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The Reshaping of Mission in Latin America

Miguel Alvarez

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Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series

VOLUME 30

The Reshaping of Mission in Latin America



Edited By
Miguel Alvarez

REGNUM EDINBURGH CENTENARY SERIES
Volume 30

The Reshaping of Mission in Latin America

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REGNUM EDINBURGH CENTENARY SERIES

The centenary of the World Missionary Conference of 1910, held in Edinburgh, was a suggestive moment for many people seeking direction for Christian mission in the 21st century. Several different constituencies within world Christianity held significant events around 2010. From 2005, an international group worked collaboratively to develop an intercontinental and multi-denominational project, known as Edinburgh 2010, based at New College, University of Edinburgh. This initiative brought together representatives of twenty different global Christian bodies, representing all major Christian denominations and confessions, and many different strands of mission and church life, to mark the centenary.

Essential to the work of the Edinburgh 1910 Conference, and of abiding value, were the findings of the eight think-tanks or ‘commissions’. These inspired the idea of a new round of collaborative reflection on Christian mission – but now focused on nine themes identified as being key to mission in the 21st century. The study process was polycentric, open-ended, and as inclusive as possible of the different genders, regions of the world, and theological and confessional perspectives in today’s church. It was overseen by the Study Process Monitoring Group: Miss Maria Aranzazu Aguado (Spain, The Vatican), Dr Daryl Balia (South Africa, Edinburgh 2010), Mrs Rosemary Dowsett (UK, World Evangelical Alliance), Dr Knud Jørgensen (Norway, Areopagos), Rev John Kafwanka (Zambia, Anglican Communion), Rev Dr Jooseop Keum (Korea, World Council of Churches), Dr Wonsuk Ma (Korea, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies), Rev Dr Kenneth R. Ross (UK, Church of Scotland), Dr Petros Vassiliadis (Greece, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), and co-ordinated by Dr Kirsteen Kim (UK, Edinburgh 2010).

These publications reflect the ethos of Edinburgh 2010 and will make a significant contribution to ongoing studies in mission. It should be clear that material published in this series will inevitably reflect a diverse range of views and positions. These will not necessarily represent those of the series’ editors or of the Edinburgh 2010 General Council, but in publishing them the leadership of Edinburgh 2010 hopes to encourage conversation between Christians and collaboration in mission. All the series’ volumes are commended for study and reflection in both church and academy.

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REGNUM EDINBURGH CENTENARY SERIES
Volume 30

The Reshaping of Mission In Latin America

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Front cover photo shows contemporary worship in Latin America.
Back cover photo shows a scene from the Edinburgh 2010 conference.

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PREFACE

The Edinburgh 2010 Common Call emerged from the Edinburgh 2010 study process and conference marking the centenary of the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910. The Common Call, cited below, was affirmed in the Church of Scotland Assembly Hall in Edinburgh on 6 June 2010, by representatives of world Christianity, including Catholic, Orthodox, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and other major Protestant churches.

As we gather for the centenary of the World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh 1910, we believe the church, as a sign and symbol of the reign of God, is called to witness to Christ today by sharing in God's mission of love through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

1. Trusting in the Triune God and with a renewed sense of urgency, we are called to incarnate and proclaim the good news of salvation, of forgiveness of sin, of life in abundance, and of liberation for all poor and oppressed. We are challenged to witness and evangelism in such a way that we are a living demonstration of the love, righteousness and justice that God intends for the whole world.

2. Remembering Christ's sacrifice on the Cross and his resurrection for the world's salvation, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are called to authentic dialogue, respectful engagement and humble witness among people of other faiths – and no faith – to the uniqueness of Christ. Our approach is marked with bold confidence in the gospel message; it builds friendship, seeks reconciliation and practises hospitality.

3. Knowing the Holy Spirit who blows over the world at will, reconnecting creation and bringing authentic life, we are called to become communities of compassion and healing, where young people are actively participating in mission, and women and men share power and responsibilities fairly, where there is a new zeal for justice, peace and the protection of the environment, and renewed liturgy reflecting the beauties of the Creator and creation.

4. Disturbed by the asymmetries and imbalances of power that divide and trouble us in church and world, we are called to repentance, to critical reflection on systems of power, and to accountable use of power structures. We are called to find practical ways to live as members of One Body in full awareness that God resists the proud, Christ welcomes and empowers the poor and afflicted, and the power of the Holy Spirit is manifested in our vulnerability.

5. Affirming the importance of the biblical foundations of our missional engagement and valuing the witness of the Apostles and martyrs, we are called to rejoice in the expressions of the gospel in many nations all over the world. We celebrate the renewal experienced through movements of migration and mission in all directions, the way all are equipped for

mission by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and God's continual calling of children and young people to further the gospel.

6. Recognising the need to shape a new generation of leaders with authenticity for mission in a world of diversities in the twenty-first century, we are called to work together in new forms of theological education. Because we are all made in the image of God, these will draw on one another's unique charisms, challenge each other to grow in faith and understanding, share resources equitably worldwide, involve the entire human being and the whole family of God, and respect the wisdom of our elders while also fostering the participation of children.

7. Hearing the call of Jesus to make disciples of all people – poor, wealthy, marginalised, ignored, powerful, living with disability, young, and old – we are called as communities of faith to mission from everywhere to everywhere. In joy we hear the call to receive from one another in our witness by word and action, in streets, fields, offices, homes, and schools, offering reconciliation, showing love, demonstrating grace and speaking out truth.

8. Recalling Christ, the host at the banquet, and committed to that unity for which he lived and prayed, we are called to ongoing co-operation, to deal with controversial issues and to work towards a common vision. We are challenged to welcome one another in our diversity, affirm our membership through baptism in the One Body of Christ, and recognise our need for mutuality, partnership, collaboration and networking in mission, so that the world might believe.

9. Remembering Jesus' way of witness and service, we believe we are called by God to follow this way joyfully, inspired, anointed, sent and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and nurtured by Christian disciplines in community. As we look to Christ's coming in glory and judgment, we experience his presence with us in the Holy Spirit, and we invite all to join with us as we participate in God's transforming and reconciling mission of love to the whole creation.

Themes Explored

The 2010 conference was shaped around the following nine study themes:

1. Foundations for mission
2. Christian mission among other faiths
3. Mission and post-modernities
4. Mission and power
5. Forms of missionary engagement
6. Theological education and formation
7. Christian communities in contemporary contexts
8. Mission and unity – ecclesiology and mission
9. Mission spirituality and authentic discipleship

The Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series to Date

Against this background a series of books was commissioned, with the intention of making a significant contribution to ongoing studies of mission. This series currently includes:¹

Edinburgh 2010: Mission Then and Now, David A. Kerr and Kenneth R. Ross (eds).

Edinburgh 2010 Volume II: Witnessing to Christ Today, Daryl Balia and Kirsteen Kim (eds).

Mission Continues: Global Impulses for the 21st Century, Claudia Wahrish-Oblau and Fidon Mwombeki (eds).

Holistic Mission: God's Plan for God's People, Brian Woolnough and Wonsuk Ma (eds).

Mission Today and Tomorrow, Kirsteen Kim and Andrew Anderson (eds).

The Church Going Local: Mission and Globalization, Tormod Engelsviken, Erling Lundeby and Dagfinn Solheim (eds).

Evangelical and Frontier Mission: Perspectives on the Global Progress of the Gospel, A. Scott Moreau and Beth Snodderly (eds).

Interfaith Relations after One Hundred Years: Christian Mission among Other Faiths, Marina Ngursangzeli Behera (ed).

Witnessing to Christ in a Pluralistic Age: Christian Mission among Other Faiths, Lalsangkima Pachuau and Knud Jørgensen (eds).

Mission and Post Modernities, Rolv Olsen (ed).

A Learning Missional Church: Reflections from Young Missiologists, Beate Fagerli, Knud Jørgensen, Rolv Olsen, Kari Storstein Haug and Knut Tveitereid (eds).

Life-Widening Mission: Global Anglican Perspectives, Cathy Ross (ed).

Foundations for Mission, Emma Wild-Wood and Peniel Rajkumar (eds).

Mission Spirituality and Authentic Discipleship, Wonsuk Ma and Kenneth R. Ross (eds).

A Century of Catholic Missions, Stephen Bevans (ed).

Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation, Robert Schreiter and Knud Jørgensen (eds).

Orthodox Perspectives on Mission, Petros Vassiliadis (ed).

Bible in Mission, Pauline Hoggarth, Fergus Macdonald, Knud Jørgensen and Bill Mitchell (eds).

Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity, Wonsuk Ma, Veli-Matti Karkkainen and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (eds).

Engaging the World: Christian Communities in Contemporary Global Society, Afe Adogame, Janice McLean and Anderson Jeremiah (eds).

Mission At and From the Margins: Patterns, Protagonists and Perspectives, Peniel Rajkumar, Joseph Dayam, I.P. Asheervadham (eds).

The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives, Margunn Serigstad Dahle, Lars Dahle and Knud Jørgensen (eds).

¹ For an up-to-date list and full publication details, see www.ocms.ac.uk/regnum/

Global Diasporas and Mission, Chandler H Im & Amos Yong (eds).

Theology, Mission and Child: Global Perspectives, B Prevette, K White, CR Velloso Ewell & DJ Konz (eds).

Called to Unity for the Sake of Mission, John Gibaut and Knud Jørgensen (eds).

Freedom of Belief and Christian Mission, Hans Aage Gravaas, Christof Sauer, Tormod Engelsviken, Maqsood Kamil and Knud Jørgensen (eds).

Korean Church, God's Mission, Global Christianity, Wonsuk Ma and Kyo Seong Ahn (eds).

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INTRODUCTION

LATIN AMERICAN MISSION, THEN AND NOW

For centuries Latin America was considered a mission field. It was not until 1987 that Luis Bush, during the Congress of COMIBAM in São Paulo, Brazil, made the historic statement that, from that time onwards, Latin America was no longer a mission field, but a mission force¹ instead. Missionaries from different streams made their way to this continent to plant new churches. The first missionaries were the Catholic priests who accompanied the ‘conquerors’ sent by Spain. They were committed to ‘Christianize’ the ‘New World’ with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. They started at the end of the fifteenth century.² Then Protestant missionaries arrived. The mission thrust of the Reform movements caused them to reach out to new territories as well.

This volume is about *missio Dei* in Latin America and how God’s mission has been implemented in that continent. The authors unfold and interpret the most recent history of some Protestant movements in Latin America in their contexts of mission across the region.

History records that at Edinburgh 1910 Latin America was considered an evangelized region. The Anglo-Catholics³ who seemed to be dominant in the Church of England at that time refused to participate in that conference if Latin America were considered a mission field. They were able to persuade the leaders of Edinburgh 1910 to take Latin America out of the list of non-evangelized regions and territories.⁴ However, some mission leaders from North America were not convinced by this approach to

¹ W. Harold Fuller, *Tie Down the Sun: Adventure in Latin America* (Indiana University, IN: SIM Publications, 1990), 364. See also Raúl Zaldívar, ‘Where are the Evangelists? The Phenomenon of Evangelism in Latin American History’, in this volume.

² See Jorge Alberto Zavala Salgado, ‘The Evolution of the Human Right to Religious Freedom of the Indigenous People of Latin America’, in this volume.

³ The Catholic Church did not push for the exclusion of Latin America as a mission field. Catholics were not part of the conference planning. See Carlos Ham, ‘Christian Communities in Contemporary Contexts: A Latin American Perspective’, in Kirsteen Kim and Andrew Anderson (eds), *Edinburgh 2010: Mission Today and Tomorrow* (Oxford: Regnum, 1911), 249.

⁴ See Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 13, 52-55, 64-68, 303-307; and Samuel Escobar, ‘It’s your Turn, Young Ones; Make me Proud! Evangelical Mission in Latin America and Beyond’, in this volume.

mission in Latin America; instead, they decided to call a conference that eventually took place in Panama in 1916.⁵

Although most participants of Panama 1916 were foreign to Latin America and the conference was conducted in English, the congress marked the beginning of a new era for the evangelization of the continent.⁶ The delegates acknowledged that Latin America needed to be evangelized, that new churches were needed, and that the gospel had to be presented by Protestants as well. Panama 1916 opened the doors to Evangelical and Pentecostal denominations from North America and Europe to plant churches and centres of social action in all countries to this day.

The 21st century found Christianity established but also divided in Latin America. It is divided in numerous forms of government, doctrine and ministerial practices. There is an obvious need for inter-denominational dialogue⁷ and for a mature conversation between the two entities of the Protestant movements and the Roman Catholic Church in the region. Once these dialogues take place, the road to a full transformation of the region may be expedited.

This volume was designed with the idea of bringing about mutual understanding and co-operation among the different members of the body of Christ in Latin America. Christian leaders may show true maturity as they open the doors to welcome genuine co-operation, an honest disposition to engage in dialogue, and a willingness to accept others even when they think and act differently.

Latin American Mission in its Diversity

The twentieth century is now known as the time for the expansion of the gospel in Latin America. In that expansion the Evangelical and Pentecostal seed was planted in most people groups in the region. Eventually the gospel among those groups began to grow and new churches were added to their denominations.⁸ The reader of this volume will also notice that in recent statements every Christian denomination claim unprecedented revivals and high numerical growth.⁹

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⁵ Emilio Antonio Núñez and William D. Taylor, *Crisis and Hope in Latina America: An Evangelical Perspective* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1996), 157.

