative evangelical circles this proposal finds fertile ground since churches have been discussing lately which models for worship changes must be taken in order for them to survive and prosper into the twenty-first century. One of them is the type of non-pentecostal middle-class suburban mega church, like Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago,<sup>189</sup> or Saddleback Valley Community Church in California,<sup>190</sup> which claim to be the largest Evangelical churches in North America. Wimber's "signs and wonders" model represents the other paradigm. He argues that the Western Church has lost God's power long ago due to materialism and secularism that have permeated local congregations. For him, the West would have to learn from the Two-Thirds World to be more sensitive to the supernatural

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<sup>189</sup> The church was started in 1975 in the Willow Creek Movie Theatre in Palatine, Illinois. Since 1981, the church has been located in South Barrington, a suburb in Chicago, and boasts an attendance of 17,000 people weekly. Bill Hybels, founding and senior pastor of Willow Creek, is well-known for his numerous books, including *Rediscovering Church: the Story and Vision of Willow Creek Community Church* (1995). Willow Creek is now part of the Willow Creek Association (WCA) that was created in 1992 as the larger parachute organisation of the Willow Creek Community Church to form mega denominational churches attracted to the Willow Creek model. WCA is comprised of nearly 1,200 member churches from 19 countries, representing 70 denominations. Using drama, multi-media, contemporary music, and a message that connects with people's lives, Willow Creek says, "the ageless wisdom of Scripture is presented in a creative, yet straightforward way." Its success has not come cheap. Under the title "Selling Out the House of God", *Christianity Today* (July 18, 1994) said "the Willow Creek Community Church is singled out as the undisputed prototype of this new pop "shopping-mall culture" organised church where the biggest doses of this make-you-feel-good religion are dispensed." See its web page <http://www.willowcreek.org/>.

<sup>190</sup> It is said that Saddleback Church, a Baptist congregation, is the fastest growing church in America and one of the ten largest. Its senior pastor is Rick Warren, known as the pioneer of the "Purpose-Driven Church paradigm" for church health and growth. Over 300,000 copies of his *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising your Message and Mission* (1995) have been distributed in seven languages. His paradigm is rather the old five-fold ministerial structure for a church: Worship, Evangelism, Fellowship, Discipleship, and Ministry. Yet what appeals most is his convincing statement about the future for the church, "The key issue for churches in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be church health, not church growth." Interestingly enough, almost twenty years ago, Puertorrican missiologist Orlando Costas (1981:6) had drawn attention to the same issue as he said, numerical and organic growth in themselves not necessarily mean that a church is indeed growing and healthy. "It may be" Costas adds, a "problem of ecclesial obesity, an excessive fatness that may preclude (or at least cloud) the presence of the kingdom." Saddleback Church has grown from just one family in 1980 to over 14,000 attending each weekend in 1998, while also starting 26 other churches. More in its web site <http://www.saddleback.com/>.

manifestations of the Holy Spirit,<sup>191</sup> especially when we come to deal with issues such as propheticism, restorationism and revivalism.

## **2. PROPHETISM, RESTORATIONISM AND REVIVALISM**

### **A. The Modern Prophetic Wave**

Traditionally, prophecy has been associated with teaching and preaching rather than any revelation directly received from God. For some, the apostolic exhortation to desire earnestly to prophesy (1 Corinthians 14:1) may be interpreted as a call to those who felt themselves gifted with inspired utterance, but not as an indication of seeking extraordinary visions or dreams from heaven. In a sense, Paul's regulations for the use of prophecy in the Church might have lead it to see it this way. There he points out two specific characteristics that identify the prophet and his message. Firstly, a prophet is the person who receptions the truth of God and then communicates it to the congregation. Secondly, prophets are in full control of their faculties at all times, and it is not conceivable to pretend that prophets or prophecies may get out of hand (1 Corinthians 14:32-33).

Although Paul would seem not to make a difference between the "office of prophet" and the "gift of prophecy" in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, modern prophets do. For them the "gift of prophecy" operates within the believers for the general up building, encouraging, and comforting of the church (1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:3, 4). But the "office of prophet" is an authorized and anointed ministry that covers much more. Thus the ministry of the prophet is not only a gift of the Holy Spirit, but the extension of Christ Himself as the Prophet in the church. Therefore it is designed and endowed to function in a higher realm of ministry than the Holy Spirit's gift of prophecy. Prophets then are especially anointed to perceive what is next on God's agenda for the restoration of the church. They lift their voices like

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<sup>191</sup> Not all evangelicals are convinced that this paradigm will be the best option for the Church. They say that the call for a new world view, a shift from an objective approach to God's truth, to an almost entirely experiential approach, to attempt to abandon your entire world view, particularly, your "Western rationalistic paradigm," and replace it with a more subjective view, may leave you quite vulnerable.

trumpets to alert, enlighten, and charge God's people to conquer that part of the truth to be restored at that time (Hamon 1987).

Modern prophets know that the formula "Thus Yahweh has said" does not have the same impact now that it did in ancient Israel, but they use it to gain recognition and authority before their listeners. In principle, modern prophets' message try to keep similarity of purpose with that of their predecessors, but it is clear that their emphasis is more focussed, firstly, on foretelling future events regardless the transcendence or importance of them, and, secondly, they are experts in interpreting messages they claim come from God for particular individuals, churches, cities or even countries.

These functions make modern prophets and apostles strong personalities in the pentecostal trans-empirical world. Due to the fact that prophets are seen as leaders with proven acceptance by God, it is very hard for Latin American neopentecostals —especially those who come from a traditional catholic background— not to associate the prophet's role with that of the catholic saints: mediators with God. It is not unusual then to see prophets taken as potential mediators and to be asked by the petitioner to seek God's will for his or her life. José's experience is a good example of this dynamic.<sup>192</sup> He was converted in his early twenties and began to attend a church where a prophet would bring fresh messages from God every Sunday. According to José, people respected the prophet very much because he always spoke to both the congregation and individuals, so many would go to see him after church and ask him to intercede for them.

One day I was desperate looking for a job. I had filled many applications but no results. I knew God had a job for me because this is what the pastor always says. "You need to claim for any job you have in mind, and then get it by faith", the pastor says. I simply could not understand how this worked so I went to the prophet to help me sort it out. I told him my problem and need of work, and asked him to come to church with me so he could beg God for special revelation for me. He told me that was not what prophets were for, but I didn't understand because prophets can speak directly to God, can't they? Perhaps he just didn't want to help me.

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<sup>192</sup> José, whose last name has been held at his request, was born in a Northern province of Peru, and came to Lima as a teenager. I interviewed him on 5 March 1998, in Lima.

Although José's account may be not the normative conduct of new pentecostalists, nevertheless it draws attention to the fact that some religious practices are interpreted by church-goers according to their own understanding of what religion is or at least should be. In this particular case, it seems that in the popular mind "prophet" is associated with personal charisma endorsed by miracles and private revelations, and with the idea that prophets should be always willing to mediate with God on one's behalf.

Certainly, prophet's willingness to help others is not as much of a problem. Perhaps the most difficult element has to do with the character of the prophet and the accuracy of his or her predictions. It is accepted that prophecies must be "tested" or "evaluated" by other prophets in accordance with the Scripture, but it happens that if a prophet delivers a wrong message or forecast, he or she may be excused after giving reasonable explanation and can continue carrying on their prophetic ministry.<sup>193</sup> In a sense, there is a propensity to value more the office of the prophet than the character of the individual, which is reflected, for instance, in the characteristics that according to Steve Penny identify the true modern prophet.<sup>194</sup> In Penny's list, every one of the ten features mentioned has to do with the function of the prophet but not with the person of the prophet in itself.<sup>195</sup>

1. Lays foundational truth.
2. Moves under divine direction.
3. Exalts, exhorts, corrects, confirms, adjusts and counsels his peers in ministry.
4. Ability to predict future events.
5. Ability to lay hands upon for ministry.
6. Exposes sin.

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<sup>193</sup> What they basically say is that "everyone needs to understand the biblical principles concerning prophetic words, visions and dreams happening as perceived or spoken. Both revelations of judgement and of blessings can be changed by how humankind responds." In other words, if a prophecy fails, it may be due to repentance or change of attitude in people's hearts but not because the prophet is a false prophet. Taken from the report on the prophets meeting held on 29 January 1999, in Colorado. See *Y-2-K Report* by Bill Hamon. <http://www.cimn.net/> (accessed 23 November 1999).

<sup>194</sup> Steve Penny is founder of Prophetic People International, organisation based in Australia bound to Rodney Howard-Browne and Toronto Airport church.

<sup>195</sup> Taken from *The Prophetic Wave*, on <http://www.uq.net.au/~zzproph/n396.html#wave> (accessed 12 November 1999).

7. Knows secrets of God.
8. Submits to judgment of other prophets.
9. Speaks for God to individuals, churches and nations.
10. Brings perfecting and maturing of the saints.

This weakness has led to a variety of specialisations in the prophetic arena, which somehow is meant to protect or at least not let the prophet be exposed to the scrutiny of the people. Thus, along with all this prophetic fervour, it has emerged many “ministries” with their respective jargon and concepts that for the followers of this movement seem to be amazingly familiar. Just for the sake of our understanding, here we offer a glossary with some of the most used ones that for common evangelicals may be unknown.<sup>196</sup>

- *Prophetic ministries.* They are the ways and means by which the Holy Spirit makes known the heart and mind of Christ to mankind. Prophetic ministry includes the ministry of the prophet and all prophetic people. They may move in prophetic ministry by prophesying with the gift of prophecy, or by giving personal prophecy with a prophetic presbytery, or do prophetic counseling and ministry with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, or minister in prophetic worship. But it also includes all the ministry and manifestations of the Holy Spirit and all the scriptural ways in which God can be praised: prophetic worship with singing, song of the Lord, praise-dance, mime, and sign language.
- *Prophetic word and “Rhema” word.* One is from, the other is of. In other words, it is hearing and receiving a word directly from the Lord and hearing and receiving a spoken word from a mature and fruitful prophet of the Lord.
- *Prophetic anointing.* It is releasing gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit to the people for more effective ministry.

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<sup>196</sup> For this section I consulted *School of Prophetic Ministry*, “Prophetic Definitions” on <http://www.ascensionet.org/page51.html>, and *Foundations of the Apostles & Prophets School of Ministry* on <http://www.apostlesandproph/topicspage.htm> (accessed 12 November 1999).

- *Prophetic presbytery.* It is when two or more prophets lay hands-on and prophesy over individuals at a specified time and place. Prophetic presbyteries are conducted for several reasons:
  - i) For revealing a church member's membership ministry in the Body of Christ.
  - ii) For ministering a prophetic Rhema, a Word of God, to individuals.
  - iii) For impartation and activation of divinely ordained gifts, graces and callings.
  - iv) For the revelation, clarification and confirmation of leadership ministry in the local church.
  - v) For the laying-on of hands and prophecy over those called and properly prepared to be a five-fold minister
  
- *Prophetic conference.* It is a gathering designed to teach, train and activate saints concerning the many aspects of prophetic ministry. The emphasis is to help instruct God's people concerning the times that we are living in and to help activate them into proper, pure and powerful ministry in the Body of Christ. Sometimes this includes the impartation of gifts, prophetic presbytery, anointed teaching and practical participation in training. There is helpful instruction for pastors and other five-fold ministers to enhance their functioning and relationship with the prophetic ministry.
  
- *Prophetic praying.* Basically, it is a Spirit-directed praying. Prophetic praying is prophesying with prayer phraseology by using prophetic motivation, words of knowledge, discerning spirits, words of wisdom and so forth. Intercessory prayer is much more effective when it moves into the realm of prophetic praying. Instead of prophesying, "Thus the Lord has said," you verbalize the prophetic word in prayer by saying, "Lord, we pray for this... Jesus, you see what he/she has been going through regarding... or how difficult it has been in the area of ...or overcoming..."
  
- *Prophetic worship, praise and dance.* They are biblical expressions of praise and adoration (singing, clapping, dancing, lifting of hands, bowing, etc.) that are directed to God. These high praises of God both exalt the Lord and accomplish spiritual warfare in the heavenlies.

Prophetic dance is physical movements that are inspirational and anointed by the Holy Spirit and many times accompanied by prophetic song. It may be spontaneous or choreographed. At times, it may communicate divine thoughts, ideas and purposes.

- *Prophetic song.* A song that is inspired, anointed and directed by the Holy Spirit through an individual; usually spontaneous in nature, which expresses the mind of God in musical form. It is literally prophecy through song—referred to in the New Testament as spiritual songs (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19). These songs are directed to man for the purpose of edification, exhortation and comfort or may be directed to God as the Holy Spirit helps us express our deep devotion that we could not ordinarily express by ourselves.
- *Prophetic similitude.* This is a teaching of the many types of prophetic expression which are not always vocal such as banners, the arts, mime, the dance, instruments of music, dreams, visions (not visualization).

As we may have noticed, pentecostals and charismatics like to use the term “ministry” to describe a series of offices and services that really puzzle most people. “Ministry” in traditional Christianity basically means doing good for others. Evangelicals think of an evangelistic or missionary organisation. But for neopentecostals “ministry” means something else. They either use it to describe a new experience with the Holy Spirit, be it falling down or going through a manifestation of any sort, or to explain the inner healing or spiritual renovation they receive from God. Testimonies like “I was ministered to last night” or “my friend received ministry in our prayer cell this week”, illustrate what we are saying. We will come back to this point in the next chapter.

## **B. The Prophetic and the “New Wine” for Ibero-America**

An application of the above concepts can be observed in the work of Randy MacMillan who brought David Fischer’s International Worship Symposium to Latin America. MacMillan, an American minister, is the senior pastor of *Comunidad Cristiana de Fe* (Christian Faith Community) in Cali,

Colombia, a church that he and his Colombian wife founded on Easter Sunday in 1979, which now boasts of having thirty branches in the country.<sup>197</sup>

It was in 1984 when Randy MacMillan, his wife and other five members of his church attended for the first time the International Worship Symposium led by Fischer in Pasadena, California. During the conference “God spoke prophetically, announcing that the time for his Spirit to begin to carry out the restoration of worship in his Church around the world had arrived” (Fisher 1992:4). Upon returning to Cali, MacMillan and his team felt that worship restoration was also needed in Colombia. Immediately they wrote to Fischer asking him permission to translate the symposium materials so they could use them in Cali. Fischer answered positively because he had been praying particularly for this country since the first time he had been there some years ago holding and evangelistic crusade.

The International Symposium founders and directors entrusted then the *Comunidad de Fe* with carrying out the first Latin American Worship Symposium in Cali in 1986. “It was the first time that *Comunidad de Fe* organised an international event of such importance”, recalls Castrillón, “and some leaders of the evangelical community of Cali were somewhat concerned for they believed outsiders would come to teach us how to dance which could affect the theology of our churches. It was very difficult because we had never before seen things like these, for instance, healings.” No doubt fears were justified at the time. *Comunidad de Fe* was the first Charismatic church in Cali that practised faith healing, prophecies and believed in the restoration of the five ministries.

Similar to Rony Cháves, who took his prophetic ministry of the Restoration of David’s Ark to Peru, MacMillan did also take the Worship Symposium to Lima. This was held in the tent of the Crillón Hotel in 1992. Lima was favoured over other cities for being the capital city, and therefore the head of the nation. In restoration theology, being “head of a country” is important because power and authority are concentrated there. Furthermore, as MacMillan says in the presentation of the symposium (Fischer 1992:1):

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<sup>197</sup> I am deeply indebted to pastor José Darley Castrillón for the information he provided me about the *Comunidad de Fe*. He leads the Dance Ministry in this congregation and works very closely to Randy and Marcela MacMillan. I interviewed him in his office at the church on 14 October 1999. Unless otherwise indicated I am quoting him for this section.