⁶ See Carlos Ham, 'Emerging Contemporary Contexts of Mission: The Havana Contribution to Edinburgh 2010', in this volume.

⁷ See Carmelo Alvarez, 'The Ecumenism of the Spirit', in this volume.

⁸ See Dinorah B. Méndez, 'Evangelical Mission in Mexico Today: The Challenge to Remember and Celebrate our Heritage', in this volume.

⁹ See Bernardo Campos, 'Neo-Pentecostal Paradigms in Latin American Mission: Megatrends in the Theologies of Mission and Missionary Practices among Neo-Pentecostals in Peru', in this volume.

One difficult issue to be resolved by Latin American Christian movements, particularly among Evangelicals and Pentecostals, is the imbalance between numerical growth and human transformation. For most writers of this volume this imbalance does not represent the best interests of the gospel as presented in the Scriptures.¹⁰ Even in the most evangelized nations, such as Guatemala, poverty, corruption and other social evils remain unresolved. The churches have invested significant energy in social work but social evils remain defiant. Even so, contemporary scholarship is also investing lots of energy in researching the causes and solutions of this phenomenon.¹¹

Those who are looking at the future see the 21st century as the time of hope, when the churches will be able to engage in social action with serious responsibility, for they also have a part to play in the solution to the social evils that affect Latin American society.

Historic Mission Streams

In this volume the reader will find diversity in the expansion and expression of the Christian faith in Latin America. The writers have candidly interpreted the history of their movements. They all have one thing in common: there have been mistakes committed at the beginning of every ministry in these lands, yet with the course of time they are making adjustments that are leading them to work for the best interests of people and in harmony with other Christian groups.

Emerging Contemporary Contexts of Mission

In the content of this volume the reader may distinguish two important topics among many others:

Mission from the margins to the margins

Most writers agree that the gospel found fertile ground among the poor and marginalized of the region. At some point Pentecostals were able to capitalize on what was earlier initiated by the Evangelical movements in the region. Now both movements claim a great deal of success, which is seen in the response of their constituencies to the gospel.

¹⁰ See Israel Ortiz, 'Beyond Numerical Growth: The Challenge of Transformation in Guatemala', in this volume.

¹¹ See Ortiz, 'Beyond Numerical Growth', in this volume.

Transformation of Latin American civilizations

One interesting phenomenon to be observed is the response of the Mayan civilization to the gospel. The epicentre of this civilization gravitates around Guatemala and the surrounding nations, especially South Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua.¹² In recent years literally millions of Mayan descent and people living among them have experienced unprecedented Christian revivals that are mostly observed by a significant increase in conversions.¹³

These revivals are now reaching out to the Inca and Aztec civilizations. For instance, recent data about Christianity in the Andean region show substantial numerical growth in the area.¹⁴

One considerable challenge for the Latin American church is the matter of human growth and transformation. In recent years, scholars such Samuel Escobar, René Padilla and others have called on Protestants to study and practise mission holistically.¹⁵

Hope and Expectations: Unity and Co-operation

The authors of this volume are referring to Latin America as a continent of hope. They address their topics with a critical and positive interpretation of history in preparation for a better future. Future scenarios are anticipated with an expectation of unity and co-operation among Christians.

The reader will also notice a multicultural contribution to the volume and scholarship from strategic regions of the continent. The volume includes indigenous African and Asian voices. It also embraces the voices of women, children and youth.

There have been other volumes written about Latin America. The continent continues to produce highly qualified leaders and scholars who conduct serious studies regarding the mission of the church; but this volume is unique in its purpose. It brings fresh information and a thorough analysis of contemporary Christianity in the region. This perspective enables the strategic mind to see possibilities and to plan with optimism.

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¹² See Arthur Bonner, *We will not be stopped: Evangelical Persecution, Catholicism and Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico* (New York: Universal Publishers, 1998), 5.

¹³ See Sherron George, 'Constructing Latin American Mission: How the Holistic Perspective Overcame Traditional Stereotypes', in this volume.

¹⁴ See Bernardo Campos, 'Neo-Pentecostal Paradigms in Latin American Mission', in this volume.

¹⁵ See Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everywhere* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003), 142-53; and René Padilla, *Mission Between the Times* (Grand Rapids, MI: Langham Monographs, 2010), 146-56.

On behalf of all writers of this volume, I invite the reader to study objectively the following articles. I also thank all the contributors for taking the time to produce this academic work. Their input has been outstanding!

Miguel Alvarez

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PART ONE

**MISSION IN
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IT'S YOUR TURN, YOUNG ONES – MAKE ME PROUD!

EVANGELICAL MISSION IN LATIN AMERICA AND BEYOND

Samuel Escobar

At present I live in Valencia, Spain. My assignment for this volume was to write about 'Evangelical Mission in Latin America', but here in Spain, in 2015, I write instead about 'Evangelical Mission *from* Latin America'. In 2014 I spoke at a missiological gathering in Torrox, near Málaga, attended by over a hundred Latin American Evangelical missionaries now working in Europe.¹ After that event I crossed the peninsula to Seville in order to teach an intensive course about Christian mission organized by Irismenio Ribeiro, a Brazilian missionary who leads an extension theological centre for the region. The Baptist church of Montequinto, where the pastor is Stella Maris Merlo from Argentina, who has been serving as a missionary in Spain for thirty-three years, hosted it. At mealtimes we were served by Gladys, a lady from El Salvador, a hard-working immigrant, and one of the thousands of Latin American volunteers that are active in Spanish Evangelical churches these days.

There is a blooming missionary enthusiasm of Latin American evangelicals sending missionaries to Europe, Asia and Africa. But there is also the spontaneous missionary activity of Latin American migrants who are contributing their presence and ministry to the Evangelical churches of Spain. All this may be better understood if we have a basic idea about Evangelical mission *in* Latin America during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

It is necessary to clarify the use of the term 'Evangelical' in this article. In most countries the Spanish equivalent 'Evangélico' has become synonymous for 'Protestant'. However, for the sake of precision we must remember that 'Evangelical' means a particular form of Protestantism. It is characterized by a concern to keep basic doctrines of the Christian faith, an emphasis on a personal conversion to Christ, insistence on certain ethical standards of behaviour and active participation in the evangelistic task of the church. And those of us that are familiar with the history of Protestant mission know that the great drive towards communicating the Gospel, the missionary thrust, in the English-speaking world came from Evangelical

¹ The meeting, at Torrox, Malaga, Spain, 2014, was sponsored by COMIBAM, the Evangelical Alliance, and Back to Europe.

sectors within Protestantism. Speaking in Buenos Aires in 1956, Kenneth Scott Latourette, the great historian of Christian mission, stated that:

The vital minorities of Protestants in Europe come in a great part from the puritan-pietistic-evangelical tradition. In that same stream takes place the larger growth in figures and influence outside Europe. This means that world Protestantism has more and more a puritan-pietistic-evangelical complexion.²

Latin America as a Mission Field³

The arrival of Christopher Columbus on a Caribbean island in 1492 opened the way for an imperial expansion of Spain and Portugal in the vast territories that today we call the Americas. The evangelization of the natives was a key element in the ideological construct that was developed to explain and justify the conquest of those lands. It is not easy to separate darkness from light in the imperial missionary enterprise. Catholic liberation theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez wrote a self-critical masterpiece of historical research and theological reflection describing and evaluating the missionary enterprise of the sixteenth century.⁴ The fact is that for three centuries after the Spanish and Portuguese conquest there was a highly institutionalized and powerful Roman Catholic Church in the colonies. No other church had a right to exist in the empire and the Inquisition was an efficient way of eliminating any sign of dissent.

The panorama started to change when between 1810 and 1824 the Spanish colonies broke away from Spain and became independent nations. Some of the leaders of the emancipation had sympathies for Protestantism and its potential for social change. So when in 1816 Scottish educator James Thomson, representing both the Lancasterian Society and the Bible Society, offered his services to José de San Martín in Argentina, Chile and Peru, he was welcomed and eventually established some training schools in these countries. Later on Simon Bolívar called him to Colombia and he also travelled to Mexico. Throughout the nineteenth century, agents of the Bible Societies became the pioneers of a Protestant presence that slowly but steadily grew to the point that by 1916 it was estimated that there were 160,000 Latin American Protestants. The Inquisition had eliminated Protestantism from Spain in the sixteenth century but two Spanish Protestant exiles, Casiodoro de Reina and Cipriano de Valera, were able to complete a full translation of the Bible, which three centuries later became the key instrument for evangelization.

² Kenneth Scott Latourette, *Desafío a los protestantes* (Buenos Aires: La Aurora, 1957), 78.

³ In this essay I am borrowing material from my book *Changing Tides. Latin America and World Mission Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002).

⁴ See Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Las Casas. In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993).

When Protestants from Europe and North America began to send missionaries to Latin America in the final decades of the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church rejected their presence, claiming that the region was Christian and was already evangelized: it did not need missionaries. Most of the older European Protestant churches adopted the same position and decided not to send their missionaries to Latin America.

In 1910 American and European Protestant missions organized the now famous missionary conference of Edinburgh in order to consider the state of Christian mission and the possibility of joint action for the future.⁵ The slogan chosen for the meeting expressed an evangelical sense of urgency: 'The evangelization of the world in our generation.' However, the organizers were bound by the position that Latin America was not a mission field, and hence they did not invite any of the Protestant missions that were then working in the region, or any other Protestant churches established in it by that time.

The well-known Mexican journalist and Bible scholar Gonzalo Báez-Camargo interpreted this exclusion as a sign of the prevailing mindset among Protestants in 1910, which was still shaped by the Victorian-era of complacency and paternalism. They saw the human race as divided into a 'Christian world' that included Europe and the Americas and a 'non-Christian' world encompassing Asia, Africa and the Pacific islands. 'In other words,' says Báez-Camargo, 'here were grouped on one side and on the other a bloc of Christian civilized "sending" countries, and a bloc of non-Christian uncivilized, as "receiving" mission fields.'⁶ Báez-Camargo believed that this global classification was too naïve and paved the way for blatant inconsistencies, such as placing Latin America in the first bloc.⁷

In the intense missiological debates around this issue, some Protestant missionary statesmen from Great Britain and North America described the spiritual condition of Latin America in sombre tones. The appeal to send Protestant missionaries was accompanied by a description of social, moral and spiritual conditions that were considered as a call to action. Thus Robert Speer, the well-known American Presbyterian mission statesman, wrote in 1913:

The first test of religious conditions is to be found in the facts of social life. No land can be conceded to have a satisfactory religion where the moral conditions are as they have been shown to be in South America. If it can be proved that the conditions of any European or North American land are as

⁵ See a history of this process in Norman Goodall, *The Ecumenical Movement* (Oxford: OUP, 1961).

⁶ Gonzalo Baez-Camargo, 'Mexico: A Long Stretch from Edinburgh', in *Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XIV (October 1963-July 1964), 267.

⁷ Gonzalo Báez-Camargo, 'The Place of Latin America in the Ecumenical Movement', in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. 1:49 (1948), 311.

they are in South America, then it will be proved also that that land needs a religious reformation.⁸

Speer was an enthusiastic member of the group of missionary leaders who were not in agreement with the criterion adopted at Edinburgh 1910. They formed a Committee of Co-operation in Latin America and supported a Missionary Congress of Protestant bodies that were working in the region, which was held in Panama in 1916. That meeting was a milestone for the Protestant missionary effort in these lands. It was preceded by a careful study of the situation, based on information sent by missionary correspondents throughout the continent, and that material served as the basis for ten working groups.⁹ The three volumes that sum up the studies of the Congress give us a clear idea of the scope of the Protestant mission in these lands, and the results that it had achieved. The Congress also reflected the self-critical attitude of the participating missions, which recognized the flaws in their work and were looking for new forms of co-operation and co-ordination.¹⁰

Speer's observation reflected an Evangelical conviction about the relationship between faith and ethics, and between religion and morality, which is also found in other authors of missionary literature in those days, 'Christianity is not opinion or ritual. It is life and that life must utter itself in moral purity and strength. No amount of theological statement or devout worship can avail to take the place of ethical fruitage in social purity and victory over sin.'¹¹ For Speer the situation was not a matter of concern only to Protestants, but also to Catholics in North America.

We find the same approach in John A. Mackay, a Scottish Presbyterian who was a missionary in Peru since 1916 and later on in Mexico, before becoming President of Princeton Theological Seminary. Well known for his friendship with several liberal and socialist leaders of Latin America, Mackay had come to the conviction that most of them rejected the Catholic religion out of moral motives related to social justice.¹² Twelve years after the Panama Congress, at the initial meeting of the International Missionary Council (1928) in Jerusalem, Mackay made very clear the legitimacy of a Protestant missionary presence in Latin America:

⁸ Robert E. Speer, *South American Problems, Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions* (New York: Lanham, 1913), 145.

⁹ Juan Kessler and Wilton M. Nelson, 'Panamá 1916 y su impacto sobre el Protestantismo latinoamericano', in *Pastoralia*, No. 2 (November 1978), 5-21.

¹⁰ This has been noted particularly by the Catholic historian, Prudencio Damboriena, S.J., *El Protestantismo en América Latina*, Vol. I, FERES (Bogotá: Friburgo), 23.

¹¹ Speer, *South American Problems*, 145.

¹² John A. Mackay, *That Other America* (New York: Friendship Press, 1935), 69-73; 107-16. For a recent biography of Mackay, see John Mackay Metzger, *The Hand and the Road. The Life and Times of John A. Mackay* (Louisville, KY: Westminster-John Knox Press, 2010).

Sometimes those who are interested in Christian service in South America are apt to be regarded as religious buccaneers devoting their lives to ecclesiastical piracy, but that is far from being the case. The great majority of men to whom we go will have nothing to do with religion. They took up this attitude because religion and morality had been divorced throughout the whole history of religious life in South America.¹³

Interpreting what happened in this meeting in Jerusalem, Báez-Camargo holds that it represented a significant change of mindset. In Jerusalem it was also noted that a wave of secularism had invaded the countries sending missionaries. Acknowledgement of this fact had major consequences for both missiology and theology:

This proved to be a revolutionary admission, for it meant that, after all, the formerly self-designated 'Christian world' was also a mission field itself. It meant again – and this was still more important – that the Kingdom of God cannot be defined in terms of mere territorial accretion, but that the whole of life everywhere must be brought under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.¹⁴

Thus, starting from convictions established by Protestant missionary practice in Latin America, serious questions were raised about the Christianizing process that had accompanied the Iberian conquest in the sixteenth century. This perspective is well summarized by the Argentine Methodist theologian José Míguez Bonino, who would later be the only Latin American Protestant observer at Vatican II. Míguez says:

Latin America was never 'Christian' in the sense that Europe or even North America can be said to be so. What took place here was a colossal transplantation – the basic ecclesiastical structures, disciplines, and ministries were brought wholesale from Spain, and were expected to function as a Christian order: a tremendous form without substance.¹⁵

This Latin American missionary field turned out to be fertile soil for the growth of evangelical Protestantism. The 160,000 Protestants in 1916 have grown to around 60 million in 2015. A Catholic observer in 1989 said that:

If current growth rates continue, Latin America will have an evangelical majority in the early 21st century. Actually, in terms of church participation, 'practicing' evangelicals may already outnumber 'observant' Catholics.¹⁶

This prediction became true in 2015. Today, religious practice is one of the areas of human experience that is researched and mapped by market analysts. For instance, *Latinobarómetro*, located in Chile, is one of the

¹³ John A. Mackay, 'The power of Evangelism', in *Addresses and Other Records: Report of the Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council*, Vol. VIII (Oxford: OUP, 1928), 121.

¹⁴ Báez-Camargo, 'The Place of Latin America in the Ecumenical Movement', 268.

¹⁵ José Míguez Bonino, 'Latin America', in *The Prospects of Christianity throughout the World*, M. Searle Bates and Wilhelm Pauck (eds) (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), 168.

¹⁶ John McCoy, 'La Embestida Evangélica', in *Noticias Aliadas*, 26:24 (Lima: 29th June, 1989), 2.

institutions that reports regularly about their findings in Latin America. Their research about religious practice in eighteen countries shows that countries where there is a strong Protestant presence are also countries with more religious practice: ‘The general rule is that in all countries, except Colombia, evangelicals practice their religion more than Catholics’.¹⁷

Latin American Protestants considered Latin America a territory needing basic evangelization, a field of pioneer experiences where the New Testament model could be applied almost literally. In their more enthusiastic moments, some of them expressed the hope that something unprecedented could happen, and they used the New Testament era as a reference point. Thus, for instance, in 1916 Brazilian evangelical leader Erasmo Braga, after describing how first-century Christianity had signified ‘the end of paganism’, came to this conclusion:

The lesson of history authorizes us to hope that under the impact of the simple and sincere gospel message, as the apostles preached it in ancient Rome, the ‘end of paganism’ will also take place for Latin America.¹⁸

This vision was re-echoed in 1973, almost sixty years later, in the words of Roger Greenway, a Reformed missionary, who in the 1970s devoted special attention to studying the evangelization of large Latin American cities. Greenway said:

If revitalized churches whose leaders have been trained in church growth-oriented schools can be turned loose in the burgeoning cities, then a multiplication of churches will occur *such as the world has not seen since the first century*.¹⁹

The numerical growth of Protestants in the twentieth century led some Catholic observers to refer back, not to the first century, but to the sixteenth. Bishop Boaventura Kloppenburg, for example, writing in 1987, noted how in terms of changing religious affiliation, what was happening in Latin America surpassed what happened during the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century. In the twentieth century, the Catholic Church had lost more faithful who became Protestants than it lost in the age of Luther and Calvin.

Evangelicals in Latin America

In general terms it may be said that the term ‘Evangelical’ describes well the ethos of the majority of Protestant churches in Latin America. We may

¹⁷ See Marta Lagos, *Report from Latinobarómetro 1996-2013* (Santiago, Chile: Corporación Latinobarómetro, 2015). This is an organization in Chile dedicated to researching the opinions and social practices of Latin Americans.

¹⁸ Erasmo Braga, *Panamericanismo: Aspecto Religioso* (New York: Sociedade de Preparo Missionário, 1916), 195.

¹⁹ Roger Greenway, *An Urban Strategy for Latin America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973), 236. Emphasis added.

group them in four sectors.²⁰ First, the so-called *ethnic churches* that came with migratory waves, as was the case of German immigration to Brazil, Chile and Argentina that brought in Lutheranism. In a similar way the Anglicans came first to assist the growing number of British expatriates brought by commerce and industry immediately after the end of the Spanish empire. Second, the so-called *historical churches* such as Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists, which were established by missionaries from Europe and North America who also came in the final decades of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth.

The third sector are the *free or independent churches* and new denominations that resulted from the work of interdenominational missions, the so-called 'faith missions' or denominations that were being formed in North America in the early twentieth century, such as the Christian and Missionary Alliance or the Church of the Nazarene. The classic Pentecostal churches that were the result of early Pentecostal missionary action or local revival movements in other denominations form the fourth and largest sector. The dominant religious force is still the Catholic Church which has experienced significant changes in recent years but it continues to decline in numbers and influence, in spite of the visible efforts of the Vatican and the local hierarchies to regain political influence and control of public education.

There is also a new religious force emerging that could be described as para-Evangelical. Its origins are among charismatic Catholics disaffected with Rome, independent missions from some USA mega-churches, and groups that split from Evangelical churches. Some of these are connected with the so-called Neo-Apostolic movement. These para-Evangelical churches initially seek legitimization by connecting with Evangelicals. However, their numerical growth, their disregard for theological definition, and their ability to develop forms of church life relevant to post-modern culture, as well as their claim to originality, may turn them into a new religious force different from both Evangelicals and Roman Catholics.

More detailed and careful analysis shows steady growth in places such as Colombia where Evangelicals were 85,000 in 1968 (0.43% of a 19 million population) and in the year 2000 were close to two million (5% of a 38 million population). According to Paul Freston, a Brazilian sociologist who is at present one of the most able specialists:

By 2000, Protestantism was the religion of perhaps 12% of Latin Americans.

In the largest country, Brazil, the 2000 census showed 15.5 per cent Protestant growth... the highest percentage is probably in Guatemala (20

²⁰ Different authors have used different typologies of Protestantism in Latin America. Here I am using my adaptation of the one developed by José Míguez Bonino in his seminal study *Faces of Latin America Protestantism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997).

percent plus)... The 2002 census in Chile showed 15.1 per cent Protestants, up from 12.4 per cent in 1992.²¹

With the growing attention paid by sociologists and Roman Catholic hierarchies to this phenomenon there is also a good amount of qualitative analysis of growth, which gives ground for reflection. Take for instance the case of Chile where a sociological study by the Catholic University in 2001 concluded that research among the upper classes shows that while only 6.2% claim to be Protestant, 81.9% claim to be Roman Catholic. In the same study, among the poorer sections of the population, 21% claim to be Evangelical.²² The study also pays attention to the fact that, while the average Catholic priest has gone through a minimum of ten years of rigorous formation, many of the Evangelical pastors are self-taught.

A disturbing fact uncovered by missiological studies is that in some countries there are signs of decline and defection among Evangelicals. Careful field research has provided data showing that a number of people from Evangelical churches are returning to the Catholic Church or leaving Christianity entirely. Jorge Gómez in Costa Rica conducted the most disturbing of such studies, and it provides a factual account of these trends. His research was completed during 1994, and he could make use of other rigorous sociological samples of studies carried on between 1989 and 1991. Summarising his findings, Gómez concludes that 'from the almost 20% of the population that in some moment of their lives have been or are Protestant, only 10% were Protestant at the time of the study'.²³ Defection has been higher than what pastors and denominational leaders ever thought it would be. The groups in which defection is more frequent are young adults (18-24 years of age), men, persons born in Protestant homes, and new believers (within the first or second year of their affiliation). There is a direct relationship between an intentional discipleship process and the retention of members. The churches that have lost more members are those that have no clear plan of discipleship or pastoral care. Among the top reasons for defection are the inability of defectors to live up to the standards required by the churches, and financial and sexual scandals among pastors and leaders.

The Objective of Mission in the Catholic Tradition

A comparative study of missionary methodology helps to understand the present situation. A fundamental difference between Catholic and

²¹ Paul Freston, *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), 15.

²² Samuel Escobar, 'Latin American Christians in the New Christianity', in *Review and Expositor* 103:3 (Summer 2006), 579-601.

²³ Jorge I. Gómez, *El Crecimiento y la Deserción en la Iglesia Evangélica Costarricense* (San José, Costa Rica: IINDEF, 1996), 133.

Protestant approaches has to do with the way they understand the purpose of missionary activity. A statement by the Catholic historian Robert Ricard in the introduction to his classic book about Catholic evangelization of Mexico in the sixteenth century, offers us a useful starting point. Ricard notes that:

... more and more every day an idea is spreading among theologians who deal with mission issues that the essential aim of mission among non-believers is not the conversion of individuals, but rather the establishment of the visible church, with all the organs and institutions entailed in such visible expression of the church.²⁴

This sharp statement by Ricard to some extent represents pre-Vatican II theology, and today some Catholic specialists question it.²⁵ However, Ricard describes well the prevailing tendency in Catholic missionary practice. For him this notion 'falls perfectly within the logical line of Catholic teaching', for which the vision of the church has a strong sacramental accent. When this vision is formulated with precision, it cannot but be surprising to a Protestant observer. Ricard recognizes that it is God's grace that converts a human being but he reaches the following conclusion:

... if it is the church that normally spreads divine grace through its sacraments because it is intermediary between God and his creature, the primary task of the missionary would logically consist in making the normal means of conversion available to non-believers.²⁶

In recording the history of evangelization, Ricard places the church first and then he looks at missionaries, 'no doubt as converters, but even more as founders of the church'.²⁷ Missionary activity is preceded by clear ecclesiological definition in which the institutional and sacramental note predominates. This fits the Catholic tradition, which was continued even at Vatican II. Before defining its theology and missionary strategy in the document *Ad Gentes*, the council fathers defined their ecclesiology in *Lumen Gentium*. Missionary methodology draws nourishment from the ecclesiological vision. Even so, it could be said that a basic weakness of Catholic methodology is to be found in this statement: Roman Catholic mission in Latin America succeeded in setting up the institution but it failed to convert individuals.

The Protestant critique expressed by the pioneers of missiological reflection clearly pointed out the failure of this methodology. This was

²⁴ Robert Ricard, *La Conquista Espiritual de México* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1991), 21 (emphasis added).

²⁵ A study of the relationship between Catholic ecclesiology and mission is found in *La Misionología Hoy*, edited by Obras Misionales Pontificias in Spain (Madrid: Editorial Verbo Divino, 1987). See especially chapters 6 and 9.

²⁶ Ricard, *La Conquista Espiritual de México*, 21.

²⁷ Ricard, *La Conquista Espiritual de México*, 22.

made explicit in the writings of pioneers such as Rycroft²⁸ and Mackay, and more recently by ecumenical thinkers such as Báez-Camargo²⁹ and José Míguez Bonino.³⁰ However, in the 1970s Catholic self-criticism also began to recognize this fact, precisely because at that time the social crisis of the continent shook up the nominalism of the Catholic faith of Latin Americans.