[The capital] is also the headquarters of the spiritual authority of a country. For this reason we are gathering to encircle the region with praise and adoration and make the powers of darkness recede as the rain of God's glory falls on our nation. The secret of the spiritual success of Zion (the mountain where God's tabernacle was located) laid on praise and worship that continually ascended to the Lord from the capital of Israel. This can be the secret for a revival in Peru as well.

MacMillan contacted Hugo Hoyos, pastor of *Iglesia Cristiana "Yo Soy"* ("I Am" Christian Church) in Lima. He introduced MacMillan to the Association of Charismatic Ministers,<sup>198</sup> which agreed to organise the symposium every two years. Unlike other countries that kept inviting the MacMillans for the following symposia, ministers in Lima decided they would rather continue with the vision themselves, which unfortunately has not happened because the 1992 symposium was the only one held in Peru.

There is no explanation why Peru did not resume the symposia. However it is clear that Peru is not alone for even Colombia has stopped doing it. The last was held in 1995. According to the organisers this is due to the fact that God Himself has told them to stop for now because He has something else in store for them. Leaders of *Comunidad de Fe* feel there is a new "prophetic wave of praise" coming up that is already taking shape. In Castrillón's words:

We believe there is a "new wine" of God for these days. We did not want the *Comunidad de Fe* to decide what we needed. We thought this was a task for every minister in Cali. And in this year [1999] the Cali Ministers Association told us: "we need another Worship Symposium, and want you to organise it. You've got our support." This will be the sixth symposium and we'll call it *New Wine for Ibero-America*, for we will present the move of praise music, the prophetic move and the restoration move, which is the new wine that God has for Ibero-America.

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<sup>198</sup> This association is known as FIPAC, which stands for *Fraternidad Internacional de Pastores Carismáticos* (International Fraternidad of Charismatic Ministers).

As it can be observed, in this movement there is a three-fold emphasis: music and dance, prophecies, and restoration of the five ministries. On these columns, as Castrillón puts it, the prophetic move rests and begins to diversify itself and develop into new forms as he explains it.

What we are witnessing now is the prophetic move in a new dimension. It is neither dance choreography nor the Moses tabernacle as established parameters, but a spiritual flow, something of which we are just beginning to hear about that has to do with the prophetic sounds of God. We are already experiencing it in our worship services here where we talk about prophetic declaration, that is to say musical instruments prophesying. This is a new practice that leads us to learn how to listen to God's voice through the instruments. There is a new move in sounds produced during the time of praise around the world. The man behind it is Rodney Howard-Browne.<sup>199</sup> Rodney is a man God is using now in the entire world. With him comes Randy Clark.<sup>200</sup> Randy began to raise up the prophetic, and Randy Clark is his disciple. Randy Clark started the Toronto Blessing and from there he went to Pensacola where another revival was started. Clark's ministry is prophetic restoration, praise and joy. A little while ago pastor MacMillan and other leaders of our church went to the Madison Square Garden to attend a Howard-Browne meetings.<sup>201</sup> There they saw this new move of the Spirit. It

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<sup>199</sup> Rodney Howard-Browne is president and founder of Revival Ministries International, whose purpose is to stir up the Church to get ready for the coming revival. In December 1987, Dr. Howard-Browne and his family left South Africa and moved to the United States to be a part of what the Lord had told him in a word of prophecy: "As America has sown missionaries over the last 200 years, I am going to raise up people from other nations to come to the United States of America." He also said He was sending a mighty revival to America. Howard-Browne has preached in North America, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, England, Scotland, Wales, Holland, Germany, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the Philippines. His revival meetings are told to be reminiscent of revivals of the past, with unusual and powerful demonstrations of the Holy Spirit in salvation, miracles, signs, and wonders. See <http://www.revival.com/graphic/bio.html>.

<sup>200</sup> Randy Clark is the senior pastor of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship of St. Louis, MO. In 1984, Randy was pastoring a small church in southern Illinois that experienced a sweeping move of the Holy Spirit, which is spoken of in the book *Power Evangelism* by John Wimber. Soon after this event, Randy was led to plant their current Church in St. Louis. On January 20, 1994, Randy and a team from his church were asked to come to the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship to have four days of meetings. The move of the Holy Spirit that began during those four days has yet to end. See <http://www.globalawakening.com/index2.html>.

<sup>201</sup> Castrillón refers to *Good News New York* that was held in the Madison Square Garden in July 1999, where Howard-Browne was the main speaker.

was like swimming in the river of the Spirit. This is the new trend for today: celestial sounds, which here are still little known. Our pastor and his wife who come from this school, have been leading the congregation to this change where only instruments are used for the time of praise. Sometimes we sing just one song for an hour or more, and you can feel the flow through instruments as it were a wave. In truth, they are revival waves that bring healing, cleansing and holiness, where words die away to give way the instruments so repentance and confessing of sins may take their place.<sup>202</sup>

Although Toronto Blessing has a strong influence in MacMillan and his team, the demonstrations that occur in their church have rather a more local tone which accords with the particular situation of Colombia. It is here when the American pattern of movements like “Restoration”, “Signs and Wonders” and “Spiritual Warfare” become indigenised to reflect the idiosyncrasy of the target culture and group where they have been performed. Let us see one case in *Comunidad de Fe* that may well illustrate other circumstances within the neopentecostal world.

It has been the norm for song leaders to lead the praise and worship with verbal songs. But now we are seeing that God is speaking through the instruments. Sometimes we have seen the very congregation leading the songs even overtaking the song leaders. We are experiencing it here as God is taking us to times of holiness, revealing things of the hearts, personal sanctification. This is very astonishing indeed, to the point that it is already 11:00 am and the pastor says, “you should stop singing to give time for the Word.” But then the drummer begins to play releasing times of freedom and spiritual warfare, and one says: What should I do now?... just submerge ourselves in the “wave” of the Spirit. I was reading Rick Warren's book where he speaks of the waves of the Spirit,<sup>203</sup> and he says we do not need to create them but just ride them. Similarly, we do not need to create the wave of praise. God is raising it up and we are to ride it. I believe the outpouring of the Spirit is more evident every time. What we see now in the Ibero-American Church is something totally different to what we were used to. It is as though God were

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<sup>202</sup> Prophetic movement followers share similar experiences in different parts of the globe. See *Another 'New Music' Prophecy*, on <http://www.lists.thinkcoach/prophetic/9806/msg00043.html>, and *'New Music' Experiences* on <http://www.lists.thinkcoach/prophetic/9806/msg00047.html>.

<sup>203</sup> See Warren's *The Purpose Driven Church*.

prophesying a new outpouring for the new millennium as we have never seen before. What we have seen until now is just a preparation for something bigger. God has been leading us to break old patterns. But He now wants to take us to a style of life that resembles a mature life in the Spirit. In former years God used liturgical dance to lead His people as a body towards a spontaneous response to the move of the Lord. Thus, when some speak of it, they basically refer to marching in symbolic attitude of war. But liturgical dance in itself is a response to the prophetic move of God. For instance, if we are praying for the ministers, the Lord may guide us to dance by using a war dance.<sup>204</sup> We had an unusual experience the day worshipers were kidnapped from *La María* Catholic Church here in Cali.<sup>204</sup> We were in the service and pastor Randy was just about to preach that day, when God led us to a moment of silence and worship. Suddenly the drummer began playing his drums like we had never heard him before. The drum sound was urging people to march. People then stood up and marched around the sanctuary. It was an electrifying moment because it was a cry, a war call, and we took banners to surround the church.<sup>205</sup> The Lord then led us to pray for pastors and ministers in Cali, and to rebuke the spirit of kidnapping and death. We were still praying when somebody came to Randy to tell him a woman was on the phone. She had been in *La María* where people had just been kidnapped. She wanted to talk to her sister who worshiped in our congregation. We had not heard anything about the kidnapping, but the Lord had put us to march, surround Cali and to declare protection for His people. Some other day we were “warring” and, crying out before the Lord but not marching. A spirit of victory and celebration was over us, with many weeping and pouring their hearts out to God. On the following day a man came to see us. He had been hired to

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<sup>204</sup> This incident took place in the parish *Santa María*, Cali, on 30 May 1999. It was 10:40 am and the mass was coming to an end, when members of *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Army) burst into the church and took 99 parishioners hostage. See “En Misa, Secuestrados 99”, Colombian newspaper *El Herald*, 31 May 1999.

<sup>205</sup> In the Spiritual Warfare movement banners play a very important role. The symbolism is taken from the people of Israel that used flags as a sign of authority and showed them off to the enemies during wartime. For Restorationists to rise banners in “spiritual places” is to lift God’s name and declare war to spiritual beings. Coloured banners have prophetic symbolism. For example, red flags are symbol of Jesus’ blood, and may be used when proclaiming that God is surrounding a country and bringing salvation on that nation. It is also used to surround a country flag to symbolise protection for this land. Blue flags symbolise celestial spheres and the Holy Spirit. A white flag means holiness. The crimson one speaks of redemption. As coloured flags have a symbolic meaning, so does the shape of them. Thus spear-head-like flags are used as symbol of destruction and defeat of the enemy.

kill our pastor. He said he had tried to come into the church yesterday but he could not and was not able to explain why. He said he had been sent, along with other ten men, to kill Randy after being hired by a satanic cult that wanted to stop pastors of doing their job in Colombia, and Cali in particular.<sup>206</sup> All the information we were giving as well as his fingerprints we passed them onto the District Attorney's office, which were analysed and proved true. The man said when he got to church on Sunday morning and tried to enter, a heavy headache almost knocked him out and he went back home. Now he was there telling us his story. He came to see us not to ask for money. He said, "This is what happened. Please, help me." Well, things like that happen all the time. We have no idea what they are or where they come from, but it is God at work and we are learning not to depend on songs' lyrics but to let us be guided by the move of the instruments and banners.

The experience of *Comunidad de Fe* and other neopentecostal communities in the region with similar accounts, speaks of concrete facts where "theology comes after" to respond to specific social and economical problems. In countries like Colombia where violence has taken civil war characteristics, pentecostal and charismatic churches alike are doing their part to revert the situation.<sup>207</sup> The way they are doing it is through "spiritual warfare" because their leaders believe that forces of evil operating in the country have their source in the spiritual realm, where they have to battle to free their nation from negative forces that are

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<sup>206</sup> Randy MacMillan is now back in the United States due to continued threats. He continues to minister his church in Cali.

<sup>207</sup> According to Harold Segura, as of September 1999, evangelical churches in Colombia had lost 35 ministers to the guerillas' hands, and other 50 had been forced to leave their congregations. Furthermore, 300 churches were closed down by the insurgency, and many more have been asked to pay up to 50% of their income as a "war tax." In H. Segura, "Colombia, sus iglesias y sus pastores", paper read at National Symposium on Pastoral Ministry (Concepción, Chile, October 1999, p4). In November 1999, an evangelical delegation met with the High Commissioner for Peace, Victor G. Ricardo, to see how to deal with the situation of violence that affects the whole country and Evangelical churches in particular. This delegation expressed concern for churches in zones of conflict, especially in the Guaviare department where guerrilla *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) ordered Evangelicals to leave the zone before 17 November. According to analysts, FARC's decision is based on the presumption that agents of paramilitary groups pretend to be Evangelicals in order to accomplish intelligence work. Besides, the FARC also believes that Evangelicals remain "passive to reality" for they do not participate in meetings held by the guerillas to examine the social problems of the region. "Evangelicals", according to the FARC, "are a hindrance to the revolution cause, but they are very skilful to exploit the people and get rich with the tithes and offerings they demand from the flock." Taken from *ALC*, "Colombia: Evangélicos y Paz", 19 November 1999.

bringing the country to ruin. But in places like Peru, where poverty and deprivation have been around for a long time, it is a “prosperity gospel” that attracts people most.

### C. Restorationism and Church Historical Revisionism

It is worth noting that restorationism is to be understood within the framework of the so-called “Prophetic Movement” that has interesting connotations for the present. Restorationists see the present great swell of interest in the realm of the prophetic —interest meaning conferences being held everywhere focusing on the blessings and dangers of the “Prophetic Movement”— as part of the plan of God to restore His church to full stature and power. They regard the prophetic heritage as God's gift for our world, as it was during the Patristic era, the Reformation and the Pentecostal movement during the twentieth century.<sup>208</sup>

For authors of this line, namely James Ryle,<sup>209</sup> director of Promise Keepers, Richard M. Riss,<sup>210</sup> professor at Asbury Theological Seminary in New Jersey, and Jim Paul,<sup>211</sup> who is part of Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship's (TACF) itinerant staff, the history of the Christian church basically comprises three large periods: The Early Church (100-450 AD), the Reformers and European Revivalists (1400-1846 AD), and the American Revivalists and the Latter Rain Prophets (1801-1948 AD). These authors argue that prophecy, and other

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<sup>208</sup> As an illustration, Jim Paul takes the case of the reformers. Paul says when we talk about the Reformation we tend to think of Calvinism, orthodoxy, and surely not prophetic utterance. However, the Reformation was more than just a return to the Scriptures. According to Paul, Martin Luther taught on the value of the prophetic in his commentary on Joel 2:28: “For what are all other gifts, however numerous they may be, in comparison with this gift, when the Spirit of God Himself, the eternal God, descends into our hearts, yea, into our bodies, and dwells in us, governs, guides, and leads us? Thus with respect to this declaration of the prophet, prophecy, visions and dreams are, in truth, one precious gift.” Paul goes on to say, “Luther was not just an armchair theologian. After wrestling with God in prayer for his sick friend Philip Melancthon, he operated under a prophetic gift and declared to him, ‘Be of good cheer, Philip, you shall not die.’ As a result, a gift of healing was released and his dying friend was revived.”

<sup>209</sup> See his book *A Dream Come True*, Orlando: Creation House, 1995

<sup>210</sup> <http://www.christianword.org/revival/rissman1.html>. “The Manifestations throughout History” (accessed 11 November 1999).

<sup>211</sup> [http://www.creativityplus.com/godspeak/mini\\_series/ms6\\_week1.html](http://www.creativityplus.com/godspeak/mini_series/ms6_week1.html). “The Prophetic in Church History” (accessed 11 November 1999).

supernatural gifts, is not some glamour gift of this modern age, but rather is like a “golden thread woven throughout the fabric of Church history.” John Wimber (1985:37, 151-174) certainly agrees with this view, and says that instances of signs and wonders at his Vineyard Christian Fellowship is not unique because “people like John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, Charles Finney, and Jonathan Edwards all had similar phenomena in their ministries.”

Traditional evangelical historians view this interpretation of church history as an example of historical revisionism, the natural fruit of revivalist expectation. Hank Hanegraaff,<sup>212</sup> president of the Christian Research Institute and fervent opponent of this tendency, affirms that this movement has gone so far as to quote prominent figures of the first Great American Revival like Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), to back up their practices and beliefs.

Indeed, Hanegraaff refers to Guy Chevreau and his book *Catch the Fire* (1994), where he reviews the history of the American Revival and draws a parallel between the revival in days of Jonathan Edwards and the phenomenon known as “The Toronto Blessing”. Chevreau, historical theologian and member of the Toronto Airport Vineyard, assembled “the various threads and components of the Airport Vineyard story and the various acts of the Holy Spirit,” says John Arnott, senior pastor of the Toronto church, in the preface of the book (p.ix). This assembling primarily consisted of discovering theological foundation and historical precedents for the extraordinary signs happening in Arnott’s church, namely wailing, laughing, shaking and falling about. However, Chevreau admits, “to my knowledge, there is no biblical parallel, or basis for such a physical manifestation of the Spirit’s power and presence on a person.” Then he asks, “Does that mean that it is necessarily ‘of the flesh’? Should they be taken aside immediately, and corrected?” (p.53). Chevreau’s rhetoric question takes him to state that God’s presence has always been regarded as philosophical and intellectual but it does not have to be like that. During times of revival, he argues, the “manifest presence of God is highly subjective. It is experimental. It is often, emotional. And, it is typically messy.” (p.68-69). Bearing all this in mind, then he cites J. Edwards —whom he regards as the foremost theological architect of the Great Awakening— to say, “throughout all of his extensive theological writings

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<sup>212</sup> See his book *Counterfeit Revival* (1997). For a brief recount of it, see *Visionary Hoaxes and Revisionary History*, <http://www.equip.org/aboutthank/> (accessed 11 November 1999).

is his passion for what he called ‘practical and vital Christianity’, religious knowledge as experience, has to be held not in the head but in the heart” (p.71).