It is very important to keep in mind that the renewal of Catholic theology in Latin America has a missiological starting-point. Liberation theologians like Juan Luis Segundo and Gustavo Gutiérrez, at the outset of their careers, were motivated by a strong pastoral concern, and they pointed out the weaknesses of Latin American Catholicism. They criticized what they saw as a 'huge machine for making Christians' that had not led to the true conversion of individuals through the transforming gospel. Segundo said:

If Christianity can only survive social change in Latin America insofar as it becomes a personal, heroic, and internally shaped life in each person, pastoral activity ought to take on a formally new task. New in terms of the Constantinian era in which we have lived up till now; but also the oldest and most traditional: the task of *evangelizing*.³¹

Gutiérrez, moreover, performed a historic analysis of this missionary method, locating it within what he called the 'pastoral care of Christendom', a pastoral approach corresponding to the Constantinian era. He also criticized the fact that it was still continuing well into the twentieth century. In opposition to it, he proposed a prophetic pastoral work. His critique goes to the heart of the matter when he says of Christendom-style pastoral work:

In terms of access to faith, in this pastoral option, conversion (conversion of the heart, interior conversion) and belonging to the visible church, which takes place through baptism, are regarded as the same thing. One who is baptized is regarded as a believer, even if he or she is not so in practice... Evangelization is ignored in favor of immediate sacramentalization... Matters go so far that the sacrament is regarded as salvation insurance, and the person's subsequent conduct does not matter much.³²

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²⁸ See W. Stanley Rycroft, *Religion and Faith in Latin America* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1958).

²⁹ See 'Who's Who in Latin America', in *Hacia la Renovación Religiosa en Hispanoamérica*, Part I, Mexico (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1929).

³⁰ José Míguez Bonino, 'El Testimonio Cristiano en un Continente Descristianizado', in *Testimonium*, Vol. IX, Fasc. 1 (First Quarter 1961). Míguez nuances his judgment but maintains his critique in *Protestantismo y Liberalismo en América Latina*.

³¹ Juan Luis Segundo, *De la Sociedad a la Teología* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Carlos Lohle, 1970), 37.

³² Segundo, *De la Sociedad a la Teología*, 16-17.

The sociological interpretation of the crisis of this weakly rooted 'Catholicism vis-à-vis the modernization crisis' we owe to a key work by Ivan Vallier. His analysis demonstrated quite precisely that the lack of depth of the profession of faith of Catholics led the institutional church to respond to the processes of modernization, seeking to use the political manipulations of social control. Vallier pointed out that no thorough evangelization took place and that the church had been hastily 'scattered', rather than 'planted'. Hence, because it could not count on enthusiastic loyalty from the population when moments of crisis came, the institutional church defended itself with political means:

The more the Church became politicized and tied to short-run adaptive strategies, the more the religious and spiritual interests of the rank and file weakened. The Church became a major political actor on behalf of the forces that promised to protect it as an institution, rather than a differentiated religious system with roots in the spiritual life of autonomous membership groups.³³

The Objective of Mission in the Protestant Tradition

How was the question of the purpose or the objective of mission posed in Protestant missionary practice? It should be recalled that the Protestant missionary movement only got underway in the mid-eighteenth century, that is, two centuries after Roman Catholic mission was flourishing. One of its distinctive notes was that it came to see the purpose of mission in terms very different from those of the Catholic vision. Historians like Latourette, Stephen Neill and Justo González agree that Protestant mission sprang out of the Pietist revival and was shaped by it. We ought to recall that Pietism above all else sought personal experience of faith for each believer, as opposed to simply confessing a common creed collectively. This was a revival or spiritual awakening and, as Gonzalez notes, Pietism contained a protest against the older Protestant orthodoxy. Some of the Pietist leaders were academically trained theologians, but they were convinced that practical Christian life was worth more than theological formulas.

This Christian life was generally understood in individualistic terms, and hence what was highlighted was the Christian's individual experience and obedience as an individual to the divine commandments.³⁴

This Pietistic root as the origin and driving impulse of the Protestant missionary movement determined the style and the way mission was carried out. The purpose of mission became more and more understood as 'the conversion of individual persons to the Gospel of Jesus Christ'. This

³³ Ivan Vallier, *The Future of Christianity in Latin America* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970), 8.

³⁴ Justo L. González and Carlos F. Cardoza, *Historia general de las misiones* (Barcelona, Spain: CLIE, 2008), 138.

was very much the experience in Latin America and continues to be so, in contrast with the Catholic experience. Historian Justo González points out that in the twentieth century this tendency was accentuated. Theologian Emilio Antonio Núñez emphasized this aspect in the practice and style of missionaries of the independent missions or 'faith missions', as they are called in English. Núñez points out that from 1900 to 1949 those missionaries were 'pre-millenarian in eschatology, Pietist in their vision of Christianity, and separatist in their basic attitude towards other ecclesiastical bodies and towards society in general'.³⁵ Núñez also finds in these traits the reason why that missionary generation was unable to take up the tasks demanded by the social context of poverty and injustice characteristic of Latin America.

It could be said that the specific features of Pietism in the Protestant missionary movement were sharpened in Latin America because of the tendency to stand out in contrast against the Christendom pastoral practice of the Roman Catholic Church. The positive side of the influence of Pietism was its renewing power within the dormant Protestant churches in Europe and North America, and its ability to generate missionary energy in many ordinary Christians. The churches that arose from this effort were made up of people with a high degree of loyalty and a sense of belonging to the Lord who was drawing them to a disciplined and self-sacrificing life in a hostile environment. This helped them to live as a minority whose high standard of personal behaviour had possibilities for social transformation.

The negative side lies in the problem resulting from the excessive individualism of this conception and its missionary methodology, because the emerging local churches and communities do not achieve institutional cohesion, and do not have the sense of what it means to be the church as a body with continuity. Caudillo-style³⁶ leadership easily causes divisions, generational differences are not contained, and no pluralism of opinion is allowed, even for secondary matters. Missions cannot avoid a spirit of commercial competition, heightened by the glorification of numerical growth as the sole criterion of missionary action. That hinders co-operation between Protestants for mission, and despite numerical growth and the many churches that spring up, they cannot find a common voice to give witness in the face of the social and political problems of each nation. This lack of clear ecclesiology also leads to the sectarian attitude by which some churches tend to regard themselves as the only true church.³⁷

³⁵ Emilio A. Núñez and William C. Taylor, *Crisis and Hope in Latin America* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1989), 376.

³⁶ The term *caudillo* refers to a political or military strongman, like the regional leaders who dominated post-independence politics in the nineteenth century, and by extension it is applied to dictators, populist leaders and political bosses to the present day.

³⁷ This problem was partly what prompted Juan Kessler to undertake the research in the previously cited work on Protestant missionary history in Peru and Chile. See

The dangers of this missionary practice were recognized early on by Kenneth Strachan, who headed the Latin American Mission and shaped the missionary methodology known as 'In-Depth Evangelism'. Strachan was one of the first missiologists who analyzed the strong Protestant missionary movement to Latin America that flourished after World War II.³⁸ As is known, during this post-war period the missionary enthusiasm and activity of the traditional or historical Protestant churches, which until then had been predominant in Latin America, began to wane. At the same time, the zeal and activity of conservative and fundamentalist sectors increased, as they organized independent missions, and sent strong missionary contingents to Latin America. 'For better or worse,' said Strachan, 'the non-historic groups constitute a major factor in the determination of Latin America's Protestant future.'³⁹

Strachan believed that God might be using these groups or missions to pour new life into ecclesiastical bodies that had lost their strength and vitality. But the opposite was also possible – that is, that these groups could reach the point of being

... instrumental in sidetracking the Evangelical church down sterile bypaths of doctrinal extremes and religious oddities, and tragically remove it from effective contact with the mainstream of Latin American life. And it can so intensify and magnify its divisions as to make it hopelessly unable to resist and overcome to the point where they will be completely unable to resist and overcome the anti-Christian pressures that are building up in the world today.⁴⁰

This observation turned out to be prophetically true. On the one hand, evangelical advance has been based on individual conversion. And yet the lack of a sense of 'church' – the ecclesiological vacuum – has produced institutional weakness, a sectarianism that hinders co-operation for mission, and an inability to forge alternatives in the realm of social ethics. For the last thirty years, Protestant missiology has been making an effort to respond to this situation.⁴¹

Juan B.A. Kessler, *Conflict in Missions: A History of Protestantism in Peru and Chile* (Denver, CO: Academic Press Books, 2001).

³⁸ See W. Dayton Roberts, *Strachan of Costa Rica: Missionary Insights and Strategies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971). See also my brief appraisal of Strachan in 'The Two Party System and the Missionary Enterprise', in *Reforming the Center: American Protestantism, 1900 to the Present*, Douglas Jacobsen and William Vance Trollinger (eds) (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 349-58.

³⁹ Kenneth Strachan, *The Missionary Movement of the Non-Historical Groups in Latin America* (New York: Latin American Co-operation Committee, 1957), 120. Strachan presented this paper before the Study Conference of the Committee on Co-operation in Latin America in Buck Hills Falls, Pennsylvania, November 1957.

⁴⁰ Strachan, *The Missionary Movement*, 96.

⁴¹ The most outstanding works in this regard are René Padilla's studies of Pauline ecclesiology in *Mission Between the Times* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985),

I am of the conviction that help in the area of leadership formation is more necessary than ever because patterns of leadership are in crisis. Institutional weakness is characteristic of Evangelicalism in Latin America, and cultural change as well as the economic crisis put the continuity of institutional life to the test. While some of the older denominations have an institutional structure that has provided for continuity of leadership and generational change, some of the new denominations are confronting crisis in this regard. The Charismatic mega-churches propose an authoritarian pastoral model that seems to be contextual and connects well with the clerical authoritarian pattern that is deeply entrenched in the Catholic culture. Sexual and financial scandals in some mega-churches that have reached the popular media in countries like Argentina and Peru have demonstrated the dangers of an authoritarian pattern of leadership without checks and balances as well as clear lines of accountability.

Institutional weakness has also affected the structures of interdenominational co-operation. The conservative alliance known as CONELA, related to the World Evangelical Fellowship seems to be permanently at the point of extinction. It was only in 2015 that new leaders revived CONELA, calling the alliance by a new name, CONEL. Also, the ecumenical alliance known as CLAI seems to have kept a more definite institutional presence, especially through its media services. The Latin American and Caribbean News Agency (ALC) provides an excellent Internet news service that covers the whole of Latin America. Its printed monthly *Nuevo Siglo* was for a while the only publication that offered a measure of visibility for Evangelicals as a whole.

Mission beyond Latin America

Some Catholic missiologists have expressed their admiration for the evangelistic zeal of Evangelicals, which is absent from Catholic life and which they find difficult to foster. The same zeal and enthusiasm, for me an indication of spiritual vitality, is now demonstrated for participation in global mission. Since 1987 a measure of co-ordination of mission from Latin America to other parts of the world has been provided by COMIBAM, a network of agencies and individuals that was formed after a missions congress held in São Paulo, Brazil.

Progress in evangelical missionary work from Latin America has been significant. It is estimated that in 1982 some 92 Protestant organizations were sending a total of 1,120 Latin Americans as missionaries to other parts of the world. By 1988 there were 150 organisations and some 3,026

and those of Juan Driver on Anabaptist ecclesiology in *Contracorriente: Ensayos sobre Eclesiología Radical* (Guatemala: Semilla, 1998).

missionaries.⁴² By 1997 figures indicated that there were 3,921 Latin American missionaries elsewhere in the world, sent by 284 organisations.⁴³ During the congress COMIBAM III it was reported that there were 9,000 missionaries sent out by 400 agencies. These figures are generally conservative estimates and do not include many spontaneous movements that are hard to document. Nor do they include migrants who on their own do missionary work elsewhere in the world though they are not related formally to established agencies.

Several denominations have been developing ways in which churches from the United States and Europe now partner with churches from Latin America for this new stage of global mission. Among the faith missions, *Latin Link* has widened its original British base to include other European partners and their Latin American counterparts. The *Latin America Mission*, based in Miami, had long experience in fostering these new kinds of partnerships. Latin American Evangelicals have now grown enough to be partners that cannot afford to be ignored in any consideration of the future of Christian mission.

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⁴² Data taken from Larry Pate, *From Every People. A Handbook of Two-Thirds World Missions with Directory/Histories/Analysis* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1989).

⁴³ Ted Limpic, *Catálogo de Organizaciones Misioneras Iberoamericanas* (Miami, FL: COMIBAM-Unilit, 1997), 171.

CONSTRUCTING LATIN AMERICAN MISSIOLOGY: HOW THE HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE OVERCAME TRADITIONAL STEREOTYPES

Sherron George

This essay describes the creative construction of Latin American missiology with a focus on the contributions of René Padilla, Samuel Escobar, Leonardo Boff and Roberto Zwetsch. The work requires the deconstruction of colonial, imperial and paternalistic imposition. The holistic perspective overcomes traditional mission stereotypes. The foundational building blocks include integral mission, *missio Dei*, Trinitarian and human community, dialogue, mutuality, context, justice, compassion, solidarity, human dignity, cultural diversity, Mother Earth and interculturalism. The reign of God – a present reality and future hope – receives greater emphasis than institutional churches. Mission dialogue with Latin Americans leads to dynamic integration and solid partnerships.