From here Chevreau quotes Edwards’ entries in his diary where he clearly describes manifestations happening in his church, which resemble those of Toronto church and other Charismatic fellowships today. In doing so, Chevreau tries to prove that Edwards was not a secessionist —a person who thinks the spiritual gifts and demonstrations were only meant for the Early Church— but on the contrary, he firmly believed in the supernatural power and work of the Holy Spirit as he quotes Edwards saying (p99, 100):

By the providence of God, I have for some months past been much amongst those who have been the subjects of the work in question; and particularly, have been in the way of seeing and observing those extraordinary things with which many persons have been offended: such as persons’ crying out loud, shrieking, being put into great agonies of body, etc. — and have seen the manner and issue of such operations, and the fruits of them, for several months together; many of them being persons with whom I have been intimately acquainted... What the church has been used to, is not a rule... because there may be new and extraordinary works of God [that He will yet bring] in an extraordinary manner.

Undoubtedly, in such a sensitive issue we will always have two parties taking sides and expressing their own views. Supernatural phenomena would seem to have been difficult subjects throughout the history of the church, and certainly the cause of splits within catholic and protestant circles. Both in the past as now, the Christian church has tried to deal with spiritual demonstrations and it remains to be seen if modern revivalism will fade away like other movements of the past.

#### **D. Restorationism and Post-denominationalism**

The restorationist discourse is also bounded by a rather critical attitude toward historical and even pentecostal churches. This could be a theological and ecclesiological explanation to understand the appeal of this movement. For restoration leaders, historical denominations appear to have lost credibility and momentum in their evangelistic task, therefore God is raising a renewed church, with no geographical nor denominational frontiers that will fulfil His purpose.

Again, it is Deiros who makes some historical and theological remarks in this regard. In his book *Latinoamérica en Llamas* (1994), our author begins by asserting that “pentecostalisation” of Latin America owes its success in great measure to the “need of a more vibrant Christian faith and a even more expressive worship style” (p.138), which regrettably people cannot find in the liturgy and traditional rituals of historical churches. For Deiros, this explains the great deal of inter-ecclesiastical mobility that has occurred in the past decade, when thousands of believers went from one church to another seeking to meet their spiritual needs. In a sense, the “third wave” was “a reaction of many traditional and biblical evangelical churches to this actual fact” (p.139), for the more open they were to a charismatic-type of worship, the fewer members they would lose. Had traditional churches been sensitive to this shift, “third wavers” would have continued identifying themselves with Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian or Plymouth Brethren. The only change, he said, would have happened in “their services, discipleship programmes, fraternal relationships and their commitment for incarnational ministry to the world, which will be not only unique but certainly very attractive and dynamic” (p.139).

However, three years later, in his new book *Protestantismo en América Latina* (a sequence of the previous one), Deiros stated that evangelical denominationalism was in serious crisis and needed a decent burial. “Time after time it gets harder to speak of 'Baptists principles', 'Methodists ideals', or 'Pentecostal doctrines'“ he said (1997a: 114). If some kinds of differences between the different Latin American denominations still exist, they are not doctrinal but rather ideological and social. In his own words: “Most of the time, distinctions have to do with styles and forms, and not with principles and contents” (p.115). Therefore, he predicted that the “process of theological, ecclesiological, liturgical and missiological homogenisation” would deepen even more as long postdenominational churches will keep their status as the fastest growing churches in the world.

What Deiros was saying is that “denominationalism and its historical products” were terminally ill (1997b: 32). The crisis, which has been afflicting Christianity for the last three decades, has its more visible expression in the steady numerical decline of membership in historical churches all over the world. Paradoxically, the sunset of traditional denominations brings the dawn for a new “Christian paradigm” that Deiros calls “experimental church” (1997b: 33).

The experimental church is rapidly emerging in the world... [This church] is meeting in gymnasiums, schools, cinemas, parking lots, and especially in countless homes... Its scale of values is different from that of the world, so is its understanding of reality. These churches are giving up rationalistic and systematising schemes of modernity that have shaped Christianity for the last three centuries, and instead are trying to understand Jesus' mentality and that of his first followers... Observers of this phenomenon describe it and classify it in a number of ways, but they all are certain that these churches will survive the transition and characterise the 21<sup>st</sup> century Christianity. (1997b: 33-34)

Many of us will agree with Deiros' observation just by looking around and interpreting what is happening in the religious field of the region. However, it is worth asking if this phenomenon is exclusive of our time or similar phenomena have also been part of the history of Christianity in previous centuries. Attempts to overcome denominationalism can be also found in movements like the Plymouth Brethren at the beginning of the nineteenth century in England. Like modern restorationists, they wanted to recover the apostolic simplicity too, and remain with no institutional boundaries (Romanenghi 1997:40). And if we took the homogenisation of liturgy and popularity of the variety of praise and worship movements that, as Deiros well indicates, is the greater change that Latin American Evangelical Church has ever experienced, we would not have an isolated event neither. The efforts of Luther and the other reformers for renewing the liturgy in the sixteenth century were as equal or more dramatic than those taking place in the Latin American continent today. Perhaps, that particular century witnessed one of the most radical changes in the church since the fourth century, when Gregory the Great had Latin as the language to be used in mass. Due to his decree, for a thousand years people had to worship in a language and liturgy they did not understand. This situation prompted reformers to think about restoring worship in people's lives, which started first among churches in Northeast Europe and then spread to the rest of countries.

Liturgical changes and restoration of things to their original state were also goals that English puritans pursued. They simply wanted to return to the New Testament church model. The changes achieved by the reformers were not enough for puritans who still believed that Christianity was not "pure". Unfortunately, Queen Elizabeth I liked very much the type of reformed worship

and was strongly opposed to any change that puritans wanted to make. Finally, the insistence of puritans paid off because it not only brought changes to the church but introduced changes of political order too, for puritan convictions destroyed the power of monarchy and established the base of parliamentarism.

The Pietism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was another, so to speak, revolutionary movement. It strongly reacted against the rigid orthodoxy of the English and German protestantism, particularly their dangerous inclination towards the rational scholasticism that was taking churches away from the principles established in the Reformation. In those days, England was very much influenced by rationalism and deism that inevitably affected Christian churches as well. It was in these circumstances that Charles and John Wesley's Methodism was seen by many as a valid Christian alternative. By the nineteenth century, Pietism and Methodism had established themselves very strongly in the country, and even in the United States they were making their influence felt. In fact, one of the most important changes the movement brought along was the incorporation of hymns in the service. Isaac Watts and the Wesley brothers, who in addition to being musicians and composers were also preachers themselves, were instrumental for the introduction of these changes. George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards wanted the church to be renewed as well, and were doing exactly the same work in the American colonies. By the end of the eighteenth century, the revival influence had visibly affected mainline protestant churches like the Presbyterians, Congregationals and Baptists. This served as the background for the American Great Awakenings of the nineteenth century. The big tent revival meetings, with its message of personal salvation at its core and soloists singing catchy tunes, radically changed the face of American protestantism.<sup>213</sup> New missionary agencies and schools were formed and also some independent churches were born, the latter developing into respectable denominations years later.<sup>214</sup> Furthermore, people in those days openly favoured the changes occurring in the church and many opted for attending the tents of the evangelists instead of going to the cathedrals of the established churches. Is it not a similar phenomenon which we also see today?

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<sup>213</sup> Those were days of the great preachers such as Dwight Moody and Billy Sunday, and of famous soloists and music writers like Ira Sankey and Fanny J. Crosby, who is said composed more than 2,000 hymns many of which are still sung today (Niklaus 1986:49).

<sup>214</sup> The Church of the Nazarene and the Christian and Missionary Alliance were among them. Today, these two denominations have a strong presence in Latin America.

## E. Revivalism

Some observers would argue that the missionary enthusiasm seen in Latin America today (Bush 1989:15), has probably to do with a form of revival that is already taking place in the region.<sup>215</sup> A possible explanation for this enthusiasm may be found in the eschatological expectation of neopentecostal leaders, for they consider themselves as the bearers of a new, and perhaps final, spiritual awakening before history comes to an end. Carlos E. Velásquez, member of the National Council of Guatemala Verb Ministries, puts it as follows:<sup>216</sup>

The Lord Jesus said he would remain in heaven until the restoration of all things and we are witnessing this to happen during the last years. Little by little fundamental doctrines, which were lost in times known as the Dark Age, are now being restored to their original state as they were in the Early

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<sup>215</sup> Peter Wagner and its associates of the Center for World Mission in Fuller, California, have been working hard in making the world know of a revival in the continent and particularly in Argentina. For sociologist Hilario Wynarczyk (1997:8,10), the idea of an Argentine revival is firmly rooted in the minds of Pentecostals and Charismatics “where Carlos Annacondia’s ‘Asociación Evangelizadora’, ‘Visión del Futuro’ church, ‘Rey de Reyes’ church and ‘Ondas de Amor y Paz’ are found... Some marginal churches are left outside this Evangelical circle, such as ‘Dios es Amor’ (God is Love) and the ‘Iglesia Universal’ (Universal Church).” It is worth noting, however, that “important members of foreign pastoral teams and para-ecclesiastic agencies that in good measure are managed by Argentine immigrants processed the whole idea. The same people who are key actors of the process have created in the evangelical circle the idea of a church awakening in which the Holy Spirit is visiting and equipping participants for evangelising and conquering the cities and country for Christ.” In this regard, theologian José Míguez Bonino believes that all of this has been blown up out of proportion: “There is no serious reports of what is actually happening” affirms this author. “In the last research done in a sector quite limited in the south of Buenos Aires, 17% claimed to be evangelicals. But this is an impoverished area. Unfortunately, there are no national projects... If we talk about the Argentine population, I think no more than 5-7% might be evangelical... In any case, there has been in the Argentine religious map a qualitative differentiation, where the evangelical presence, as perceived by outsiders like politicians or sociologists, has become part of what social scientists call the religious field. What before was purely an accidental thing in the religious field, now it is constitutive of the Argentine religious map. For Argentina this is very new, because Argentina never had a history of any meaningful religious awakening like Uruguay or other countries did. So in this sense, we are in other stage, but I believe nothing else than that.” (Interview with Dr. Míguez on 13 May 1999, in Edinburgh, Scotland).

<sup>216</sup> *Iglesia Verbo* is one of the first Neopentecostal churches established in Guatemala. Soon it became known both in the country and the rest of the region because Efraín Ríos Montt, former President of the Republic, worshipped there, and its praise band *Restauración* pioneered through records and cassettes the Praise and Worship movement.

Church. Today, these fundamental doctrines are in place in different parts of the world.<sup>217</sup>

Certainly, the interpretation of Church history is vital here to understand revival within this context. They view Christian history as an oscillating movement of disintegration and restoration (Melton 1989:407) where they have an important role to play. In Velásquez own words:

God has put a restoration message in my heart and has commissioned me to proclaim it to the Hispanics; to tell them time has come to leave their religious traditions because God wants to use them powerfully to show others His greatness through a people that is considered part of the Third World and unable to make a world impact.<sup>218</sup>

Historian and prolific author Pablo Deiros, and a renewed minister himself, helps us to clarify the concept of the imminence of a revival in this land. He clearly warns us that “revival” is not “renovation” nor “restoration” nor “revitalisation” and not even “reform” (1997b: 22-24). “From the apostles days, human history has not registered a spiritual awakening so universal and generalised as the one that is taking place today, especially in Latin America,” says Deiros (1997a: 181). By interpreting the history of Christianity from a perspective of the “two rains” as recorded in the Old Testament (Joel 2:23), our author assures that they go beyond a physical and regional phenomenon limited to Palestine, but rather have a deep prophetic symbolism that we all should pay attention to.

In the New Testament, the “former rain” and the “latter rain” are linked to the promise of the Second Coming of Christ and the end of the present age. The passage in James [5:7-8] clearly implies that before the return of Christ “the former rain and the latter rain” will come down. Thus, the promise and announcement of these two rains has not only a prophetic meaning but a historical one too. In other words, these heavenly pouring of blessings are given within a temporary space framework, in a specific season or as registered in Joel, “in the right time” In God’s economy, there are times when He wishes to make rain over His people so they may harvest abundant crop. These refreshing times of rain are days of spiritual revival and powerful pouring of the Holy Spirit. Many serious students of contemporary Christianity believe

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<sup>217</sup> Quoted by Moisés Chávez (p.2).

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid* p.2

that the development of the Pentecostal-Charismatic renewal of our days is the fulfilment of these promises. Recently, David B. Barret has indicated that in the 1970s, Pentecostal-Charismatics made 74 million, in 1980 they were already 158 million, reaching 352 worldwide in 1989, and climbing to 464 million in 1995. According to him: “It is not surprise that their credentials of power Christianity —characterised by power intercession, power ministry, power healing, power evangelism, power confrontation— have become widely known in the world. Such signs and wonders have been scattered mostly by osmosis all over the world, and have silently filtered throughout the communist countries, rejuvenating moribund ecclesiastic institutions, flanking adverse regimens, and so forth”... The former rain has already fallen on the land. Christian church was born as a result of the Holy Spirit pouring in Pentecost... Then, during several centuries, the Church suffered the dryness of the spiritual desert and the lack of greenery and fruits... Today there are millions of believers in the world who believe the Church is beginning to receive the “latter rain”... Contemporary church is rediscovering the power of the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit are being exercised in local fellowships and believers are abandoning the rout spirit to assume the victory that belongs to them in Christ Jesus. The chains with which Satan had bounded Christians and churches are breaking, and they are putting aside defensive attitudes to fight, in the name of Jesus, the demonical bastions and the kingdom of darkness. A new life and fertility starts to be perceived in many believers and churches, as the drops of the spring rain begin wetting them. (1997:183-186).<sup>219</sup>

Needless to say, for restorationists, churches that are experiencing the “latter rain” are those whose worship service is festive and exuberant, and allow charismatic demonstrations to be performed. They can be either independent or even traditional but pentecostalised, risking to be separated from their denominational body. Among evangelicals, they are known as “renewed churches” in as much as they contrast with the historical ones often called “cold churches”.

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<sup>219</sup> See also Deiros 1994:160-171.

## F. The Need of Pneumatological and Revivalist Experiences

Since the Enlightenment, most Western intellectuals have anticipated the death of religion, but such predictions seem far from happening. At dawn of a new millennium, we should dismiss these indications as superficial because revival of conventional churches and the growth of new religions are in the raise. As Stark and Bainbridge (1985:1) put it, “the vision of a religionless future is but illusion”.

For Evangelical this is a turning point. “Evangelical piety has in fact outlived the dissolution of modernity”, claims Thomas Oden, and says: “Against all predictions of the secularisers, we are still around and vitally flourishing” (1995:22). Be they the pentecostalisation of historical churches or the emergence of “experimental churches”, it cannot be denied that this new spirituality holds much allure for a society facing widespread economic hardship, political uncertainty and family breakdown.

Revival, generally understood as an experience of collective religious overflow produced by the Holy Spirit, is considered by social scientists as a phenomenon “that has the particularity of out breaking in popular and low-middle sectors, but not in middle-high and high strata of society” (Wynarczyk 1997:11). Since revival is associated with pneumatological demonstrations of power, power meaning healing, casting out of evil spirits from people's bodies and places, miraculous conversions and other similar manifestations, researchers find that it is easy to establish a link between the affiliation to this type of religiosity in particular, and its followers' social background. At least, this has been shown in the Argentine case where Wynarczyk claims that the well-publicised revival is neither taking place in all Christian churches nor should be considered as a spiritual visitation to all social classes alike. Wynarczyk wonders and questions the so called revival “when its impact is limited to the poorest and most marginalized sectors, while the structural conditions of the whole society remains unchanged, and has not touched public corruption, crime and hunger.”

According to Fuenzalida (1995:49), there are three factors that can explain the spiritual quest of our days. Firstly, the loss of the adscriptive conditions in religious affiliation, that is to say the religion or belief that is inherited from parents to children. Post-modern society, says the author, is experiencing the passage from an adscriptive community to a semi-adscriptive one, where

deliverance religion is offered to those who do not share the inherited faith. "As a reaction to this, prophetic revival intrudes claiming the return to ancient practices, so does millennialism announcing the renovation of old contracts and the messianic process that generates new consensus" (p57). Since adscription is opened to all, the entry to the new religion is not only possible but also desirable, making it a missionary force for its followers feel their duty to share this faith with others. Secondly, the failure of the Western cultural paradigm, where modernity with all its technological advances did not satisfy the needs and expectations of human soul. And thirdly, the simultaneous concurrence of contradictory beliefs that operate in a same market, promising the way out for current problems at individual and community levels. This religious competition appeals more to the conscience of each person and subtly discourages ecclesiastical loyalty. This would explain the non-excluding affiliation of some churches, the interdenominational and inter-confessional mobilisation, and even the sincretic religiosity seen in Brazil and other places, where a person can go worship in a pentecostal Sunday morning service, and participate of an Umbanda session in the evening.

Theologians have another explanation for this phenomenon. Harvey Cox says if we ask pentecostals why they grow and expand so rapidly, they would say because the Spirit is in it (1996:81). This may be right and so far they have succeeded because they have spoken "to the spiritual emptiness of our time by reaching beyond the levels of creed and ceremony into the core of human religiousness, into what might be called 'primal spirituality', that largely unprocessed nucleus of the psyche in which the unending struggle for a sense of purpose and significance goes on," affirms Cox.<sup>220</sup> Certainly, the appearance of the wide variety of pentecostal-charismatic groups in the region proves the validity of this proposal. The fact that many have described pentecostals as "restorationists" may also hold the key for understanding the neopentecostal movement. "My own conviction", says Cox, "is that pentecostals have touched so many people because they have indeed restored something." Needless to say, the new movements are helping countless people to recover their self-esteem, piety and hope that are rooted in their primal spirituality. For Latin Americans, spirituality is part of their daily experience that transcends the liturgical space in the church, therefore everything would seem to indicate that restorationism will continue harvesting more fruits in the years to come.

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<sup>220</sup> See also Shaull, "La iglesia, crisis y nuevas perspectivas" (1997:33).

Latin American theologians are concerned with the course this movement will take. Justifiably, a revival that only affects the individual but not his or her social environment, would simply be an ethereal and mystical religious experience with no impact for the continent. In this regard, Brazilian Lutheran Ivoni Richter Reimer,<sup>221</sup> speaking on this spiritual awakening in the region points out:

Revival should not only be understood as a spiritual transformation but also as a means of change in personal, social and political relationships. Latin America needs a revival of justice and of feelings that procure a dignified and respectful living among people... Spirituality shows itself in faith in God and serving as testimony on how God works in us through Jesus Christ. Nowadays, people talk too much about which church is more spiritual and which one is not. Those who believe they are more spiritual, outline models based on fame, allure, success and mass managing. Naturally, they are getting many followers. However, true spirituality is to be found in each one of us, as part of God's project seeking a society with moral values, solidarity, love, respect and co-operation, for spirituality implies a change of life and structures.

Another Brazilian theologian had similar words when he addressed the Conference for Argentine Pastors in 1992. Caio Fabio d'Araújo Filho coined then the phrase “revival the Latin American way,” meaning a sterile religiousness “with no real sense of God's presence.”<sup>222</sup> Here, d'Araújo Filho spells out some characteristics that define this kind of revival:

- It is emotional, for it only seeks the “slain in the Spirit” with no reference to a life modelled in Christ..
- It likes to manipulate the power of God —”anointing”— but it does not accept to submit itself to the same God in whose name they perform signs and wonders.

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<sup>221</sup> Round table on “Avivamiento y Carismatismo en América Latina”, held in Lima on 8 September 1999. See also “Biblista brasileña analiza avivamiento en las iglesias”, *ACL* Lima, 9 September 1999.

<sup>222</sup> Caio Fabio d'Araújo Filho is a Presbyterian minister and former president of the Brazilian Evangelical Association. This conference was delivered in the *Encuentro Nacional de Pastores Argentinos* (9-12 October 1992). It was published in *Apuntes Pastorales* under the title “El avivamiento actual”, 1994, p.27-32.

- It shakes with extraordinary miracles, but it does not shake with the same excitement when it comes to practice justice and truth.
- It talks about tearing down pagan idols of the society, but it is inoperative when dealing with the self-glorified ego of mega-churches leaders.
- It teaches that any business is legal as long as it will help to preach the gospel.
- It teaches Christians to celebrate material prosperity with sarcasm, irony and ungodliness in relationship to the misery of the dispossessed of society for whom they feel no pity.
- It is making the Latin American church grow, but is not changing the continent.

To illustrate his point, which totally contrasts that of a supposed conversion of Latin America to protestantism, d'Araújo Filho adds:

Ten years ago there were ten million evangelicals in Brazil. Now, according to the last census, we are 35 million... Ten years ago we represented 6% of the population. Ten years after we are 24%... If the church continues growing to this pace, we will certainly be majority in the next decade... What afflicts me deeply in my country is that when I see the growth of the church and I compare it to the situation of the nation; and more yet, when I see the type of contribution that this growing church is making to the country, my heart profoundly saddens. If we continued growing as we are, we will be majority, but majority in a country of corrupts, majority in a country of immorality, majority in a country sold to prostitution, majority that is not able to make any difference, majority that does not experience in itself any difference. Some time ago I heard that 45% of children who live in the streets or are placed in Brazilian government houses, come from evangelical families. Do you believe in revival? I believe in revival, but I do not want a revival that leave 45% of children in the streets. Do you believe in visions? I believe in visions and revelations and prophecy, but I do not want a revival with heavenly visions, but with no eyes to see the crude reality of life.

Apparently, the difference between the reviving presence of the Spirit (revival) and the voice of the Spirit (prophecy) that revivalists like to stress, rudely

confronts itself with serious questions about down-to-earth Christianity that d'Araujo Filho is concerned about. To what extent this revival "the Latin American way" reveals a lack of integrity in the very core of holiness among renewed churches? Revivalists say, in revival God is not concerned about filling empty churches (although this automatically takes place). He is concerned about filling empty hearts. Yet, will these empty hearts be filled just with a quick-fix kind of experience where emotions and easy promises prevail over theology or even common sense? Is filling empty churches an excuse for not getting involved in more earthy affairs that have to do with a macro vision of the world? Surely revival has its place in church and people's lives, but it would seem that it will need to transcend the ethereal spheres that neopentecostalism seems to be confined. Leonard Ravenhill (1959), a revivalist himself, speaking of the religious fervour in his days wrote: "Many present-day 'Christians' are hazy in their convictions, lazy in their commitments, and crazy if they think God will endure this torpor much longer." Then he added, "This is a day of healthy unbelief and of sick faith... One can ride the current charismatic circuit today without any Biblical integrity or theological allegiance... How little it takes to make us laugh. How much it takes to make us weep".<sup>223</sup> Ravenhill's statement would not characterize the whole spectrum of neopentecostal churches today, but it certainly draws attention to a potential passiveness that its leaders may want to prevent.

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<sup>223</sup> From *The Lukewarm Church*, <http://www.lists.thinkcoach.com/prophetic/9806/msg00001.html> (accessed 2 November 1999).

## CHAPTER 7

### NEOPENTECOSTAL WORSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF THE “SPIRITUAL WARFARE”

One of the most innovative aspects of the neopentecostal movement is the way in which its followers have developed their *culto* (worship service)<sup>224</sup> and missionary structure. For them, both elements go together. They meet in their churches to celebrate and worship God, and then go out to spread their conversion discourse. They are not averse to using advertising strategies and marketing techniques to ensure the success of their enterprise.

The neopentecostal *culto* resembles to some degree the classic pentecostal one, but also incorporates new components in order to make it even more emotional. These appear to be highly appreciated by its listeners. Chart 9 below stresses some of the differences between these two liturgical practices. Yet for illustrative purposes I am including a column for the traditional protestant worship service to see the changes the evangelical *culto* has experienced in the last years.

Since the *culto* is the most visible expression of neopentecostal collective worship, I intend to analyse it in order to show and understand the dynamic that takes place when leaders and worshipers meet together. For this purpose I will follow the scheme used by Margaret Paloma from the University of Akron, Ohio, who studied the “Toronto Blessing” movement from a liturgical standpoint.<sup>225</sup> My interest is to provide some portrait of the components involved in the neopentecostal *culto*, which

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<sup>224</sup> The English translation “worship service” does not convey the whole meaning of *culto*. For evangelicals *culto* means worship, prayer meetings, Bible studies and any other type of gathering where religious activities and fellowship take place. This explains why a *culto* can be carried out not only in the church, but at homes, cinemas, stadiums and in the open air too.

<sup>225</sup> M. Paloma, *Charisma and Institutions: A Sociological Account of the ‘Toronto Blessing’* (1999).

**DIFFERENCES IN LITURGICAL PRACTICES**  
[Chart 9]

<b>TRADITIONAL EVANGELICALS</b>	<b>CLASSIC PENTECOSTALS</b>	<b>NEOPENTECOSTALS</b>
Conventional prayers	Faith prayers	War prayers
	Testimony of personal conversion	Testimony of healing and economic prosperity
Hymns	Contemporary songs and hymns	Contemporary well prepared music with instrumental and vocal bands
Sitting and standing occasionally	Clapping and hands raising	Clapping, hands raising and liturgical dance
	“Baptised in the Spirit” expressed with seizures and glossolalia	“Slain in the Spirit” evidenced by falling backward, laughing or imitating animal’s groans
Expository preaching	Narrative and allegoric preaching	Admonitory preaching urging to seek God’s blessings
Tithes and offerings for the local church and denomination	Offerings to support the local pastor and church programmes	Tithes and donations to support the different ministries pastors and involved with (radio, TV, publications and so forth)
Religious symbols: cross and Bible	Cross, Bible and pulpit	Cross, Bible, banners, blessed objects, etc.

serve for both to celebrate God and get spiritually motivated to face the forces of evil in what they call “spiritual warfare”.

## 1. THE *CULTO* AND THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD

The acts of worship which express the attitudes of believers in relation to God, the object of their adoration, are central to organised life of the new fellowships. The underlying principle of the worship meeting is that the Holy Spirit will pour His blessings upon them in explicit supernatural manifestations. The fact that people come to the *culto* expecting God to work in a variety of ways, makes the neopentecostal service different from most traditional evangelical ones where attendees would not expect anything like this to happen. Surprise is the key word here, for this is what makes their *culto* so unpredictable and full of expectations at the same time. As we said before, this may hold the key that would explain why too many people are attracted to these churches.

Generally speaking, the *culto* involves three main actors whose participation is key to understanding not only the evolution of the evangelical *culto* through the years, but also the way this activity might look like in the years to come. These players are: the song leader, the preacher and the prayer warriors.

### A. The Song Leader

Music plays an important role in the neopentecostal *culto*, and it is the song leader with the praise band who call people to worship. A wide variety of tunes and rhythms are used, where the soft ones are meant to set the mood for praising the Lord for a period in which many claim the presence of God is manifest. Jeremy Sinnott, minister of music of a large congregation in Canada, defines worship as “a personal and intimate meeting with God in which we praise, magnify and glorify Him for His Person and His actions. It is the act of freely giving love to God. We meet God and

He meets us.”<sup>226</sup> Worship then is only for God’s glory and all must be evaluated in light of that purpose.

Most would agree that there is no formula that can be applied to every setting. However, there is a basic programme structure that if followed can ensure the smooth flow of the *culto*. For example, the *Camino de Vida* church in Lima opens the service with several upbeat songs that proclaim what God has done or is doing among His people.<sup>227</sup> Believers sing freely, raising their hands and clapping along the music. Then begins the time of bringing the songs down, moving toward quiet love songs to Jesus that allow worshipers to come into a moment of intimacy with God. This precedes the preacher who finds a very motivated audience eager to listen the message he is about to bring. At the end, musicians also play during the altar call. Songs chosen for this period are soft and quiet, for they know the Spirit will minister to many who remain sitting on their chairs after the sermon has finished.

Although the above will describe what usually happens in most independent churches, there are other groups that prefer to have a kind of television type of service due to the influence of the electronic church. Social communicator Rolando Pérez-Vela (1996:29) rightly points out that in this type of liturgy there is a conscious appropriation of the show business world that it hardly can be ignored. In his words:

From the moment you enter a church, particularly in those of the upper and middle classes, the physical make-up of the place shows a significant adaptation of television's aesthetic structure. In fact, many churches have found that cinemas in Latin America are quite suited for holding church services. In the church itself, the decor, the placing of electronic equipment, the equalising sound —controlled from an electronic room— the use of electronic musical instruments, are not only direct adaptations of

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<sup>226</sup> Quoted by M. Paloma, *Ibid* p 6.

<sup>227</sup> I visited *Camino de Vida* on 8 March 1998. It is from its third Sunday morning service at 11:30 am that I gathered this information. Pastor Aguayo performed as a song leader.

media technology but of the symbolic codes of mass culture as well. Even poor churches have incorporated elements of mass culture. Their sound equipment and musical instruments may be less sophisticated, but they are still there. In addition, one finds that the brightly coloured banners, the way the pastor leads the congregation, the service, and his carefully rehearsed movements speak of a staged ritual which modifies the traditional ceremony associated with the church building. The solemn services, the ceremonial or circumspect preachers, have been replaced by the pastor-entertainer, by the high-pitched voice, by the applause, and by the extremely rhythmic chanting.

Pérez-Vela's observations seems to touch what has become the brand-name of neopentecostal liturgy: "show-biz" *culto* having the song leader as "master of ceremony". In a programme like this almost anything can go. That is why many critics would say that in this type of service even the testimonies are manipulated, for the organisers will always favour the most dramatic, emotional and appealing ones in order to have the audience shocked and convinced they should not leave the hall without being prayed for. Naturally, cinemas lend themselves better than old church buildings to hold big gatherings. Neopentecostal leaders know it and that would explain their fascination with buying or renting cinemas,<sup>228</sup> where their song leaders have to be very good at handling the masses.

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<sup>228</sup> In the specific case of Lima, this trend started at the beginning of 1980 when *God's House Heaven's Door* church bought the *28 de Julio* cinema. Soon afterwards the American preacher Jimmy Swaggart purchased the *Teatro Azul* for the Assemblies of God. In the last years some charismatic churches have been using the *San Antonio, Pacific, Colina* and *Western* cinemas, which are located in the middle-class sector of Miraflores and Lince respectively. Similarly, groups of "divine cure", such as the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG), have also shown interest in cinemas as their presence in the capital city proves it. However, behind this interest for cinemas there is another plan that new pentecostals are carrying out silently. The UCKG, for example, is purchasing X-rated cinemas as a way to terminate pornography and other social ills like it. This church just bought the famous theatre *La Scala* of Paris, one of the oldest and most celebrated music halls of the city that in the last ten years had been functioning as one of the largest X-rated cinemas there (taken from "Concern for Paris theatre after sect moves in". *The Scotsman*, 4 February 2000, p17). Cleansing the city morally is another expression of its commitment with the metropolis they operate in.