In a book entitled *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas*, published for the 500th anniversary of the so-called ‘discovery’ of the Americas, Luis Rivera, Puerto Rican scholar, deconstructs the mythology of the ‘discovery’ and describes the reality of expropriation, domination, conquest and genocide. It was not an ‘encounter of two cultures’. Instead of a celebration, he proposes a critical reflection. Rivera shows that:

With the conquest of the New World not only is there escape from Islamic encirclement but also there is the beginning of European world hegemony, the imperial system that, passing through various phases, has characterized the modern era... In that European expansion... Christian faith played an exceptional role as imperial ideology.¹

Leonardo Boff, Brazilian liberation theologian, for the same occasion offered a missiological reflection from the oppressed cultures of Latin America. He calls for a deconstruction of ‘colonial evangelization’ and the (re)construction of ‘integral’ and ‘liberative evangelization’. The Franciscan proposes a ‘new evangelization’ that is truly good news to the poor, takes seriously their context of suffering, and begins with their marginalized cultures. Consciousness-raising and new inculturation of the gospel are necessary because

¹ Luis N. Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 21-22.

... the evangelization that occurred here entailed the transposition of the institutions, symbols, concepts, and moral habits of European Christian culture to a new continent. By and large, there was no encounter between faith and native reality, between gospel and autochthonous cultures, which would have permitted the rise of a Christian expression typically ours.²

Establishing Protestantism in a continent colonized by Roman Catholic countries was not easy. Only in the mid-nineteenth century did missionaries from the United States and Europe begin to distribute Bibles and to plant churches, schools and hospitals. Puritanism, Pietism, the Great Awakening, Manifest Destiny and the Age of Empire influenced mission efforts. As in Catholic missions, imposition, domination, dependency, imperialism and paternalism hindered respect for, and cultural contributions from, original indigenous, African slave descendants, and Catholic Iberian-Americans. Mission was a mix of the good, the bad and the ugly. In spite of colonial attitudes and practices, much good was done and Gospel seeds and churches were planted.

A watershed moment came with the Latin American Evangelical Hispanic-North American Congress in Havana, Cuba, in 1929. In sharp contrast with the Panama 1916 Congress, which had only 21 native Latin American participants, the Havana Congress was planned and conducted by Latin Americans who met with North American partners to envision cooperative mission. Samuel Silva Gotay described the event as a significant historic 'eruption of Latin Americans in the evangelical missionary world as agents who appropriate their theological, political and cultural space'. For Gotay this was the 'birth cry of a new generation of evangelical Protestantism in Latin America'.³

The next generation moved beyond deconstruction to the creative (re)construction of a contextual Latin American missiology. This chapter presents important building blocks and the contributions of four Latin Americans to this process.

Building Blocks

In the context of military dictatorships in Latin America, civil rights demonstrations in the United States, and declarations of independence from colonial powers in Africa and Asia, the Spirit blew in a new way over the church in the modern world. One of the fruits of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) was the Second Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellín, Colombia (1968). The breakthrough at Medellín was

² Leonardo Boff, *New Evangelization: Good News to the Poor* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), xii.

³ Samuel Silva Gotay, 'O significado histórico do Congresso Evangélico Hispano-Americano do Norte da América Latina', in Nilton Giese (ed), *Missão e Evangelização na América Latina e Caribe* (São Leopoldo, Brazil: Editora Sinodal/CLAI, 2012), 18-19, 28.

reinforced in Puebla, Mexico (1979). As a result of the ‘preferential option for the poor’, theologians such as Gustavo Gutiérrez, Leonardo Boff, Richard Shaull, Rubem Alves and George Pixley began to guide the poor on a new scriptural journey ‘from below’.

Consequently, the first building block of Latin American missiology is ‘liberation’ with ‘feet on the ground’ immersed in the historical-cultural ‘context’. Liberation Theology was born in Latin America as a contextual mission theology that started with an analysis of the socio-economic context of poverty and injustice, and insisted that evangelization could not occur in a vacuum separated from social awareness and justice. Mission must discover and deal with the root causes of poverty. These theologians used political language to express two complementary dimensions of mission: personal and social transformation. Catholics and Protestants⁴ in Latin America have employed this new hermeneutical key. They observe the painful realities of context, and then listen and reflect critically and pastorally on the biblical text.

In the area of education, Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogia do Oprimido* also emphasized the importance of starting with the historical-cultural context and added a second building block: dialogue – a new pedagogical and missiological starting point. In a horizontal dialogical relationship, educators and educated are all subjects with creative and reflective democratic participation in the process. Those ‘educated’ and those ‘evangelized’ are active subjects, agents, and never simply objects to be ‘filled’, manipulated or dominated. Learners must be ‘critical investigators in dialogue with the educator, who is also a critical investigator’. For Freire, dialogical education is a mutually liberating praxis of ‘reflection and action related to the world in order to transform it’.⁵

Argentine José Míguez Bonino took dialogue onto another level. For him, mission begins with the Trinitarian dialogue between Father, Son and Spirit. We are included in this ‘missionary dialogue’ with God and others, and experience the unity of God’s one mission and the distinctions of its dimensions. Consequently, mission becomes the ‘material principle’ of a Latin American Protestant theology in search of unity.⁶

Protestants in dialogue with Catholics sought to nuance liberation, making it more holistic. In 1970 Latin American theologians founded the *Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana* [Latin American Theological Fellowship], with a commitment to be biblical and Latin American. The contributions of theologians such as Elsa Tamez, Orlando Costas, René Padilla, Mortimer Arias and Samuel Escobar enabled the church in Latin

⁴ See for instance, the book of the late Puerto Rican theologian, Orlando Costas, *Liberating News: A Theology of Contextual Evangelization* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989).

⁵ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogia do Oprimido* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1983), 40, 80.

⁶ José Míguez Bonino, *Faces of Latin American Protestantism*. Translated by Eugene L. Stockwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 141, 131.

America to move beyond a false dichotomy between evangelism and social justice, creating a third, building block – ‘integral’ or ‘holistic’ mission. My personal journey towards integration into God’s holistic mission has been a process of learning from Latin Americans. The first time I heard the term ‘holistic’ in reference to mission as a ‘unitary, indivisible whole’ was from Orlando Costas in a conference. He affirmed: ‘The true test of mission is not whether we proclaim, make disciples or engage in social, economic and political liberation, but whether we are capable of integrating all three in a comprehensive, dynamic and consistent witness. We need to pray that the Lord will liberate us for wholeness and integrity in mission’.⁷ Costas critically embraced the prophetic liberation message and developed a theology of integrative contextual evangelization.

Finally, dialogical relationships, integral mission, and the deconstruction or break with ‘dominant’ theology and missiology ‘from above’ – from the perspective of the powerful – create a new way of being the church in the world. Boff uses the term ‘ecclesio-genesis’. The people of God gather in grassroots communities, cell groups, charismatic, student and social movements, which transcend national or denominational loyalties, and institutional structures and doctrines in order to promote the ‘kingdom’ or ‘reign of God’. In Costas’ book, *The Church and its Mission: A Shattering Critique from the Third World*, he criticizes the church growth movement and asks:

Isn’t the gospel the good news of the *kingdom*? Who is the center of the kingdom – Christ or the church? Who is the object of the kingdom – the community or the King? What is the aim of the kingdom – the exercise of Christ’s righteous, peaceful, and loving reign in *heaven* and on *earth* in a restored and transformed universe, or the gathering of a community to him?⁸

The ‘Reign of God’ becomes a category much greater, ultimate and more important than the church. God promises a reign of love, justice and peace on earth. This reign is a space where Gospel values of equality, reciprocity, hospitality, humility, simplicity, solidarity and respect are practised. ‘Your Kingdom Come’ was the theme of the World Council of Churches’ Conference on Mission and Evangelism held in Melbourne, Australia, in 1980. In his presentation, Mortimer Arias, native Uruguayan and first bishop of the Methodist Church in Bolivia, systematized his understanding of ‘kingdom evangelization’, which is ‘*biblical, evangelical, holistic, humanizing, conscientizing, liberating, contextual, engaged, incarnational, and conflictive*’. He asserts that evangelization for Jesus ‘was no more and no less than *announcing the reign of God*’⁹ with all its

⁷ Orlando Costas, *The Integrity of Mission: The Inner Life and Outreach of the Church* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), 75.

⁸ Orlando Costas, *The Church and its Mission: A Shattering Critique from the Third World* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1974), 135.

⁹ Mortimer Arias, *Announcing the Reign of God: Evangelization and the Subversive Memory of Jesus* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), xiii, xviii.

personal and social implications. Latin Americans take seriously the fact that what Jesus came to establish was the reign of God, and not the church.

In the 1960s and 1970s two distinct but interrelated contextual missiologies arose in Latin America: Liberation Theology and Integral Mission. The following sections show how four Latin American missiologists used the building blocks of liberation, context, dialogue, integral mission and a kingdom perspective during the last four decades to construct a Latin American missiology with theological depth, ecumenical openness and a sensitivity to globalization – a notable contribution to post-colonial mission.

Integral Mission

A building block that continues to be a major theme in Latino missiology is the whole gospel or integrity of mission. This was a key concept in Costas' mission theology. The person who epitomizes integral mission¹⁰ for me is the Ecuadorian C. René Padilla who resides in Argentina at the Kairós Community.

At the Lausanne International Congress on World Evangelization in 1974, plenary presenters Padilla and Peruvian Samuel Escobar, both Baptists, convincingly defended integral mission. Padilla was associate secretary for Latin America of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students and Escobar was secretary of the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship of Canada. Both openly criticized Christianity associated with the American way of life, the paternalistic North American missionary movement, the neat separation of evangelism and social concern, and the priority given to evangelism, leading to strong disagreements between South and North Americans.¹¹ They were accused of being Marxists, perhaps because of their dialogue with Liberation Theology. However, their insistence resulted in the inclusion of social concern in the Lausanne Covenant as an integral part of mission, inextricably linked with evangelism.

Ten years after Lausanne I, Padilla published *Mission between the Times: Essays on the Kingdom*. In the Preface he explains that the essays were 'written within the last decade and reflect my involvement in a

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¹⁰ In English I prefer using the term 'integral' rather than 'holistic'. Charles Rigma explains his preference for 'integral' in Charles Rigma, 'Holistic Ministry and Mission: A Call for Reconceptualization', in *Missiology: An International Review*, XXXII:4 (October 2004), 432-44. He shows that 'the whole will always elude us'. While philosophical holism works 'from the whole to the part', the term integral 'moves in exactly the opposite direction – from part to completeness. To integrate is to bring things together in contributing to a greater whole'.

¹¹ See Chapman Alister, 'Evangelical International Relations in the Post-Colonial World: The Lausanne Movement and the Challenge of Diversity, 1974-89' in *Missiology: An International Review*, XXXVII:3 (July 2009), 355-68.

number of conferences' and 'the international theological dialogue that has been taking place in evangelical circles since the 1974 Lausanne Congress'. Padilla insists that the fullness of mission includes evangelism and discipleship, partnership and unity, development and justice. It is 'centered in a prophetic lifestyle' and points to 'Jesus Christ as the Lord over the totality of life, to the universality of the church, and to the interdependence of human beings in the world'.¹² Integrated missiology seeks the dialectic, the interaction, the convergence, the wholeness, and the fullness of God's mission.

The final essay shows the kingdom perspective of integral mission. He begins: 'To speak of the Kingdom of God is to speak of God's redemptive purpose for the whole creation and of the historical vocation that the church has with regard to that purpose here and now, "between the times"'.¹³ The church is 'the community of the Kingdom... [It] must not be equated with the Kingdom, but it must not be separated from it either'. He continues: 'The church is... the concrete manifestation of the Kingdom of God... [and] it must be seen in the context of God's universal purpose in Christ.' He concludes affirming that 'evangelism and social responsibility are inseparable', but distinct, like the two wings of a bird. As long as both 'are regarded as essential to mission, we need no rule of thumb to tell us which comes first and when'.¹⁴

The ecumenical Kairós Community of integral discipleship and mission at the service of the reign of God, founded by Padilla in Buenos Aires in 1976 with student leaders and theological professors, published *Series of the Way* in 2006. The first volume is *What is Integral Mission?* by Padilla.¹⁵ In his Preface he states that eighteen of the short essays are being published again because of their overwhelming reception in all of Latin America and the recently renewed interest in integral mission, especially in the global South. The final essay on the need for unity and mutuality between evangelical and ecumenical groups is encouraging.

In 2010 Padilla was present at Lausanne III in Cape Town, South Africa. Afterwards he pointed to 'serious flaws' such as the continuing dichotomy between 'evangelism and social responsibility' and the dominance of strategies 'made in USA'. He sadly concludes that 'the biggest obstacle to implementing true partnership is the affluence of the North and West'.¹⁶

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¹² C. René Padilla, 'The Fullness of Mission', in *Mission Between the Times: Essays on the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 141.

¹³ Padilla, 'The Mission of the Church in Light of the Kingdom of God', in *Mission between the Times*, 186.

¹⁴ Padilla, *Mission Between the Times*, 189-98.

¹⁵ See C. René Padilla, *Qué es la misión integral? Series del Camino. No.1. Red del Camino* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Kairós, 2006).

¹⁶ C. René Padilla, 'The Future of the Lausanne Movement', in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 35:2 (April 2011), 86-87.

Samuel Escobar collaborated with Padilla in the student movement on the continent, the Latin American Theological Fellowship, and the Lausanne Movement. Samuel and his wife Lilly worked with the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) in Peru, Argentina, Brazil and Canada (1959-85). René Padilla also served with IFES (1959-82). They were partners in ministry throughout Latin America for over two decades.