## B. The Preacher

The preacher or speaker is the pivotal actor in neopentecostal *cultos*. He or she is expected to address a biblical topic for anywhere from 30 to 40 minutes. In general, these preachers tend to be social communicators in the sense that they use Scripture to uplift people's hearts, rather than old-time preachers who would deliver solid theological treatises every Sunday. In part this is due to the constituency of the new churches whose members highly appreciate light discourses, but it is also because of the lack of formal theological training most of these pastors have.

My experience visiting the *Agua Viva* church in Lima will illustrate this point.<sup>229</sup> The preacher talked about Faith, using Matthew 21:18-22. He began by asking: How to reach God's promises? In a very informal and colloquial style, the preacher said that there are 7,000 promises in the Bible for us. "The Devil does not want us to receive them, but if we believe, then they are ours." He said that faith is a divine attribute, for God has faith Himself. Faith is not for the mind but for the heart, and it is not a "sixth sense" either. Then he made a distinction between what "faith" is and what "believing" is. To illustrate his point he told that the day he went for his university admission test, he had not studied at all but he got an "A", (here people gave him a round of applause). "This is faith, for I knew I would pass that exam anyway", he added. Then he went to state that diseases and problems are from Satan, our enemy, and that we should stop him with the shield of faith in the promises of God. "Poverty is located between our ears: in our head", he says. "If you say: 'I'm poor', then you have already made yourself poor for all your life. But if you are in Christ, then you are not poor." With very simple illustrations, the preacher continued reminding the congregation: "Instead of saying 'I'm a loser', repeat God's promises for you." After a short prayer he ended his sermon and invited people to come forward to the altar. More than thirty people responded, many of them with tears rolling down their face.

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<sup>229</sup> I attended the 9:30 am second Sunday service at *Agua Viva* on 8 March 1998.

My first reaction was of unbelief especially given the poor theological quality of his presentation. Yet I had to accept that it is this type of preaching what make people move.

In neopentecostal circles preachers do not only deliver the Word but they also perform signs and wonders as part of their role as pastors and leaders. Believers expect the preachers to have the anointing and power of God to heal the sick and command the evil spirits to leave. Some are very careful with this area because they do not want to endorse every manifestation as the work of God. But unfortunately many other leaders have simply raised so many expectations and then have failed to deliver what they promised. People have become disillusioned and it has brought shame to the church.

### **C. The “Prayer Warriors”**

The “prayer warriors” are those who support the different teams of the church praying constantly for them. These are the people who regularly meet at homes or church to intercede for their leaders and the programmes the church runs. They pray for people who come forward for prayer, and are alert during the service of any disturbance that may come from evil spirits. If anything like this happened, they would quickly gather together to rebuke the spirits and make sure the place is clean of demonic influence, ensuring the *culto* will continue with no disturbances.

These persons also get involved with the time of “ministry” that usually takes place at the end of the service. Here they counsel those in crisis; help the needy; pray for the heartbroken; and give the first instructions to those who want to follow the new faith. In churches where supernatural manifestations happen, they would be also be the “attendants” or “catchers” of those individuals who may get “slain in the Spirit”. In this practice, people fall to the floor under the action of the Holy Spirit. Since there is the potential for serious injury, the “catcher” normally would stand behind

the person being prayed for so he or she does not land on top of one another or on bare floor. The intent of the “catcher” is not to ritualise the fall but rather to balance the safety factor with allowing the Spirit to move freely, so that the individual may have a genuine experience with Him.

The song leader, the preacher and the prayer warriors thus work together to maintain a common goal, which is to have any person blessed and touched by God during the worship service.

## 2. “SPIRITUAL WARFARE”

A revival by the neopentecostals of the doctrine of the unseen called “spiritual warfare” is challenging traditional strategies for world missions and evangelisation.<sup>230</sup> It appears to have been popularised by Frank Peretti’s novels *This Present Darkness* (1986) and *Piercing the Darkness* (1989), but soon found echo in well-known popular evangelical writers,<sup>231</sup> and began to be spread out through the AD2000 and Beyond Movement.<sup>232</sup> Besides the new vocabulary that this revived theology brings with it,<sup>233</sup> there are three key concepts which need to be analysed: “power encounter”, “strategic level spiritual warfare”, and “spiritual mapping”.

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<sup>230</sup> Spiritual warfare was a characteristic of the 1905 Welsh revival Movement, and was set out by its leaders Jessie Penn-Lewis and Evan Roberts in *War on the Saints* (Erith: Diasozo Trust, 1987). For the concept of “pleading the blood” see Gwen R. Shaw *The power of the precious Blood Engeltal*, End-time Handmaidens Inc. 1978.

<sup>231</sup> Among others, Peter Wagner, “Territorial Spirits” (1990), *Engaging the Enemy* (1991), *Warfare Prayer* (1992); Héctor Torres, *Derribando fortalezas* (1993).

<sup>232</sup> The AD2000 & Beyond Movement is a global, informal network of Christian missionary agencies, denominations, churches and individuals committed to world evangelism. See [www.ad2000.org/](http://www.ad2000.org/). For *AD2000* and its connections with the Peruvian church in particular, see *Cooperación 2000 y la Iglesia Evangélica en el Perú*. CEMAA (1995).

<sup>233</sup> i.e. “Power encounter”, “spiritual warfare”, “territorial spirits”, “spiritual cartography”, “walking prayer”, “power evangelism”, “binding the strongman” and so on. This vocabulary will be clarified in this chapter.

The basic premise is that the world is ruled basically by two forces, good and evil,<sup>234</sup> Christians have understood that the kingdom of darkness has always been fighting the kingdom of God in order to have control of the souls of mankind and ultimately of the whole creation. On the one hand, according to the Christian view, God created the universe and therefore He reigns over everything. On the other hand, Satan, the fallen angel and enemy of God, has been trying to increase his supremacy on earth, watching that his kingdom of depravity, lies and death will remain firm and strong.

In evangelical circles, evangelistic crusades with their bold message of repentance and return to Jesus Christ, have been precisely the kind of instrument meant to defeat the forces of evil and expand God's kingdom.<sup>235</sup> Yet, neopentecostals would seem to regard these efforts as timid attempts to overcome the enemy hosts. For them, spiritual warfare is an offensive strategy that seeks not only to deprive Satan's hold on people's lives, but also to reclaim properties, TV and radio stations, cities and even countries that Satan has stolen from God. As the kingdom of evil is threatened by the kingdom of God, the former counter-attacks by unleashing a violent demoniacal action against the Church and individuals who are committed to this task. This is often perceived by neopentecostals as a consequence of spiritual warfare, in which the Christian is subject to the relentless attack of demonic agents.

#### **A. Power encounter: Satan's power versus God's power**

For the spectrum of evangelicals who like biblical literalism, the spiritual warfare teaching appears to have no grounds in the Scriptures because the term "spiritual warfare" as such is not mentioned there. Neopentecostal leaders argue that although the term itself is not found in the Bible, the concept was clearly taught by Jesus and particularly by the apostle Paul (i.e. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-

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<sup>234</sup> Augustine's classic work *The City of God* (New York: Hafner Pub. Co., 1948), is a good example of this dualism.

<sup>235</sup> Billy Graham's crusades became very well known around the world. In turn, Luis Palau and *Hermano Pablo* are to Latin American what Graham is for the USA.

12). From their perspective, spiritual warfare should be seen as a pro-active approach to Christian faith since Christians must actively resist the devil when his hosts harass them.

We actively engage the enemy when people are in spiritual bondage. We utilize prayer as a weapon to penetrate strongholds that cannot be reached in any other way. Spiritual warfare is the putting aside of passive attitudes towards faith which keep us from commitment and cause us to pursue only those things that will benefit us. Instead of seeking our own agenda, we submit our will to God and accept the sacrifices He calls us to make.<sup>236</sup>

For this sector of the Church there is not a single area in Christian work that cannot be turned into a battleground by the enemy. In the neopentecostal view, Christians very often lack the discernment to understand if some kind of spiritual resistance is in place. "It has become common to attribute a natural or human explanation to most problems and leave it at that," is what they say. The one who has a spiritual warfare perspective will be inclined to test the situation to ascertain whether or not there is something more than natural influences involved.

A spiritual warrior has an alertness to the activity of the enemy. This alertness is by no means fear or paranoia. He does not go around crediting Satan and his hosts for everything wrong under the sun. The Apostle Paul was a good example of a spiritual warrior. He didn't go out of his way to look for demonic activity, but when he encountered it, he quickly recognized it and then he confronted it with spiritual authority victoriously. A spiritual warrior knows he must bring discipline to his thought life and to his actions. If he allows these areas to be compromised, he will not be affective in resisting the enemy. He takes sin very seriously, because he knows that sin always gives the adversary an advantage. He must always be on guard against comparing himself with others and being entrapped by the subtlety of religious pride. The true warrior knows that he can do nothing

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<sup>236</sup> Taken from *Spiritual Warfare Ministries*, "What Is Spiritual Warfare?". <http://www.sw-mins.org/strat1.html> (consulted 30 November 1999).

that is affective in his own strength. His strength, authority, wisdom and discernment are dependent upon his close walk with his Lord.<sup>237</sup>

From a western secular world-viewpoint, this way of understanding the spiritual world is often classed as mere superstition. Traditionally, western Christians as a whole have either completely disregarded the devil and his hosts, or condescendingly relegated their influence off to more "primitive" cultures and societies that are without the advantages of "modern" civilization. It is inconceivable to them that the devil can co-exist with cars, microwave ovens and computers. The mindset of that modern world does not allow for dread, fear of inexplicable things like demon-possession. They belong to a different age, a pre-scientific time, when people had no rational explanation for the phenomena around them. When things of the spiritual realm are encountered, there is often an attempt to account for them in terms of the belief system of that person or people's group. Post-modernity has completely changed that.

Some conservative Christian writers plainly deny the concept of spiritual warfare as taught by neopentecostals. Stephen Sizer says, for example, that "there are real, evil spiritual beings arrayed against God and His Church... but the battle is not some kind of dualistic cosmic struggle between good and evil. Such an understanding has more in common with pagan mysticism and films such a 'Star Wars', than any genuine spiritual reality described in Scripture."<sup>238</sup> Lesslie Newbigin (1989:200) re-defines the words demons, principalities and powers. His statement about ignoring this New Testament language because it belonged "to a thought-world which we have grown out of", may infuriate neopentecostals, but to Newbigin, "demons and principalities" refer to human rulers and authorities that we would recognise as magistrates, priests and elders. He argues that the powers and authorities do not exist

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<sup>237</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>238</sup> Stephen Sizer's on-line book, *The "Toronto Blessing"*, Chapter 6: "Spiritual Warfare" and David Yonggi Cho, p 6.

apart from the human agencies in which they are embodied. By asserting this, Newbigin is talking about a “power” that is exercised by some people but it is not a living entity with purpose of its own.

However, in recent years books like *Taking our Cities for God* by John Dawson,<sup>239</sup> and *Engaging the Enemy* edited by Peter Wagner,<sup>240</sup> have begun to present another model to the Western Church of a different reality of the spiritual world. Interestingly, this task would seem not too difficult to achieve now as it might have been one or two decades ago. Thanks to the increasing demand on knowing and experiencing the metaphysical world today, more people are becoming aware of it. Post-modernity and eastern philosophies are in part responsible for this change as was referred to in Chapter Two. But we should also give Pentecostalism credit since, after almost a hundred years of existence, its discourse about the supernatural is beginning to echo in all social strata of the most diverse cities of the planet. Today, industrialised and secularised societies are accepting the influence of spiritual powers whose activities may even affect people’s lives.<sup>241</sup>

The Argentinian sociologist Hilario Wynarczyk asserts that the emphasis on the spiritual realm and preachers who are portrayed with a special anointed power, might indicate a return to the functions of the shaman of ancestral cultures where the spiritual leader was endowed with knowledge and discernment. The shaman was the

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<sup>239</sup> *Taking Our Cities For God: How To Break Spiritual Strongholds* (1989).

<sup>240</sup> *Engaging the Enemy: How to Fight and Defeat Territorial Spirits* (1991).

<sup>241</sup> In Great Britain people began to acquire voodoo dolls that, according to their distributors, drivers could use to curse those who would improperly drive their vehicles on the route. "Voodoo Car Doll Blasted by Cops", in *Daily Record* newspaper (17th October 1977, p5). Free *HotLine* magazine (issue 7, Summer 1999), distributed to the passenger of British Virgin Railway Company, included a note on witchcraft in the workplace by using voodoo dolls. "To make black magic," the article says, "you should procure some personal effects from your victim such as hair or his/her mug, and put them with the doll. Then you make a wish." These wishes, that come with the doll-kit, may vary from "getting recognition for your hard work" to "wishing someone going bald." The interesting thing in this article is that editors warn readers not to use the doll for violence, because you "should not to forget you are dealing with high powers,". (p21)

owner of power and authority, capable of recognizing the spirits and defeating them.<sup>242</sup> This individual distances himself from the prophet in the sense that he neither claims to be a divine messenger nor being the receptacle of particular oracles, yet exercises his or her influence on the group thanks to personal charisma, which is backed up by ability in negotiating with and expelling evil spirits that torment a person. Thus, the "deliverance ministry" does not collide with other agents of the religious market because it particularly helps a clientele that is nourished by gestures and liberating practices rather than by discourses.

The "rebuking" and "casting down" of these spiritual beings has interesting nuances that would seem to be linked to beliefs and attitudes of popular religiosity. For some observers this practice could easily be a re-elaboration and recovery of pre-Columbian religious tradition. For example, to clap strongly during the liberating process, to stamp the floor or even shout aloud, could resemble ancient rituals to scare spirits away. Spiritual warfare leaders make use of all these resources and they have now become part of neopentecostal services. Two cases will illustrate this point.

The *Centro Cristiano de Amor y Fe* church in Cali, Colombia,<sup>243</sup> is located in sector-4 of the city,<sup>244</sup> in the facilities where J. S. Arango department store used to operate before. This property has now been converted into the largest church of Cali. I visited this church on Wednesday, the prayer-service day for traditional evangelical churches but not for this congregation. Services here are held on a daily basis and are worship celebrations, occasions to spread the gospel in the city. More than 1,000 people packed the installations and gathered in a festive atmosphere. A huge sign hanging from the front wall is perhaps what draws most attention: "*Jesucristo es*

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<sup>242</sup> "La Guerra Espiritual y sus conexiones con creencias religiosas populares", in *ALC*, 10 July 1999.

<sup>243</sup> I attended the fourth Wednesday service on 13 October 1999.

<sup>244</sup> Sector-6 is the top categorisation where the most expensive houses are built.

*Señor. Colombia es una nación sometida a Dios para siempre en el nombre de nuestro Señor Jesucristo*" (Jesus Christ is Lord. Colombia is a nation submitted forever to God in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ). For many, this is more than a faith statement. It is a statement of war and drug cartels know it.<sup>245</sup> In neopentecostal-charismatic communities declarations like this have a positive effect on followers, for these are asserting a factual position to the enemy hosts.

The service began with praise songs. People stood up for more than an hour, singing, raising hands and dancing. The song leader then led believers to periods of prayer where all joined him praying out aloud in their own way, in old-time Pentecostal fashion. At a given moment, he started rebuking demons of poverty, violence, disease and the like. His prayer became more dramatic as he would hit his left hand palm with his right fist. This gesture was immediately imitated with precision and vehemence by everyone, producing a uniform noise in the room. Subsequently, he stopped and by gesticulating with a firm arm, he said: "Satan, listen to me. We command you: Out! Out! Out!" Once more, the whole congregation did the same as if were a big choir, drawing the prayer to an end.

To the unfamiliar observer, this performance would seem to have been rehearsed beforehand by the way in which the congregation followed its leader in a natural and synchronised manner. But no rehearsal has taken place previously. This is the result of a steady practice carried out in each service, where expelling demons has become a ritual component of the service and now has been learnt by the faithful. In this symbiotic relationship between preacher and congregation, people feel good because they are also protagonists of the service and not only viewers.

The second case comes from *Yo Soy* (I Am) church in Lima, Peru.<sup>246</sup> This congregation meets in a rented premises that used to be a department store. The

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<sup>245</sup> The senior pastor of this congregation had to flee the country due to death threats.

<sup>246</sup> I attended its Sunday morning service on 24 October 1999.

worship hall has three levels: a first floor that easily seats more than a thousand persons, and where the stage is located. A multipurpose second floor that is used for Sunday school classes, which also serves to sit more people during the service. And the third level that is for the crèche. From all these three levels people can view the platform and participate of the service.

Several signs hanging around the walls catch the visitor's attention. One of them reads: "Year of the Conquest. July 1999 - July 2000. The Twelve Principle. We are 5,000".<sup>247</sup> Eight other small banners show the different Hebrew names for God: El-Shaddai, Elohim and so forth. About 1,300 persons turned out for this particular worship service. By looking at people's appearance, it could be said that *Yo Soy* draws its membership from sectors C and D of the Peruvian socio-economic strata,<sup>248</sup> most being under thirty-five years of age.

The service began at 10:00 am. After singing for over an hour, pastor Juana de Hoyos, senior pastor Hugo Hoyos' wife, came up to the stage to greet worshipers and asked them to greet each other. She then gave a brief speech on the "precious time", meaning the collection of offerings and tithes.

The Bible says that tithes belong to the Lord. Tithes are not ours. The Lord only requests the tenth part of my income and gives me the other 90% to live. Out of this 90%, you are to take your weekly offerings. I give God the very best I've got. When you give you're blessed, that's the way to get the blessing. In doing so, God will bless your finances, house, family, etc. He will never request more than you can give. Let's not rob God. Robbing God will draw a curse upon you, that's why there is so much misery around us. Let's now rebuke the "spirit of misery"... Put a label on your tithe/offering envelope, such as

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<sup>247</sup> "The Twelve Principle" alludes to Castellanos G-12 strategy.

<sup>248</sup> Sector A with incomes of more than US\$ 3,440.00/month; B, US\$ 947.00/month; C, US\$ 379.00/month; D, US\$ 225.00/month; E, US\$ 157.00/month. "Los nuevos pobres de Lima" in *Carretas*, No 1583, 2 September 1999.

illness, unemployment, poverty and so forth, and bring it to the altar. This is a spiritual warfare. Now ask the Holy Spirit how much you should put in the envelope.<sup>249</sup>

Pastor Juana Hoyos then called people to come forward bringing their money after she prayed and rebuked the evil spirits. Almost everyone quickly fill the aisles while the band played a song. The sight of the multitude is impressive. Everybody is marching to the front taking their envelopes and also with it their hope of being blessed by God.

At 11:20 Hoyos climbed up the stage again and turned her Bible to Exodus 3. "This is the text where we all will meditate on this morning," she said. The following are extracts of her sermon that show her hermeneutics within the context of the spiritual warfare.

"Facing the Pharaoh" is our topic for this morning. Pharaoh is prototype of Satan. Egypt is prototype of the world. Israel is prototype of God's people. And Moses is a prototype of God's servant (Ex. 11:25). God's call is for the 12 tribes of Israel. The higher the call the stronger the test. When Pharaoh saw that Hebrews were multiplying in his land, he said: 'let us kill all male children'. Here you have the spirit of Pharaoh, the spirit that wants to destroy God's people.

In chapter 5 we see Satan's strategies to separate us from God. Verse 15 is the beginning of the war with Pharaoh. The "spirit of Pharaoh" is the spirit that is in command of your family to prevent your service for the Lord. Pharaoh is not any demon. It is a "principality". In spiritual warfare I begin to claim territories that Satan has taken away from me, for example, my family, work, health. etc.

Chapter 8:25 teaches us that Satan wants you not to consecrate yourself to the Lord. So Pharaoh tells Moses: 'You all may go, but leave your finances with me: cows, oxen, etc'. Moses then replies: 'We all will go, and leave not even a hoof for you'.

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<sup>249</sup> Fragments of her sermon taped during the service.

Everyone say it: *'We'll leave not even a hoof!'* Louder, *'We'll leave not even a hoof!'* I can't hear you: *'We'll leave not even a hoof!'* Your family belongs to the Lord. Your children belong to the Lord. Your house belongs to the Lord. Your grandparents are His. Your friends are His. Your neighbourhood is His. Not even a hoof we'll leave for Satan. We should not leave anything for Pharaoh. We need to make this decision ours.

In 14:13 we read that Moses says 'no more'. Say it: *'No more'* [the congregation repeats it three times]. The Lord will fight for us. Once you leave Egypt Pharaoh will not look for you to enslave you but to destroy you. Just remember this, he now wants to wipe you out.

Hoyos ended her sermon at 12:20 p.m., casting out the spirit of Pharaoh and requesting God's protection for the families of the congregation. Then, she fixed her eyes on her auditorium and said: "Pharaoh is defeated! Tell him now: *'Satan, you are defeated!'*" People quickly repeated the phrase clapping frenetically. Immediately the band began playing a song whose lyric is full of Old Testament symbolism. No doubt, this was the perfect corollary to the preaching:

*Cantaré al Señor por siempre  
Su diestra es todo poder  
Ha echado a la mar a quien nos perseguía  
Jinete y caballo, ha echado a la mar*

*Eché a la mar los carros del Faraón*

I will always sing to the Lord  
His right hand is all power  
He threw our enemies into the sea  
Horseman and horse have been  
thrown to the sea  
He threw Pharaoh's chariots to the  
sea

And continued with:

*A campo enemigo yo fui  
Y yo tomé lo que me robó*

*Tomé lo que me robó*

*Bajo mis pies  
Bajo mis pies  
Satanás está bajo mis pies*

I went to the enemy field  
And I took back what the enemy  
robbed me  
I took back what the enemy  
robbed me  
Under my feet  
Under my feet  
Satan is under my feet

Though these two songs were sung together and very enthusiastically, it was the second one that people sang it with actions which very clearly showed how well accepted this teaching is among them. Everyone, following the rhythm of the music, would move forward pretending they were raiding in enemy territory. They then stopped and got down as if they were snatching something with the hand, and then finally simulated the smashing of Satan's head with their feet. As those present sang the song over and over again, every time would seem that people did it with more conviction, knowing that in fact Satan had been defeated indeed. In a sense, this victory mood was almost perceptible in the atmosphere of the service and seen on the followers' faces as well, something that even strangers must have noticed.

### **B. Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare**

In the neopentecostal worldview, the focus of encounter between the kingdoms of light and darkness frequently takes the form of a battle between the "powers". In the Old Testament, the essence of the problem is often pointed in terms of confrontation. Is Moses' God stronger than Pharaoh's magicians? Their power was coming from their "gods" (Ex. 7:11-8:20). They could duplicate the rod becoming snake, the water becoming blood, and the plague of frogs, but not the subsequent plagues which shows they had a limited power. A similar power encounter between Elijah's God and the god Baal shows the limit of the power of the Cannanites' god. Likewise, in the New Testament, the clash of the kingdoms frequently focus in spiritual warfare. Is the Holy Spirit more powerful than Elymas' spirit? The apostle Paul's commissioning involved a direct statement of the centrality of encounter in his life's task. Jesus was sending him to Jews and Gentiles "to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God" (Acts 26:18).

A significant factor in such power encounters is that the power for good belongs to a sovereign holy God. It is not the property of the agent —preacher, priest or shaman. So, it is not a setting of Christianity against other religions, nor of the Bible

worldview against another, but of the Holy Spirit of God against the powers of evil. To err here, according to neopentecostals, is to risk engaging in idolatry and untested territory. Humans will not be able to handle situations properly, for power encounters confront us with a different realm that needs a different approach.<sup>250</sup>

Here neopentecostals perceive three levels of spiritual warfare (P. Wagner 1992:17-18; H. Torres 1993:21-27). Firstly, ground-level spiritual warfare, which is the conflict between Satan and the individual. Demonic spirits aim to destroy persons and families. Inner healing, physical healing and deliverance take place at this level. According to Torres, “no serious evangelism can be possible without a deliverance ministry that goes with the preaching.” This is what neopentecostals call “power evangelism.” Secondly, occult-level spiritual warfare that deals with witches and warlocks, voodoo, satanist priests and the like. At this level it is the Church and its ministers who are the target of Satan. Thirdly, strategic-level spiritual warfare in which “territorial principalities” and powers are confronted, for these beings have been commissioned by Satan to control towns, cities and even nations around the world. This level has to do with evangelistic purposes

Often this dynamic is more complex than it seems due to the different components that intertwine in the spiritual world as conceived by neopentecostals. Firstly, their cosmivision makes a distinction between the empirical and the trans-empirical spheres: the empirical comprises human beings, territories and objects —things seen and touched, and therefore measurable; while trans-empirical is composed of non-physical beings, from evil spirits to God Himself. It is important to recognise that the seat of the activity of trans-empirical may not necessarily be limited to the

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<sup>250</sup> In the spiritual world, very often there is a pragmatic approach to questions of involvement with the "beings" and "powers". Spiritual beings, for example, may be perceived officially as innately good or bad. Ordinary believers, however, invoke or involve them in their own causes, irrespective of whether they are officially "good" or "bad". Their interaction with such spirit beings rests on an alternative analysis of those spirits' value. If the spirit can assist or appease, ordinary believers will appeal to them. If these “beings” can remove diseases, poverty or any other type of suffering, then people will appeal to them as intermediaries.

supernatural world. Indeed, much trans-empirical activity takes place in the natural world of humankind. The figure therefore distinguishes between this world and that beyond. God, and the spirits of darkness, move in both worlds, but technically speaking what happens in celestial spheres will affect people's lives and nations' history alike. It is here where "prayer warriors" come to scene, for they are committed to break up Satan's stronghold both in the trans-empirical world and on earth as well. See chart 10.

Needless to say this topic is still very controversial within the conservative evangelical circle.<sup>251</sup> Traditionally, evangelicals have seen in the Scripture enough proof to say that Satan is a defeated enemy, and therefore he is in no condition to stand firm against the power of the Church whose authority comes from Jesus Christ (Matt.16:18; 1 Peter 2:4-8). Central to this idea is the cross of Christ.<sup>252</sup> The cross is not only redemption for the believer, but it is the final confirmation and guarantee that Satan has been overpowered by God (John 12:31; Hebrews 2:14). If this is so, then the Church is not to engage itself into a battle against demonic spirits, but to accept the victory of Christ over Satan and his hosts. Unlike neopentecostals, evangelicals belief that the Church should invest time and efforts to carry out the gospel instead of trying to defeat someone who has been already defeated, or win a battle that has been already won. Mike Wakely's affirmation, may well exemplify the traditional evangelical view on this matter: "[Christ] never commanded us to fight the devil on his behalf. Our business is with God, not Satan. We do not need to destroy Satan's kingdom to build God's kingdom here".<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> See IINDEF, *Poder y Misión, Debate sobre la Guerra Espiritual en América Latina* (1997).

<sup>252</sup> See John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (1986).

<sup>253</sup> "A Critical Look at the New 'Key' to Evangelization" in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, 1995. M. Wakely is an Operation Mobilization officer.

**NEOPENTECOSTAL WORLDVIEW OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD**  
**[Chart 10]**

		CONCEPT OF “POWER” (IMPERSONAL)	CONCEPT OF “SPIRITUAL BEINGS”  (PERSONAL)	CONCEPT OF “AUTHORITY”
THE WORLD BEYOND			God Angels and Archangels  Satan Demons	God
THIS WORLD	EMPIRICAL    TRANS-EMPIRICAL	Prophecy Word of knowledge Positive Confession Prayer Anointing Music  Bible Cross Banners Sacred objects: oil, water, handkerchiefs	God Angels  Satan Demons Evil spirits	God   Prophets Preachers Deliverance minister Healers

### C. Territorial spirits and “spiritual cartography”

The main Scripture for this element of neopentecostal theology is Daniel 10. The angel messenger told Daniel that the answer he had been bringing in answer to his prayer had been delayed for three weeks because a “prince over Persia” had detained him. The angel also said that he would have to fight against the “princes of Persia and Greece” on his return and that he would have only Michael to help him (10:20-21). From this episode it is believed that the “angel princes over Persia and Greece” are in actuality Satan’s prince spirits entrusted by him to obstruct God’s answer to Daniel and his work in those territories.

For authors as Collin Warren, Daniel 10 is not the only evidence to prove the existence of territorial spirits. Warren’s thesis is that “gods” as referred to in the Old Testament are in fact satanic spirits that ruled over pagan nations.<sup>254</sup> By quoting Rita Cabezas’ theory that Baal-Zebub, the god of the Philistine city of Ekron, was in actual fact Beelzebub (Matt. 112:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15), one of the six worldwide authorities of Satan, Warren assumes that what has been said about Beelzebub who was worshipped as a god, can be also said concerning other gods that were worshipped by the Old Testament people. Consequently, Astarte, goddess of Sidon, was Ashteroth, known in Babylon and Assyria as Ishtar who ruled over the spirits of the earth. And the same is true for Chesmash, the god of Moab, Milcom, the god of Amon, and so forth.<sup>255</sup> Following this scheme, it should not surprise us that some neopentecostal leaders such as Cindy Jacobs could identify several local spirits during the so-called *Plan Resistencia* in Argentina, and discerned the three strongest principalities in that country just by walking through the *Plaza de Mayo*: “Death”,

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<sup>254</sup> *Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare*, p5-6

<sup>255</sup> Peter Wagner’s (1990, 1991) works have been instrumental for the development of this theory. Yet Rita Cabezas’ *Desenmascarado* (1986) remains as one of the most controversial due to the source of her information. Allegedly, a powerful demonic spirit led Cabezas to the discovery of the names of the satanic strongholds with regard to their influence over people and nations. See her paper “Areas of Satanic Influence” presented to the Lausanne II, Manila 1989.

“Avarice” or “Mammon”, and the worse of all them “Queen of Heaven”, who integrates witchcraft and the local religious syncretism in fashionable rituals and cults.<sup>256</sup>

Héctor Torres (1993:121-137), pastor of *Centro Cristiano Palabra de Gracia* in Mesa, Arizona, and AD 2000 South America coordinator, seems to agree with Warren. He says that identifying the territorial demons that rule over cities and nations is the first step to battle against Satan’s tricks. Consequently, he has drawn a spiritual map of Latin America to find out where Satan has his throne, principalities and powers. Because of Mexico, Central and South America were the centre of the three most important indigenous religions and cultures —Azteca, Maya and Inca— Torres has then concluded that extraordinary demonic activity is taking place in the zone. According to this author, certain countries show more evil presence than others if previous generations have invited demons to live with them. “The intensity of the demonic control”, he says, “is in direct proportion to the reception spirits have been originally given and the spiritual pact that has been retained with them through festivities, rites and pilgrimage that people practice.”