The articulation of evangelical discourse during the social turbulence and student ferment of the 1950s and 1960s was a challenge. Samuel and Lilly moved to São Paulo, Brazil, in 1962 to support the growing student movement, but returned to Argentina a month after the military takeover there in 1964, a year after he published *Dialogue between Christ and Marx* as an evangelistic tool with students seeking social justice. With Padilla he formulated 'a concept of social responsibility structured around a Christological core'.¹⁷

In 1972 the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship of Canada invited Escobar to be their secretary. He was on the way to Lausanne 1974: 'Convinced through experience that if evangelicals come together and co-operate, they can accomplish much in joint efforts in mission, I accepted an invitation to join the committee that was preparing the Lausanne International Congress on World Evangelization.'¹⁸ There he presented a controversial paper, 'Evangelism and Man's Search for Freedom, Justice and Fulfillment'. In the post-congress reflection process he summarized his position and with John Driver wrote *Christian Mission and Social Justice*. In this book Escobar insists on the need of historical awareness in mission and a new awareness of poverty in the world. Drawing on the tools of contextualization and dialogue, he affirms that an 'interclass reading of the Bible is possible'.¹⁹

Back in his native Peru in 1978, Escobar worked with the IFES team, taught missiology, and wrote a short book on Liberation Theology from an evangelical perspective. In 1985 Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia invited him to become the successor to Orlando Costas as Chair of Missiology. There he used the participative dialogical educational process of Paulo Freire, subject of his doctorate.

Though Escobar does not frequently use the term 'integral mission', as Padilla does, his focus on social responsibility and justice in evangelical circles shows his role in helping them include this dimension. His missiology represents the new ecumenical paradigm proposed by David Bosch with strong emphasis on the contextual model of Latin America. His book *Changing Tides: Latin America & World Mission Today* summarizes

¹⁷ Samuel Escobar, 'My Pilgrimage in Mission', in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 36:4 (October 2012), 207.

¹⁸ Escobar, 'My Pilgrimage in Mission', 210.

¹⁹ Samuel Escobar and John Driver, *Christian Mission and Social Justice* (Scottsdale, AZ: Herald Press, 1978), 53.

his missiological development. There he postulates: 'In Latin America the method and context of reflection on Christian mission have placed emphasis on understanding it by means of the *tools of observation, analysis, and interpretation* provided by the social sciences, especially anthropology and sociology.' Furthermore, 'Holistic Missiology' that 'stresses contextual issues' includes systematic and critical reflection 'on the missionary act in light of the Word of God'.²⁰

In the chapter with historical overview – 'From Mission to Liberation' – in reference to the renewals following Vatican II and Medellín 1968, he comments: 'The Catholic rediscovery of the Bible opened for Protestants a set of key questions in relation to hermeneutics, contextualization, missionary strategy, and ecumenism.'²¹

After writing about 'Mission *in* Latin America', he presents the significant shift to 'Mission *from* Latin America' and affirms: 'Latin America is now the base for a growing Christian missionary movement to other parts of the world'.²²

In his observations of post-Lausanne Latin American evangelical missiologists, he denotes a two-pronged approach: 'On the one hand, a critical task, which has included an ongoing debate with the liberation theologies... On the other hand, evangelical theologians have given themselves to the constructive task of developing a theology of mission that expresses the dynamic reality and the missionary thrust of their churches in Latin America.'²³ We turn now to a liberation theologian that developed the concept of wholeness in contextual mission both cosmically and ethically.

Liberation for Trinitarian Communion and Planetary Care

During the 1960s a Brazilian Presbyterian, Rubem Alves, began to articulate liberation themes and to call upon theologians from the North Atlantic to listen to the new hermeneutic coming from the southern hemisphere. Building on the theology of the omnipresent grace and inexhaustible love of God, the spirit of openness to 'other religions', and a renewed theology of mission and church in the Vatican II and Medellín documents, Franciscan priest Leonardo Boff saw in the multiplying grassroots base ecclesial communities in Latin America a new way of being church. Alves and Boff opted for the deconstruction of the church's oppressive, repressive, exclusive, unjust and humiliating structures, hierarchy, doctrines/dogmas, ethics, mission and evangelization. A political and religious liberation from all that laid 'heavy burdens' on people, and an openness to the reign of God and Christ's promise: 'My yoke is easy and

²⁰ Samuel Escobar, *Changing Tides: Latin America and World Mission Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 17, 19-20.

²¹ Escobar, *Changing Tides*, 70-71.

²² Escobar, *Changing Tides*, 153.

²³ Escobar, *Changing Tides*, 114.

my burden is light' (Matt. 11:30). In a plea reminiscent of Martin Luther's, Boff questioned the institutional power structures of the church and proposed an alternative liberative evangelization based on the charismas or gifts of every baptized Christian.²⁴

Their prophetic proposals threatened the institutional churches, but this did not dampen their creative theological development. Boff paved the way for a paradigmatic shift from *missio Dei*, with an emphasis on the church's participation, to a Trinitarian mission with an emphasis on the Spirit's work in and beyond the church and in creation.

For Boff, the essence of Christianity, the model for church and society, and the basis for integral liberation, is not dogmas or rituals, but 'communion' with 'Mystery, which is the Trinity of the Divine Persons' who 'always act in communion' and 'in relation to all other beings'.²⁵ Boff's compassionate mission and 'kingdom perspective' are founded in God's person. The reign of God was the 'great dream' that consumed Jesus.²⁶ 'God is Mystery to us and to Godself.' Thereby 'God's self-knowing never ends'. It is 'entire and full, and at the same time ever open to new fullness'.²⁷ This thread of 'newness' and 'openness' continues until the 'end' with 'the new heaven and the new earth... as culmination of all things in the reign of the Trinity'.²⁸

Boff has helped me understand that Trinitarian community and integral mission imply many participants and connections. The church is a body of interpersonal relationships and connections just as the human being is 'a knot of relations, pointed in all directions... a creature open to give and receive, to participation, to solidarity and to communion... human paths are two-way. The more a human being communicates, goes out of self, gives of self and receives the gift of the other, the more a person he (she) is'.²⁹ This openness to right relationships in mission breaks down barriers of isolation, prejudice, misunderstanding and discrimination incongruent with the witness of the one holy Catholic Church. In our multicultural, multi-religious and multi-ethnic world, a posture of openness to listen and engage in authentic interreligious and intercultural dialogue is an essential cutting

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²⁴ See Leonardo Boff, *Igreja Carisma e Poder* (Petrópolis, Brazil: Vozes, 1981), and Boff, *EcclesioGenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986).

²⁵ Leonardo Boff, *Christianity in a Nutshell* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013), 21-22. See also Boff, *A Trindade e a Sociedade* (Petrópolis, Brazil: Vozes, 1999), 56-61.

²⁶ Boff, *Christianity in a Nutshell*, 53.

²⁷ Boff, *Christianity in a Nutshell*, 5-6.

²⁸ Boff, *Christianity in a Nutshell*, 118-19.

²⁹ Leonardo Boff, *Civilização Planetária: Desafios à sociedade e ao cristianismo* (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Sextante, 2003), 92.

edge in any missiology. We do mission ‘better together’³⁰ in ecumenical and interfaith partnerships that promote the fullness of life God intends for all persons in the human family and for all of creation – practising the new covenant with nature that the Franciscan proposes.

Trinitarian mission has cosmic dimensions. In *Planetary Civilization* Boff affirms that the complex process of globalization has given us a new collective consciousness. We are part of a new global society that demands interdependence, co-responsibility, re-connections, holism and integration. Only a Christianity and a missiology of liberation and dialogue can promote this new collective planetary consciousness. We must be liberated from cultures of domination and all that hinders God’s reign where people live together in mutuality and solidarity.

In the global context of individualism that undermines solidarity, a competitive global market which excludes many, and the continual destruction of nature, Boff evokes the gut emotional responses of empathy, tenderness, compassion, care and an ethic of virtues. How do we do mission and co-exist peacefully in our violent world? Which virtues guarantee a human face to globalization? Over against all models of evangelization, which represent the ‘gospel of power’ and an imperial vision of mission, Boff urgently pleads for hospitality, a mutual welcome, generous openness, respect, tolerance, inclusive table fellowship and a culture of peace.³¹

Compassionate Mission – an Intercultural Paradigm

The Brazilian Lutheran missiologist, Roberto Zwetsch, professor at a Lutheran School of Theology in South Brazil, represents the next generation of contextual missiology. In his book *Mission as Com-passion (with-passion)*, Zwetsch resembles a Latin American ‘Bosch’. He understands mission as participation in the sending of God – *missio Dei*. Mission points to the ‘horizon of the reign of God’. The church is a co-participant and partner in the work of God in the world. For Zwetsch, the task of the church is to ‘see, hear, invite, guide, signal, assist and be in solidarity as a witness to the [missionary] action of God’.³² Mission is the incarnation of the profound and tender mercy, justice and com-passion of God for humanity in human history.

³⁰ See Sherron George, *Better Together* (Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 2010). I base my work on Ephesians to present the local and global dimensions of integral mission, with many interrelated dimensions and many connected participants.

³¹ See Leonardo Boff and Werner Müller, *Princípio de Compaixão e Cuidado* (Petrópolis, Brazil: Vozes, 2001), and Boff, *Virtudes para um Outro Mundo Possível* (Petrópolis, Brazil: Vozes, 2005). Boff also wrote a second volume on *Convivência, Respeito & Tolerância* in 2006.

³² Roberto E. Zwetsch, *Missão como com-paixão* (São Leopoldo, Brazil: Sinodal, 2008), 86-87.

Missio Dei in the Latin American context involves a commitment to the suffering – *passio* – of God and of all who suffer in Latin America. This understanding of mission is different from that of the northern hemisphere. It is not merely rational, intellectual or academic. It is visceral. Mission emerges from God's entrails and affects ours; from the inner being of a God who feels, loves, suffers, weeps. We do mission because we experience God's passion for the world and share that passion. We feel the pain, the needs and the injustices of humanity, and respond in love. Compassionate, liberating, ecumenical mission helps us live together in relationships of trust and solidarity, and promote the sustainability of creation. Zwetsch constructs a missiology with feet on the ground, but also with heart, feelings, tenderness and compassion. Along with Boff, for Zwetsch, mission originates in the compassionate love and care of the Trinitarian community for human beings and creation. The love and dialogue of our communicative and merciful God overflows and involves us.

The liberating mission, inculturation of the faith, and affirmation of cultural diversity that arose in Latin America after Vatican II, Medellín and Puebla, required an expanded vision of the concept of *interculturality*. Commenting on the WCC Conference on Mission and Evangelism held in Salvador, Brazil, in 1996, Zwetsch defines the challenge of the 21st century as 'gospel, mission and cultures'.³³

Zwetsch has developed a paradigm of intercultural theology in Latin America in dialogue with students in Brazil and in South Africa. Based on his mission experience with native Brazilians, he proposes an *intercultural dialogue* between the worldviews of indigenous peoples of the Americas and Christian theology.³⁴ An intercultural paradigm begins with the deconstruction of the cultural imposition and social destruction suffered during colonization by the peoples of 'Latin America' (name given by the colonizers! Zwetsch prefers the indigenous nomenclature 'Abya Yala'). Interculturality requires the recognition of the cultural plurality of the continent and assumes a posture and theology of solidarity with these cultures, especially in defence of the oppressed and silenced. Indigenous rights include cultural and religious diversity. Over against the monoculture of colonizers, diversity is a cultural value that leads to symmetric, liberating and mutually enriching intercultural relationships. Interculturality is *not* multiculturalism or tolerant co-existence. Interculturality enables people to learn mutually and live together with respect, reciprocity and openness to the values and beauty of 'the different other'.

³³ Roberto E. Zwetsch, 'Evangelho, Missão e Culturas – o Desafio do Século XXI', in *Teologia Prática no Contexto da América Latina*, Christoph Schneider-Harpprecht (ed) (São Leopoldo, Brazil: Sinodal, 1998), 221-44.

³⁴ See Roberto E. Zwetsch, 'Intercultural Theology and the Challenge of the Indigenous Peoples in Latin America', in *Teologia Pública* 4:1 (2014).

Inculturation and intercultural encounters lead to the construction of an intercultural paradigm and a *critical* and *alternative intercultural theology*.³⁵ The principal characteristics of this Latin American intercultural paradigm are contextuality, plurality and ecumenicity in the face of religious pluralism.³⁶ The essential methods are dialogue, solidarity and communion. Living together ecumenically in community with interfaith encounters and dialogue restores human dignity and liberates. Intercultural relationships facilitate the construction of a society based on solidarity, interdependence and communion – the dream of the human *oikoumene* or reign of God.

Zwetsch sees Christian theology migrating to the global South where intercultural contextual theology enters into prophetic dialogue with the traditional western monocultural theology of former colonizers and all claims of a universal perspective imposed on others, as well as globalization's cultural homogenization and suppression of cultural plurality. His challenging insights of inclusive global diversity are a gift!

Padilla and Escobar show the evangelistic and social dimensions of integral mission. Boff shows the connections of many participants in cosmic Trinitarian mission. Zwetsch reveals another facet of God's integral mission. It involves our emotions, our deepest feelings – our inmost person – including our multifaceted cultural diversity.