As an example of it, Torres quotes Harold Caballeros, pastor of *El Shaddai* church in Guatemala City, who says that in the “Great Serpent Valley” located in Guatemala there was a temple in the shape of a snake where sacrifices took place in pre-Colombian time. This valley, measuring about 20 miles long and 1.3 miles wide, is today the home of many cults and esoteric groups that have built up their church buildings there. Caballeros strongly believes that this old temple shows how his nation was literally given to Satan by his ancestors. “The idolatry of the Mayans was based on the Cult of the Flying Serpent, the Feathered Serpent”, he says, “and this

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<sup>256</sup> These are the spirits identified by Jacobs in Resistencia: “*Pombero*”, spirit of division; “*Curupí*”, spirit of filth; “*Pitonisa*”, spirit of witchcraft which is the serpent; “*Queen of Heaven*”, spirit of error and idolatry; and “*San la Muerte*”, spirit of death. Taken from Torres, *Derribemos fortalezas* (1993:134).

gave the devil a legal right to lord over Guatemala and its inhabitants, generation after generation".<sup>257</sup> In Torres' (1993:132) words:

In knowing the roots of indigenous cultures we may see the territorial spirits and Satan's strongholds in many nations. The spirits that rule over cities, regions, countries and even continents are part of Satan hierarchy to reign over the nations. In Mesoamerica the spirit of destruction called "Apolion" or "Abadon" has been released to kill, steel and destroy. The spirit of violence rules over Mexico, Central America and the Andean nations such as Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia.

Apparently, this type of approach to world evangelism is leading neopentecostal leaders to think of ancient cultures as demonic strongholds that have to be smashed by any church engaged itself in serious missionary work. But perhaps the most disturbing effect of this way of thinking is the assumption that Satan's principalities are only to be found in old ruins and folk traditions but not in contemporary settings, something that could be difficult to probe.

In 1995 some friends genuinely concerned for a church in a sector of Lima that had not experienced any dramatic growth in the last years, invited me for a "prayer walking" session. After assessing the spiritual condition of the neighbourhood and collecting information about religious quest sites such as shrines or burial grounds in the area, this group of prayer walkers found that the problem would seem to be a *huaca*,<sup>258</sup> an archaeological site where Incas placed burials and offerings.<sup>259</sup> Under the impression that spirits dwelled in *huacas* and these places were then filled with

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<sup>257</sup> See H. Caballeros, *De Victoria en Victoria* (1999) for a detailed account on his struggle with the "serpent". See also his church web page, [www.elshaddai.net](http://www.elshaddai.net)

<sup>258</sup> *Huaca Juliana* in the district of Miraflores.

<sup>259</sup> The fact that much effort went into building these tombs indicates the religious and ritual importance old Peruvians had for the *huacas*. In this way, power was born of the ancestors, and they were able to materialize themselves through their living representatives. Clearly, the concentration of wealth in the famous tombs of *Sipán*, *Moche* and others recalls the lavish burials of the Egyptian pharaohs.

demonic powers (Torres 1993:125), these ministers and laypeople decided to confront the demons that were hindering the advance of the gospel there. Walking around the *huaca* praying seemed an innocuous activity. But some questions soon arose, praying for what? and, to whom? Since the group was more attuned with “binding demons” than with praying for the Church in general or even the difficult situation of the country, it seemed in order to enquire more about this matter. “After we finish praying here,” some would ask, “why don’t we go to the Government Palace or the Congress House to walk around them praying? The difficult situation our country is going through would seem to indicate demonic action in those places, which may be obstructing the work of both the President and the congress members.” The organizers reacted with disbelief. They simply said the Scripture commanded us to pray for the authorities rather than to cast down demons out of them. Apparently, for them evil spirits only liked to converge in old burial grounds, so they refused to see any “spiritual activity” in high seats of the government. However, what has happened in Peru with the corruption and demise of President Alberto Fujimori could prove them wrong, or at least show them that if they are to believe in demonic influence in the life of a nation, they should also focus their attention to specific places where all kinds of power concentrate in the post-modern world.

In November 2000 the president Alberto Fujimori had to resign his office pursued by a snowballing corruption scandal involving his disgraced intelligence chief, Vladimiro Montesinos. During the 1990s Mr Fujimori ceded to Mr Montesinos control of appointments in the armed forces and of the all-pervasive secret police. His adviser built up a spider’s web of influence in the courts, the media, the cabinet and congress through a mixture of favours and blackmail. Fujimori’s government then fell to pieces since his spy chief and key personal adviser was exposed as the alleged chief of a vast money laundering ring involved in arms-trafficking, corruption and fleecing drugs traffickers. Needless to say, Peruvians were shocked as news was brought up to daylight in what journalists labelled “black September”, the

month of “national shame”.<sup>260</sup> By and large, this scandal and the degree of immorality and corruption shown in Fujimori’s government has had no parallel in modern history of the country. Who knows, but from a neopentecostal perspective, had the group walked around the government offices praying, none of this might have happened.

The strategic-level spiritual warfare, with the “spiritual mapping” at its core, has truly become a scientific method intended to overcome the powers of darkness. “Spiritual cartography”, according to Torres (1993:134-135), helps to identify the sins of both our ancestors and modern folks. We can see how the consequences of past evils are affecting people’s lives and communities now. Once this has been done, then curses of past generations can be broken and the “strong man” bound. But this “spiritual research project” is neither an easy activity nor a job for new practitioners due to the complexity of its methodology that resembles that of military tactics. Undoubtedly, it is a time consuming process that requires certain degree of expertise from the participants.

George Otis, Jr. (1999:170f) has systematized this strategy in order to provide a sort of practical advice for spiritual mappers to accomplish this task. He presents four methods of “spiritual research” that will supply a veritable host of relevant

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<sup>260</sup> “Vergüenza nacional y un farol presidencial” in *Caretas*, No 1637, 22 September 2000. The crisis was triggered by the release on September 14 of a video that showed Mr. Montesinos handing a congressman a bundle of dollar bills, apparently to seal his defection from the opposition to the government benches. Since taking office in July 1990, when Fujimori was the almost unknown rector of an agrarian university, *El Chino* (The Chinaman, as he is popularly known) has been both hailed and reviled for ruling Peru with an iron fist. His maverick style, a mixture of populism and authoritarianism, prompted him to carry out a coup in April 1992, when he dissolved Congress and sacked Supreme Court judges. His tough treatment of suspected rebels was credited with quashing a bloody insurgency, and he was lauded for fixing Peru’s economy by slashing hyperinflation with tight fiscal policies. But he was also increasingly criticised for giving free rein to what critics called “the obscure power” of the secret service led by Montesinos. He also pushed through constitutional reform to allow himself a third controversial election in May 2000 in a dubious polling process marred by dirty tricks and claims of fraud. Without doubt, there has not been other Peruvian president like him.

information for this spiritual discovery. Researchers are encouraged to combine all four for an accurate data collection:

1. Observe human environments and behaviour
2. Conduct interviews
3. Examine print and media materials
4. Listen to God in prayer

This activity involves both discipline and observation skills from the participants and the systematic notation of journals as Otis himself warns. Firstly, mappers are required to register any spiritual quest sites (cult temples, shrines, old burial grounds and the like), social bondage sites (brothels, porno establishments, gay bars, crackhouses, etc.) inside the research area, and to record patterns of behaviour within the community. These might include pilgrimages, religious ceremonies, advocacy events such as anti-abortion picketing, gay pride parades, and diverse Christian gatherings. Secondly, they need to conduct interviews with the members of the community because the most profound bondages reside in people's minds. Thirdly, they are to make use of the "secondary resources", which are books, dissertations, newspapers, census data and archives that can throw valuable information about the town or location under examination. Fourthly, the intercessors' role in the mapping process is of great importance. For Otis, the major contribution of the intercessors comes from their discipline of waiting on God. These individuals are at liberty to personalise their prayer log because it is ultimately a working document that can be shared with other members of the team. Entries should be recorded immediately at the conclusion of each prayer session, and have to be as concise as possible to avoid confusion. In brief, entries can include anything from answered prayers to subjective impressions, the latter meaning specific action items revealed by God himself.

One very publicised implementation of this methodology has been Edgardo Silvoso's *Plan Resistencia* in Argentina. From 1988 through 1991, this plan

allegedly produced 102% growth in church membership. The Silvosos model consisted of six steps that later he also applied to other 16 countries around the world.<sup>261</sup> Some authors have called it the most sophisticated strategy for evangelising a city we have at the present time (P. Wagner 1992, Otis 1999).

- Step 1: Establish God's perimeter. Establishing the perimeter of godliness inside the city is the most difficult but also the most crucial step in the process of taking a city. This perimeter is a microcosmic demonstration of the kingdom of God in the midst of Satan's dominion.
- Step 2: Secure the perimeter. Satan's preferred environment of operation is ignorance. Ignorance allows him to move with impunity. Nowhere is this more lethal than when the church is led to believe that Satan is not operating within her. Strongholds represent the greatest threat to the church today because its members are unaware of it. Strongholds are established in the minds of the believers, thus providing Satan with an undercover way to manipulate them.
- Step 3: Expand the perimeter. God uses the faithful ones to establish a model. With that model in place, others must be gradually brought inside the perimeter to build up the expeditionary force that eventually will launch the attack on the forces holding the city in spiritual darkness.
- Step 4: Infiltrate Satan's perimeter. Turning the tables on the enemy by making his base insecure by astutely "parachuting behind his lines" is one of the most difficult tasks in this process. Satan's perimeter is best infiltrated by establishing thousands of prayer warriors in cell groups to cover the entire city, block by block. Warfare prayer is not an end in itself, but a means of opening the way for the Kingdom of God to come, not

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<sup>261</sup> Silvosos, a native of Argentina, is president of Harvest Evangelism in San Jose, California. Taken from Ed Silvosos, "Biblical Principles for Taking our Cities for God", (date unknown, possibly 1992).

only in evangelism, but also in social justice and material sufficiency. At first, prayer warriors should limit themselves to taking an inventory of the neighbourhood, and then, when the power of the enemy has been weakened through prayer, should contact the members of the community to let them know they are available to pray for their needs.

- Step 5: Once prayer warriors are in force inside Satan's territory, the attack on the enemy begins for the purpose of bringing down the walls that keep the community captive. The strategy must incorporate the intelligence gathered through the spiritual and social mapping done before. Demonic strongholds must be identified. Their *modus operandi* has to be studied for offensive as well as defensive purposes. Once the enemy is within shooting range, we must fire with the intent to destroy it, not even capture it.
- Step 6: Establish God's perimeter where Satan's used to be. The only tangible way of knowing that a spiritual warfare has been successfully conducted is by looting the enemy's camp. The object of this looting is to dispossess Satan of his most precious possessions: the souls of men and women. Unless spiritual warfare results in solid conversions, and those conversions are incorporated into local churches, nothing of consequence has happened, it only was a "spiritual parade". The difference between these two is that during the former you show your weapons but you do not fire them, whereas during the latter you move into enemy's territory firing your artillery at him to conquer and to hold on to what you conquer.

Allegedly, the results of this strategy in terms of addition of members to the church have been sensational. Reports of Argentina claim forty thousand professions in La Plata, while in Mar de Plata after four months of preaching close to ninety thousand public decisions for Christ were made. In San Justo, seventy thousand, and in Cordova fifty thousand conversions were recorded. Inter-denominational ministerial

associations have been formed, and unity among the clergy is perceived by many (Warren 8).

There are clearly some positive benefits in this new teaching. Firstly, it has made secular and modern world-view Christians in the west aware of the spiritual realm, something that they always regarded as a cultural belief restricted to the Two-Thirds World countries. Secondly, there is now a renewed emphasis on prayer and intercession for mission in many Evangelical churches around the world, stirred, undoubtedly, by the enthusiasm of this movement and its literature. Thirdly, thanks to the mission focus on particular areas where supposedly demonic activity takes place, local churches regardless their denominational background are being united to fight against spiritual and social evils that afflict their communities.

Yet there are also some concerns that need to be addressed regarding at least two areas of this movement: its exposure and its theology of intercession. The advocates of this teaching like to refer to examples drawn mainly from Latin America and Africa to point out their success. Their literature is replete with cases that prove the efficacy of their method, but these are limited and carefully selected experiences such as Argentina which would seem to be a success story at the present time.<sup>262</sup> But what they do not do is give examples of places where this strategy has been put to the test and did not work, and only mention instances of those who have seen success and church growth with different methods. Critics would say that spiritual warfare supporters view strategic-level spiritual warfare as the only valid strategy for today and decry other successful methods employed by evangelicals in history and other

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<sup>262</sup> I have visited Argentina several times in the last years and noticed that pastors from traditional evangelical churches are not sure about the so-called "Argentinean revival" widely publicised through the writings of C. Peter Wagner, George Otis, Ed Silvano and others. For J. Míguez Bonino, native of Argentina himself, statistics on crusades reports and other activities have been, often times, overstated primarily by foreign observers to support their own views and theories. (Interview held on 13 May 1999 in Edinburgh, Scotland).

parts of Argentina and the continent.<sup>263</sup> Silvosio himself fails to recognise, for example, what the Argentinean revival in the mid-60s with Juan Carlos Ortiz achieved. He simply says that during this time “there were blessings, but never the breakthrough”, contrasting that happening to what he calls “the current move of God” that began in March 1983, when pentecostal layman evangelist Carlos Annacondia started practicing this strategy and led 40,000 people to a public decision.<sup>264</sup> Further, it is almost inevitable to think that Silvosio and his followers may merely have a pragmatic approach to spiritual warfare. If we surrender objectivity for success in order to catch public’s attention, then we will have a sort of one-sided account of what is really happening in the world.

The intercessory prayer in the spiritual warfare context is other topic that raises some questions. Caballeros (1999:177) defines this kind of intercession as the “task of anyone who prays, cries and fights a battle on their knees.” This prayer turns intercessors into protection shields for those who are under the attack of the enemy, but at the same time this also makes the intercessor vulnerable to Satan’s harm (Torres 1993:191). According to this teaching, intercession includes casting down strongholds, binding the strongman, and the destruction of territorial spirits such as idolatry, occultism, immorality and the like. Intercessory prayer often times expresses itself with tears, pain, laughter, screaming, and many other forms. But perhaps the most disturbing aspect of them all is a new element in prayer that is called “the resistance of the Powers to God’s will” (P. Wagner 1992:95), which evangelical resists to believe. In this teaching, intercessors address the devil or demons while praying by using a wide range of new vocabulary built up around the warfare prayer concept. “Taking dominion or authority over an area”, “claiming a

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<sup>263</sup> The Encounter Movement of the Christian and Missionary Alliance of Lima, Peru, is a well documented case of explosive church growth that has spread to other cities en the region, where strategic-level spiritual warfare was not practiced. See Miguel A. Palomino, *Misión en la ciudad* (1990).

<sup>264</sup> Noel Stanton, talking to Ed Silvosio about Revival and Evangelism in Argentina, in [www.jesus.org.uk/es.html](http://www.jesus.org.uk/es.html)

place”, “storming the gates of hell”, and so on are just some examples of the spiritual warfare glossary. Interestingly, the phrase “blood of Jesus” that classic pentecostals would use so powerfully to expel demons, is not found in the neopentecostal lexicon.

Sometimes it is hard to understand and assimilate all this. It could plainly be said that all has to do with giving direct attention to the devil, which openly contradicts what evangelicals think of a prayer as an activity to address to the Father, in the Spirit, and in the name of the Son. By dialoguing and talking to demons, intercessors would seem to be underemphasizing the work of the cross and the work of the Holy Spirit who should be the focus of their attention. No doubt that the focal point of strategic-level warfare and spiritual mapping is the demonic, and that is enough for many evangelicals to question the theology behind the intercessory prayer.