In conclusion, Latin American missiology is contextual, but responds to new global Christian realities, and offers new conceptualizations to rethink relationships with Earth and other religions. With its distinctive features of liberation, integral mission, dialogue, compassion and interculturality, Latino missiology's contribution in this new age of multilateral post-colonial mission comes from the integration of reflection and action, paving the way for true interdependence and authentic partnerships in the global church.

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³⁵ See the relationship of this paradigm with Liberation Theology in Roberto E. Zwetsch, 'Teologias da libertação e interculturalidade: aproximações e avaliação crítica', in *Protestantismo em Revista* 30:1 (2013), 32-49.

³⁶ See Célio Juliano Trindade and Roberto E. Zwetsch, 'Contextualidade, Pluralidade, Ecumenicidade: Esboço de uma Teologia Intercultural', in *Interculturalidade na América Latina*, Célio Juliano Trindade and Roberto E. Zwetsch (eds) (São Leopoldo, Brazil: com apoio da FAPERGS, 2015).

THE IMPACT OF THE WORLD MISSIONARY CONFERENCE ON MEXICO: THE CINCINNATI PLAN

Philip Wingeier-Rayo

Andrew Walls called the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh the “high water mark” of the Protestant missionary movement.¹ Thomas Thangaraj called it “one of the most historic and dramatic events” in Christian missions.² General Secretary of the World Student Christian movement and Methodist layman, John R. Mott, chaired the conference with the realistic possibility of “Christian triumph stating in a study commission report: “Never before has there been such a conjunction of crises and of opening of doors in all parts of the world as that which characterizes the present decade.”³ Brian Stanley assessed the lofty conference goals as “not the inevitability but the realistic possibility and indeed the urgent necessity of imminent Christian triumph.”⁴ Reports by the eight study commissions declared with optimism factors in the world opened the door for world evangelism. Also, a systematic atlas with details of where Christianity had triumphed and territories not yet reached was prepared for the conference. A Miguel Alvarez and Samuel Escobar have already noted in their introductory chapters that Latin America was not included at the World Missionary Conference, although the spirit of Christian unity, optimism and the scientific method of mission work would quickly influence mission work in the region. The chapter will focus specifically on impact of the World Missionary Conference on Protestant mission work in Mexico and the ensuing meeting that resulted in the Cincinnati Plan.

“Give us Friends”

The overwhelming majority of the delegates to the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh were from Europe and North America; there were

¹ Andrew Walls, “Afterward: Christian Mission in a Five-hundred Year Context,” in *Mission in the Twenty-First Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission*, Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross (eds.), London: DLT, 2008, 199.

² Thomas Thangaraj, *The Common Task: A Theology of Christian Mission*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1999, 11.

³ Report of Commission I: “Carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World,” 1.

⁴ Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, Edinburgh 1910, Eerdmans, 2009, 15.

a disproportionate number of men, few young people and the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Pentecostal traditions were not invited. One of the few non-Western delegates, V.S. Azariah of India, gave an unprogrammed speech from the floor of the conference that he concluded: “You have given your goods to feed the poor. You have given your bodies to be burned. We also ask for love. Give us friends.”⁵ Azariah was recorded in the proceedings of only having spoken twice from the floor, yet these words would become prophetic in that they echoed the sentiments of the southern church’s desire to take on more of leadership role in the self-determination of their churches, and have more mutuality between the southern and northern churches. Although Latin America was not included in the World Missionary Conference, the spirit of Edinburgh would quickly influence mission work in the region. As we will see in this chapter, and more specifically through the 1914 conference about mission work in Mexico, these words from Azariah would also express the sentiments of the Protestant churches in Mexico.

Given that the stated purpose in Edinburgh was “to consider missionary problems in relation to the non-Christian world,” some German societies objected to the inclusion of Latin America. They argued that if we take the definition of the non-Christian world scientifically, and acknowledge that Latin America is at least nominally Roman Catholic, then it did not fit the focus of this conference.⁶ The Church of England had a similar objection.⁷ However representatives of mission work in Latin America (missionaries and mission board executives) graciously agreed however made plans for a future mission conference to be held in Latin America.⁸ While this oversight was egregious, it gives insight into how the leaders of the Protestant mission efforts viewed the mission field at that time and therefore not surprising given the historical context. We, of course, read history very differently in hindsight. To us today this decision seemed like a step backwards for Protestant mission work since Latin America had been included at previous mission conferences, most recently at the 1900 conference in New York. At the very least the reports from the state of mission work in Latin America were included in the proceedings, especially in Commission I: Carrying the Gospel to all the non-Christian World.⁹

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⁵ *History and Records of the Conference*, pp.306-15.

⁶ Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, “Christian Work in Latin America,” 1917.

⁷ Miguel Alvarez, “Introduction: Latin American Mission, Then and Now” and Samuel Escobar, “It’s Your Turn, Young Ones – Make Me Proud! Evangelical Mission in Latin America and Beyond,” in this volume.

⁸ Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, “Christian Work in Latin America,” 1917.

⁹ Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 12, World Missionary Conference Records, Edinburgh, 1910.

In spite of this omission, the missionaries who were familiar with Latin America quickly recognized the need and decided to meet during the conference. During their lunch meeting, the missionaries confirmed that the methodology and the goals of the Edinburgh conference were worthy, and that Latin America would benefit from being the focus of such a mission conference. They agreed to have a subsequent meeting while still in Edinburgh and invite secretaries of mission work in Latin America. They were able to meet together during the World Missionary Conference--outside of the regular conference schedule. They observed what the conference was doing for mission work in other parts of the world and agreed that it would be good to use this same approach for Latin America. Although the focus of the conference was missions to the non-Christian world, clearly Latin America was in need of mission work.

As Samuel Escobar has already highlighted in chapter one of this volume, there is a link between missions and social ethics. A continent that lives in in such poverty, even if it is predominantly Roman Catholic, is still in need of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.¹⁰ Some of these delegates had worked in Latin America and concurred that it should definitely be included in the vision of Protestant mission efforts. The secretaries present agreed to lend their support to organize a conference with a similar methodology, but exclusively focused on Latin American missions. As a result, they formed a committee to write a statement for North American churches, which read:

The undersigned delegates to the World Missionary Conference, rejoicing over the success of that great gathering and the impulse it must give to the evangelization of the non-Christian world, feel constrained to say a word for those missions in countries nominally Christian that were not embraced in the scope of the Edinburgh Conference, we do not stop to inquire whether the dominant Churches in these lands are or are not Christian Churches, or whether they are or are not faithful to their duty ; we only affirm that millions and millions of people are practically without the Word of God and do not really know what the Gospel is.

This statement commended the approach of the World Missionary Conference and wanted the same emphasis for Latin American mission work. The spirit of Edinburgh that they wished to continue was mainly the ecumenical spirit of cooperation between denominations and the scientific analysis of data to use resources more effectively. Before departing from Edinburgh they set their sights on a subsequent conference about mission work in Latin America and the Foreign Missions Conference of North America appointed a committee chaired by Dr. Robert E. Speer, and including Drs. S. Chester, Wilham Haven, William Oldham, W.V. Pinson, R.J. Willingham and Mr. John Wood. This conference would be was one in a series of conferences organized by the same body on mission work in China, Japan and Muslim lands.

¹⁰ Samuel Escobar, "It's Your Turn, Young Ones – Make Me Proud! Evangelical Mission in Latin America and Beyond," chapter one in this volume.

Formation of the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America

The plans made in Edinburgh came to fruition with an ensuing meeting in New York City on March 12-13, 1913 that was attended by executives of 30 different mission organizations and missionaries home on furlough. The conference picked right up where Edinburgh left off in the theme of Christian unity and a country-by-country analysis of mission work. Representatives gave a total of 15 reports on topics such as: “The Present Extent and Condition of Mission Work in Latin American Lands,” “Unoccupied Fields and the Unreached Populations in Latin America,” “The Bible in Latin America,” and “Religious Liberty and the Problem of Church and State in Latin America” to name a few. In these reports contained the most recent statistical data on the status of Protestant mission efforts in Latin America.

In the case of Mexico, Protestants numbered about 75,000, which was the equivalent of about half of a percent of the approximately 15 million population.¹¹ Of the 143 U.S. denominations at the time, 18 of them had some type of mission work in Mexico for a total of 331 missionaries.¹² The Protestant missionary effort in Mexico worked predominantly in rural areas and one of the goals was to have a school alongside every church. Mexican public schools were very scarce – especially in rural areas – and Protestant teaching could help alleviate some of the ignorance and provide civic skills required for a democratic society. Protestant churches had some 179 schools with over 20,000 students, elementary, junior and senior high, as well as industrial/technical. These schools transmitted Protestant values that were forged during the Enlightenment based on rationalism, liberalism and scientific method.

Protestantism is a movement steeped in written, civic and rational education.¹³ The Protestant work in Mexico embodied these ideals in the struggle against the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz (1830-1915) and was a threat to both the hegemony of the Roman Catholic Church and authoritarian governments. Sociologist Daniel Miller wrote: “In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Mexican Protestants viewed themselves as advocates of social and political progress in contrast to the Catholic Church which they stigmatized as arrogant and reactionary.”¹⁴ Many individuals and congregations broke away from the Roman Catholic Church and Protestants began joining forces with them in a larger struggle

¹¹Deborah J. Baldwin, *Protestants and the Mexican Revolution: Missionaries, Ministers, and*

Social Change. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990, 58, 35.

¹² Jean-Pierre Bastian, *Protestantismo y Sociedad en México*. Mexico City: Casa Unida de Publicaciones, S.A., 1983, 82, 108.

¹³ *Ibid*, 58.

¹⁴ Daniel R. Miller, “Protestantism and Radicalism in Mexico from the 1860s to the 1930s,” Calvin College, 2000, 2.

for democracy in the spirit of liberalism.¹⁵ It is worth noting that some of the key leaders who opposed the government of Porfirio Diaz were Protestants or graduates of Protestant schools.

Near the end of the 2-day meeting in New York, Rev. Ed Cook D.D. gave his report at the 1913 about the Protestant work in Mexico, his vision focused narrowly on the church. The references to the Mexican Revolution were mainly out of concern for safety and stability. One his arguments in favor of implementing a plan to unify Protestant mission efforts was the chaos of the revolution. However in his report there was no reference to the democratization of Mexican society. There was no recognition that the Protestant mission work was being successful in that it had provided an alliance with Mexican leaders to articulate an alternative democratic vision for society. Although Mexican Protestantism was only ½ percent of the population, it was having a greater effect on societal movements. For example, Otilio Montaña was a Methodist elementary school teacher who co-wrote the Plan de Ayala that called for Porfirio Diaz to step down from power and to return land to the peasants under the revolutionary slogan “*Tierra y Libertad*.” Another Methodist teacher, Benigno Zenteno, was a revolutionary general under Zapata. The Saenz brothers were Presbyterians and important servants in the revolution. Jonas Garcia did the same as a Baptist, as did Alberto Rembao and Walterio Rueda Flores as members of the Congregationalists.¹⁶ Other Protestants were appointed to governmental positions during and after the Revolution. In all, there were two generals and eighteen colonels who were Protestants serving in the revolutionary army.¹⁷ French sociologist Jean-Pierre Bastian concluded: “There was a natural affinity between the revolutionaries and Protestantism, an affinity that became concrete in the massive participation of evangelicals in the revolutionary troops.”¹⁸ In many ways the Mexican Revolution actually embodied Protestant values of democracy, equality and justice. While some critics may question how the use of violence means can be compatible with Protestant values, Historian Deborah Baldwin addressed this concern: “Mexican Protestants were nationalists who rationalized their participation in the revolution with a vision that complemented Mexican progressive liberalism.”¹⁹

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¹⁵ Obed Arango, “The Evangelical (Protestant) Church in Mexico: A History of its Involvement in Social Movements from 1870 to 2001,” *American Baptist Quarterly*, 22, no. 2 (June 2003): 230.

¹⁶ Jean-Pierre Bastian, “La primera ola de la penetración protestante en Mexico (1869-1914) in Justo Gonzalez (ed.) *Historia General de la Iglesia en America Latina*, Ediciones Sigueme, 1984, 345. (my translation)

¹⁷ Justo and Ondina Gonzalez, *Christianity in Latin America: A History*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, 231.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Deborah J. Baldwin, *Protestants and the Mexican Revolution: Missionaries, Ministers, and Social Change*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press,

Yet Cook's report did not seem to comprehend what was happening in the larger Mexican society as an extension of Protestant mission work. His report looked very narrowly at church institutions and instead referred to the instability in Mexico as the ideal time to carry out sweeping changes in Protestant institutions: "The day is at hand in Mexico which demands 'the real thing.'"²⁰ Then he went on to say:

In Mexico there is a situation demanding our immediate study and our closest and most careful cooperation in the handling. The problems involved in this situation relate first to Christian education; second to Christian literature; third, to self-support on the part of the native congregations.²¹

Regarding his third and final point about autonomy, Cook concluded:

In the matter of 'self-support' the cause of Protestantism in Mexico has suffered most on account of the lack of cooperation between the denominations. After sixty years of Christian work in Mexico we are almost as far from the establishment of the native church as we were at the end of the first ten or fifteen years of continuous effort.²²

Since Cook's presentation came near the end of the conference, there was little time for discussion or questions. However Rev. L.C. Barnes was impressed with the importance of this last point and replied "Are there any suggestions to come from these associations or boards? This last point of cooperation and self-support might well be brought to the attention of our Boards as a suggestion from this conference."²³ The proceedings were published by the "Conference on Missions in Latin America" by the Committee on Reference and Counsel of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America. The final task of the 1913 conference was creating the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America (CCLA) to continue the work. This is the body that planned the 1916 conference in Panama that is referred in several places in this volume, however the situation in Mexico warranted immediate attention and moved to the top of the priority list.