Trying to engage the enemy seems an unequal fight. Demons are spirits and we are flesh and bones. Therefore, to speak of "combats" or "assaults" to the enemy using methods and human military tactics would seem to ignore the real nature of the spiritual world. It is here where spiritual warfare followers find their major critics. Motivated by their passion of getting the right missionary methodology, they have developed a well-elaborated theory that supposedly guarantees the success of the project as long as the established techniques are used correctly. For Samuel Escobar (1997:126) the spiritual warfare methodology needs to be seen as a North American product. “It is important to remember that this culture has a strong element of pragmatism and technology”, Escobar says. This pragmatic and methodological tendency makes some affirm that all scientific knowledge can be turned into a Christian technological process that can prove its usefulness in the practice of spiritual warfare. “This could explain why spiritual warfare exponents want to find a scientific theory that can be exported and applied to other nations through the right marketing.” In the end, it would seem that the extenuating work of confronting spiritual beings is just a simple art that anyone can master by reading a handbook.

## CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSIONS

### FORECASTING THE FUTURE OF NEOPENTECOSTALISM IN LATIN AMERICA

Traditional Christianity —meaning both catholicism and protestantism— in Latin America seems to have lost its monopoly position in the area of spirituality and lifeview. Like never before, these older churches find themselves located in a market situation where they have to compete with other worldviews and value-orientations. For social scientists and theologians this is an interesting development. The conventional Christian religion —which can be seen as a “sacred canopy” following Berger’s theory—<sup>265</sup> has always been a major element in society, functioning as an important foundation of norms and rules for the individual and communal lives of men and women. As a result of the loss of its monopoly position this important role would seem to be disappearing, role that the new churches are ready to take up as they are beginning to reshape the religious landscape of the region.

Yet, attempting to discern the future of neopentecostalism and its actual impact on the Latin American Christianity is somewhat risky due to factors beyond the scope of our investigation. Firstly, there are no recent statistics available that may give us a clue whether or not this movement continues to grow and if it does, what this growth means for the community. The sources I have used in this study date from the mid-nineties and, as far as Peru is concerned, no other reliable information has been published regarding the expansion of neopentecostal groups in this country. Furthermore, there is no firm evidence to support either a statement that “*evangélicos* could become a quarter to a third of the population early in the twenty-first century” (Stoll 1990:2) thanks to pentecostals. Though historical churches’ membership continue decreasing considerably, the fact neopentecostals have abandoned the ascetic ethics of their predecessors to become more in tune with post-modern values,

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<sup>265</sup> A sacred canopy is a set of beliefs designed to solve problems of meaning and provide security to people within a given religious tradition.

makes it hard to believe that their explosive numerical growth alone may bring changes—similar to that of Wesleyanism in England during the eighteenth century—with the potential to transform the Latin American values, culture and economy (Martin 1990). Predictions that E. Willems and D’Epinay made back in the 1960s regarding pentecostalism as the agent of transition and change from a rural and patriarchal society to an urban and industrialised one, are still a theory that needs to be tested. Some would say that now is neopentecostalism’s turn to carry it through. However, evidences demonstrate that this could be not as simple as it seems. The more the new churches continue to make incursion into new social spaces acting as if they were a mainstream religion, the greater the possibilities for them to adjust themselves to the status quo and, therefore, become unable to modify the culture they are now part of it.

Secondly, serious observers note that the neopentecostal appeal might be reaching its apogee, and now faces a stage of stabilisation as it is evidenced in Chile, once considered a pentecostal bastion of the South. Even in Argentina, the well-publicized Annacondia tent crusades do not attract so many people as they did in the 1980s.<sup>266</sup> What Stark and Bainbridge call “compensators” may provide a clue to understand this occurrence. According to these authors, religion is a human organisation mainly committed to granting general compensators based on supernatural presumptions (1996:8). Compensators are postulations of reward consistent with explanations that are not readily susceptible to un-ambiguous evaluation. Compensators which substitute for single, specific rewards are called “specific compensators”; and those which substitute for a cluster of rewards of great scope and value are called “general compensators” (1996:36). Specific compensators, such as healing, are one of the most attractive offers for the new converts, while general compensators, like the promise of eternal life, appeal to older members who can deal with frustration if promised miracles do not happen to them.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> José Míguez Bonino in personal letter dated 21 November 1999.

<sup>267</sup> Neopentecostal pastor Héctor Giménez admitted in an interview that eight out of ten people came to his church thanks to the offer of miracles. “Once they are in the church”, Giménez said, “we tell them about the demands of the Gospel.” Taken from *El Puente*, January 1992.

In neopentecostal circles specific compensators take the form of popular doctrinal emphases today, namely liberation from the demonic, prosperity, inner healing, and so on. By looking at them one can easily observe that the message then focuses on improving people's life here and now rather than waiting for God's final reward in glory, which as a general compensator is certainly not too attractive in countries where most of the population has to endure poverty, unemployment and sickness. In situations like this, individuals come to church attracted by the assurance that the Divine intervention will solve their problems in a near future.

No doubt, *cultos* with excessive offer of supernatural intervention can be effective tools to attract new people. But if general compensators do not follow immediately, the chances are that the success of the group will not last too long. Certainly, churches with open fellowship to other congregations are more likely to retain congregants that are there just for specific compensators, because these people can move freely among other fellowships and then always return to their "home group". *El Puente*, the monthly Argentinean evangelical newspaper addressed this issue:

There is a phenomenon going on in the last five years: people swap churches very frequently. In highly populated zones of Buenos Aires where a great number of evangelical churches have proliferated, believers go from one church to another with a dangerously persistence.<sup>268</sup>

But a more perturbing truth has been to find out that many leave these fellowships after their personal problems were not solved and their spiritual quest went fruitless. The editorial page of the same newspaper (August 1998) pointed out this fact years later:

Starting in 1985 La Plata city experienced an evangelistic explosion. Thousands and thousands got to know The Truth — Jesus Christ— in those unforgettable Annacondia tent crusades... Small churches grew large. Mission points multiplied everywhere... Obviously, a generous blessing from heaven fell upon La Plata. But as years have passed by, something has changed. The growth has stopped. Churches are showing empty pews now. Mission points have been closed down... Churches

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<sup>268</sup> "¿Por qué se cambia de iglesia? El crecimiento trajo un vicio", *El Puente*, May 1992.

have seen their membership decrease... In how many cities of Argentina something similar is happening? In many.

This is a major observation for it discloses the magnitude of desertion going on in neopentecostal churches, which, above all, took place in La Plata, a symbolic location where neopentecostalism began in the early 1980s thanks to Carlos Annacondia crusades.<sup>269</sup> What Jorge Gómez (1996) says about the desertion of evangelicals in Costa Rica, is a wake-up call for these independent fellowships as well.<sup>270</sup> In this type of business, the new leaders know that unless they close the back door, their potential followers will go to other groups with trendy specific compensators.

Thirdly, neopentecostalism will obviously not disappear, but it may indeed be slowing down. What then will happen when this movement settles down? Will it become a respectable denomination like some traditional pentecostals? It is possible we may be speculating too much, but it is hard to ignore the Weberian theories on the institutionalisation of religious movements. As these neopentecostal churches get older and their charismatic leaders pass away, might they become part of the *status quo* and therefore be perceived as traditional congregations by the rest of the community? After the death of the leader, a family succession may come about either through the wife or son of the deceased. In other cases a board might be elected and changes begin to take place, changes that usually do not follow the vision and way of doing things of the original leader. However, since we are dealing with a relatively new movement, studies on second generation neopentecostalism have yet to be done. However, parallel cases drawn from the Assemblies of God and other well-established old-time pentecostal churches may indicate what might happen to them. The *Iglesia Pentecostal Metodista de Jotaveche* in Santiago, Chile, and *Iglesia Pentecostal del Malecón Rimac* in Lima, Peru, were seen during the 1950s and 1960s as “sects” or at best extremist pentecostalist groups. They are now well-respected

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<sup>269</sup> Annacondia was instrumental in the setting of new beliefs, ritual practices and re-structure of evangelistic crusades, which served as foundation for the development of neopentecostalism in Argentina and else where. See Marostica 1997.

<sup>270</sup> The loss of members from older evangelical and pentecostal churches to neopentecostal groups is not as alarming as the fact that many of these people who at one point adopted this faith, are now apparently coming back to the Roman Catholic church, or they are simply opting for remaining faithless.

churches in their own countries. Again, over time, religious movements and their rituals become institutionalised. They all start as dynamic groups, usually with a strong leader, but soon fall into the “routinization of the charisma” and the group becomes part of the establishment. Whether neopentecostalism will be able to reverse this pattern remains to be seen.

A question must be raised here as to what kind of church would stay after this initial boom is over. This is also somewhat unpredictable. As neopentecostalism majors on numbers, what would happen now that they have begun to lose members to other churches as both Catholic church and historic denominations have experienced? To what degree do neopentecostals really fellowship with traditional evangelicals? There is no doubt that they feel comfortable with each other’s company while attending large meetings, conferences and concerts. But, would a neopentecostal go to any traditional church on Sunday morning? It is very likely that he or she would not.

As we have seen, some perceive the neopentecostal world as constructed around the business approach mentality with consumerist offers of “demon-free zones” for believers so that he or she will “feel good”. Their emphasis on expecting extraordinary things to happen in every *culto* may force leaders to up the levels of “entertainment” to maintain the “ratings”. Traditional pentecostal and evangelical churches are not generally like this, for they feel very strongly about preparing well-equipped disciples who may live out their faith in a holistic manner for any circumstance of life. Most neopentecostals appear to lack this dimension and, consequently, it would not be so difficult to foresee an implosion when the leader or church fails to deliver what was promised.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> After the Argentinean neopentecostal pastor Héctor Giménez was condemned by a jury of wrong doing and given a to two-year probation verdict in which he has to do community work, the *Confraternidad Evangélica Pentecostal* and *La Alianza Cristiana de Iglesias Evangélicas* of Argentina asked him to step down and resign his ministry *Ondas de Amor*. As result of this, Giménez has lost face and recognition, and many of his allegedly 200,000 plus church membership has split into several independent groups. (See “Famoso predicador evangélico reprimido públicamente por sus colegas” and “Conocido predicador argentino tendrá que barrer comedor infantil” in *ALC* 23 February 1998 and 3 August 1999 respectively). Something similar happened to *Agua Viva* church of Lima when its pastor, Juan Capurro, fell from grace. More than four-hundred left the church to start a new one led by Capurro’s ex-wife, and many others just

It is in this area where the new pentecostals differ most from the traditional ones. Historically, classic pentecostals have been not only “consumers” of sacred products, but above all “producers”, to the extent that every time a member who would not agree with the pastor simply would leave the church to start a new one in his or her house. Neopentecostals do not follow this pattern. They appear to lean heavily on their leader and on what they are about to receive from him or her on a Sunday. If the leader is no longer there for them or they decided to leave the church for whatever reason, how will their faith survive in a different setting they are so used to? No doubt, the leader-centred tendency perceived might be the Achilles’ heel of the movement.

Fourthly, one last important element that needs to be highlighted has to do with the undoubted enthusiasm professed in these new groups. It cannot be ignored that neopentecostals show a degree of commitment and zeal that is hardly matched by traditional denominations. In a sense, it is outside the sphere of my observation to call upon God or the demons to fully explain what is happening inside these churches. Nor can I, as a missiologist, proclaim judgment about whether a given outcome is “good” or “bad”. Certainly, no scientific discipline has the sensitivity to deal with the deep mysteries of human soul and God’s nature. But what this work can do is to contribute to the assessment of the effects on independent churches. Spiritual and emotional well-being of the believers, changes in their interpersonal relationships, and new behavioural activities that may benefit others are just some of the fruits easily perceived in neopentecostals.

If we look at their belief in the supernatural intervention of God in the *culto*, for example, we would see that they have been very successful achieving goals and a kind of status other *evangélicos* never dreamed of. As Peter Berger (1973:41) has argued, “Religion has been the historically most widespread and effective instrumentality of legitimation because it relates the precarious reality constructions of empirical societies with ultimate reality.” In this case, the “spiritual warfare” doctrine has served as a means of legitimisation for what they are doing, whether

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abandoned the faith. (A personal letter (20 January 1999) by a member of this church who asked me to remain anonymous).

buying cinemas, mass media companies or building true international business empires.

Since Latin Americans prove to be very sensitive to the spiritual world as it is demonstrated in the long pilgrimages and processions to *La Virgen de Luján* in Argentina, *Virgen de Guadalupe* in Mexico, or *Señor de los Milagros* in Lima, it would seem that the efficacy of the neopentecostal groups attraction lies not only in their discourse that has no apparent theological abstractions, but also in the fact that they can show right then and there on the stage or stadium the benefits of their preaching: healing, freedom from addictions and harmful habits, interior peace, miracles, prophecies, economic prosperity, and so forth. Traditional churches, generally speaking, stay only in the discourse level of faith.

For evangelicals, this discourse sometimes has been “narrowly conceived as announcing the so-called plan of salvation and inviting people to conversion” (Padilla 1999:111), and it has failed to bring that salvation down to earth, in concrete and tangible ways. Neopentecostals are experimenting with new forms of communicating that message, for as the wife of the late Omar Cabrera, one of the most respected pentecostal pastors of Argentina, put it:

We need to reinterpret the concepts of healing and salvation. A person is healed not when he/she has no illness, but when he/she feels good about himself/herself. Faith heals because gives back the individual the balance of life. And what does prosperity mean? It doesn't mean prosperity will make everybody rich. What it will do is get the person organised in a new and better way so he/she will be able to live a better life not necessarily because now he/she is rich, but because has gotten a good balance of life.<sup>272</sup>

There is certainly a re-structuring of the discourse of faith in this statement. If neopentecostals achieve convergence of their oral message with their ritual practices, their future will look promising and will continue changing the face of traditional Latin American evangelicalism in the years to come. So far, the alternative they are offering in terms of providing another path of religious experience, may be seen as an experiential spirituality that reflects the wholeness of the human being, an

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<sup>272</sup> Quoted by Míguez Bonino in personal letter dated 21 November 1999.

integration of the soul and body. What neopentecostalism has accomplished already in terms of legitimising its presence in Peru and other countries of the region in such short time, is a colossal success story that no other religious group has achieved in modern history. We are privileged to observe and begin to understand it.

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## Neopentecostal Glossary

**Anointing.** It is the power of God transmitted to His children by the Holy Spirit.

**Binding the Strongman.** Neutralising the hold that Satan has over human beings and towns so that the person can be spiritually freed and the gospel preached without restraint.

**Deliverance.** Walking through one's past (even pre-natal) in an attempt to bring spiritual release and healing to the present.

**Ground-Level Spiritual Warfare.** Ministry associated with individual bondage and demonization.

**Imparting the Anointing.** The transmitting of spiritual gifts by the laying-on of hands and emotion filled manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

**Intercessory Prayer.** The act of standing between the object of prayer and demonic forces in order to deflect their attacks.

**Ministry Time.** Moment of prayer for and individual who needs inner healing, deliverance or spiritual renovation from God. It usually takes place at the end of the service when the preacher invites people to come forward. Very often this time is accompanied by supernatural manifestations as evidence that God is working on the person object of prayer.

**Power Encounter.** A visible and practical demonstration that God is more powerful than Satan's powers and spirits.

**Prayerwalking.** Intentional prayer intercession while walking streets or sites where demonic activity has been reported.

**Principalities.** Demons that exert control over governments and systems.

**Slain in the Spirit.** Falling backwards by the laying-on of hands from an anointed preacher. The explanation for this phenomenon is that nobody can withstand the glory of God and so the individual falls down.

**Spiritual Mapping.** The process of identifying and diagnosing spiritual barriers for God's blessings in a community, city or even country. Once these areas are known then intercessors begin to pray against the demons over these specific evils and sins.

**Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare.** Confrontation with demonic powers that have hold on cities, cultures and peoples.

**Warfare Prayer.** Prayers aiming to uproot spiritual strongholds that hinder evangelistic and missionary work.