The first meeting of the CCLA occurred in Garden City, Long Island in January of 1914 where they considered the situation in Mexico. Mexico was in the throws of a revolution that had caused many of the missionaries to leave the country. They considered this to be an opportunity to adjust the work in Mexico, in particular the problem of overlapping of territories. Following up on Cook's recommendations, the mission boards wanted to decrease competition, increase cooperation particularly in the area of educational work and the production of literature. The opening words of Ed Cook's report the previous year were still relevant: "We have talked much

1990, 22.

²⁰ Rev. Ed Cook, DD, "Cooperation," in proceedings from Conference on Mission in Latin America, New York, March 12-13, 1913, 151.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, 153.

²³ *Ibid.*

in recent years about fraternity, comity, cooperation, and union.” So the CCLA concluded their meet in Long Island then called for a meeting in Cincinnati on June 30-July 1, 1914 and invited representatives from mission agencies and missionaries working in Mexico.²⁴ Representatives from the Protestant churches in Mexico were not invited.

U.S.-Mexico Diplomatic Relations

In the interim between the meeting in January in Long Island and the meeting in Cincinnati, U.S.-Mexican diplomatic relations took a turn for the worst. Beginning in 1911 President William Taft had placed 20,000 U.S. troops at the Mexican border poised to intervene. It wasn't until some U.S. sailors were arrested for entering a fuel loading station in Tampico that President Woodrow Wilson commanded the U.S. Navy to invade the Port of Veracruz on April 9, 1914. In the years leading up to the revolution, the U.S. enjoyed great influence in the government of Porfirio Diaz, president from 1876 to 1880 and 1884 until he was overthrown in 1911. This was a period of growing U.S. investments when Jay Gould built the Mexican Southern Railroad, J.P. Morgan established banks and Rockefeller's Standard Oil began acquiring sub-soil mineral rights and extracting oil. U.S. investments multiplied 14 times from \$9 million in 1870 to \$36 million in 1890 to \$117 million in 1910.²⁵ When the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America met in Panama in 1916, they estimated the U.S. total investment in the Mexican economy at \$1 billion.²⁶ On the eve of the Revolution in 1910, American companies owned 51% of the commerce in Mexico.

So when the sixty representatives from eleven different mission agencies gathered on June 30, 1914 in Cincinnati, U.S.-Mexican diplomatic relations were tense. Many of those present were missionaries who were serving in Mexico, but the conditions under the Mexican revolution had deteriorated to such a degree that they were forced to return to the United States for furlough. Given the situation in Mexico, it would have been difficult to hold the meeting there – even if this were a consideration.

The Cincinnati Plan

While the meeting earlier in 1914 received general reports about the Protestant work throughout Latin America, the meeting in Cincinnati was completed focused on Mexico. There had been a lot of talk about Christian

²⁴ https://archive.org/stream/christianworkinl01cong/christianworkinl01cong_djvu.txt accessed on December 12, 2015.

²⁵ John Ross, *The Annexation of Mexico*, Common Courage Press, 1998, 53.

²⁶ Missionary Education Movement, Committee on Co-operation on Latin America, New York, 1917, vol.1, 57.

unity coming out of Edinburgh, but the unique situation in Mexico made it a pressing matter. Cincinnati was the first meeting to actually implement the sweeping changes and unification that world Christian body was recommending. Cook's report and specific recommendations at the CCLA's founding meeting in 1913 were the impetus for the Cincinnati Plan. Namely, he called for cooperation in three areas: Christian education, publications and decrease competition among mission agencies in order to increase self-support for native congregations. Present in Cincinnati were representatives from the Congregationalists, United Presbyterian Church (UPCUSA), Disciples of Christ, Methodist Episcopal Church, Disciples of Christ, Episcopalians, Friends, and Northern Baptists, the YMCA, among other denominations and organizations. Due to the location and circumstances in Mexico at the time, there were no Mexicans present at the meeting.

The representatives from the various mission boards and missionaries went straight to work. The ultimate goal of the meeting in Cincinnati was to unify all the Protestant mission efforts under one umbrella that would be called "The Evangelical Church of Mexico."²⁷ In order to accomplish this larger goal, the plan called for much smaller and more concrete steps. In the area of Christian education, the Union Evangelical Seminary was formed in Mexico City to train pastors for Congregationalists, Disciples of Christ and Methodists. Also, two union agricultural schools and a training school for women was formed. In the area of literature, a union printing press called *Casa Unida de Publicaciones* was established in Mexico City.

The Cincinnati Plan also called upon the denominations to consolidate their evangelization efforts across Mexico to avoid competition and enhance efficiency. When it was all said and done, the Presbyterians received the southern most states of Campeche, Chiapas, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, southern Veracruz, and the Yucatan. Any Methodist Churches in these states were transferred over to the Presbyterian Church, and, in exchange, Presbyterians in the central and northern states became Methodists. As a result, there are 40 Methodist Churches in Mexico City along with a medical clinic that the Methodists received in the neighborhood of Tepito.²⁸ There were, however, some Presbyterian Churches in the northern states of Nuevo Leon and Monterrey who resisted and remained Presbyterian. Other denominations also agreed to focus their work within geographical regions to spread out missionaries more evenly and reach the whole country.

²⁷ Daniel J. Young, "The Cincinnati Plan and the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico: A Brief Study of Relations Between American Mission Boards and Mexican Protestant Churches During the Mexican Revolution," Master's Thesis. UTEP, 2006, 33.

²⁸ Ruben Ruiz Guerra, *Hombres Nuevos: Metodismo y Modernización en Mexico (1873-1930)*, Mexico City: Casa Unida de Publicaciones, 1992, 63.

The Response from the Mexican Church

When news of the Cincinnati Plan reached the leadership of the Mexican churches, the response was less than positive. Pastors and leaders had given their lives to certain ministries and certain regions of the country, and did not want to leave them. For example, the Mexican Presbyterian Synod met to discuss the proposed changes and studied the viability of dividing up the properties and moving to new territories. The Mexican synod asked the U.S. Presbyterians to hold-off for six months while they discussed the implications of the plan. At the end of the six months the Mexican Presbyterians concluded that:

the church was not ready for the implementation of the plan. Local churches and presbyteries had not been consulted. Practically speaking, some areas assigned to them to work were not as good as other areas. This is because there was greater openness to their work in some regions of the country than others. They also objected that some denominations did not have adequate personnel to take over works that would be left to them in the shift of missionaries from one region to another.²⁹

When missionaries met with leaders of the Presbyterian mission in the spring of 1919 to implement the plan, Mexican leaders demonstrated their clear differences. Leandro Garza Mora articulated this frustration when he stood up and exclaimed: “The Plan of Cincinnati [which is what the Mexican churches called the outcome of the Cincinnati Conference] is nothing other than the plan to assassinate the Presbyterian Church in Mexico.”³⁰

The response from the Methodist Church was also lukewarm. In fact, Bishop John W. Butler had attempted to pass a similar plan earlier in 1896 in order to save money and make mission work more efficient. He presented this plan to divide up Mexican territories among the different Protestant mission agencies at the 1896 Convention of Methodist Workers only to have the plan voted down. So given the state of turmoil that the Mexico was in during the Revolution, and the absence of Mexicans at the meeting in Cincinnati, a similar plan was approved in 1914. In a final assessment of the plan, Mexican historian Ruben Ruiz Guerra concluded: “The most important consequence of the Plan, speaking in geographic terms, was the slowdown of the growth impulse of the Methodist mission.”³¹ Historian Daniel J. Young wrote in regarding the Cincinnati Plan: “The specific actions on the part of the foreign mission boards working in Mexico caused hurt among Mexican church members and in many cases strained the relationship between Mexican and American

²⁹ Young, 33.

³⁰ Quote from Charles Petran, “Cincinnati Plan,” unpublished paper, p.9. Cited in Young, 33.

³¹ Ruben Ruiz Guerra, 63.

Protestants in an already charged atmosphere, heightened by American interventions in Mexico during the Mexican Revolution.³²

It is worthy of mentioning that 1914 marked the entrance of the Pentecostal movement into Mexico. Romana de Valenzuela participated in the Azusa Street revival under the leadership of Rev. William Seymour and received the gift of the spirit in 1912. Concerned with what she was hearing from her family about the violence under the Mexican Revolution, she returned to Villa Aldama in the state of Chihuahua in 1914 and shared this new experience with her family.³³ Wanting her family to be baptized, she sought out Rev. Ruben Ortega, a Methodist pastor in Chihuahua who was open to this style of preaching due to the influence of Dwight Moody. At that time in the fall of 1914 the Cincinnati Plan had been announced but not implemented. From our vantage point we can only speculate as to how Ortega received this news. There was a lot of anxiety over how the plan would be implemented over the next few years. Perhaps Ortega was afraid that his church would be closed, moved or he himself might be moved. Whatever his rationale, he availed himself to assist Romana and baptize the new believers, and eventually he himself also receiving baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues marking the beginning of Pentecostalism and a new autonomous denomination in Mexico called the *Iglesia Apostólica*.³⁴

Conclusion

In conclusion, Andrew Walls called the World Missionary Conference the “high water mark” of the Protestant missionary movement. Although Latin America was left out for being nominally Christian, mission board executives saw the value in the conference’s optimism, scientific method and Christian unity, and attempted to apply it to mission efforts in Mexico. The spirit of Edinburgh produced a March 1913 meeting where the Committee on Co-ordination in Latin America was born. Given the instability of Mexico, it quickly became the first place in Latin America to carry out this unification. A meeting in January of 1914 prepared the way for the Cincinnati Plan. However in the spring of 1914, the U.S. Navy invaded and occupied the Port of Veracruz, which created tense diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Mexico at the time of the Cincinnati

³² Daniel J. Young, 33.

³³ *Where are the Poor? A Comparison of the Ecclesial Base Communities and Pentecostalism – A Case Study in Cuernavaca, Mexico*, Pickwick Publications, 2011, 17-18.

³⁴ For more on this topic see Philip Wingeier-Rayo, “A Third Phase of Christianity: Reflections on 100 Years of Pentecostalism in Mexico,” chapter in Vinson Synan, Amos Yong, and Miguel Alvarez, eds., *Global Renewal Christianity: Spirit-Empowered Movements Past, Present, and Future*, vol. II: *Latin America*, Lake Mary, Fla.: Charisma House Publishers, 2016.

meeting. The aim of the Cincinnati Plan was to reduce competition among Protestant mission boards and agencies in order to increase local Mexican leadership, however the lack of Mexican representation in the Cincinnati meeting may have produced the opposite effect. By making changes to Protestantism mission work without consulting Mexican leadership, it alienated rather than encouraging Mexican participation. In the end, some of the plan was implemented, such as exchanging territories, the union seminary and the *Casa Unida de Publicaciones*, but the loftier goal of one Evangelical Church of Mexico never came to fruition.³⁵

Moreover, it is ironic that while the American missionaries were meeting in Cincinnati calling for Mexicans to take on more leadership, several key Protestant leaders were willing to risk their lives to embody the core values of liberty and social progress in the struggle to democratize Mexican society and challenge the hegemony of the Porfirio Diaz and the Roman Catholic Church. While this Cincinnati Plan was well-meaning, so was the World Missionary Conference. V.S. Azariah had it right when he requested from the floor on behalf of the younger church in Edinburgh: "Give us friends." Perhaps for this reason it is only half-joking when Mexicans today refer to the Plan of Cincinnati in Spanish as: "*El Plan de Asesinato*" (The Assassination Plan).³⁶

³⁵ For more on the Protestant mission work in Mexico see Dinorah Mendez's chapter in this volume: "Evangelical Mission in Mexico Today: The Challenge to Remember and Celebrate our Heritage."

³⁶ Baldwin, 161.

THE ECUMENISM OF THE SPIRIT: EMERGING CONTEMPORARY CONTEXTS OF MISSION IN LATIN AMERICA

Carmelo Alvarez

The theoretical framework of this analysis is based on two biblical, theological and missiological concepts: *missio Dei* and *koinonia*. *Missio Dei* is analyzed in the context of recent ecumenical discussions. The Trinitarian implications of *missio Dei* is studied in relationship to an ecumenical and Pentecostal thinking of the Holy Spirit as it affects its role in mission. The *koinonia* concept is examined as a partnership within the ecumenical movement and its influence on mission theology, particularly that of the Protestant and Pentecostal movements in Latin America.¹

Sharing in God's Mission: An Ecumenical Partnership

Latin American Protestantism has struggled with the issue of the multifaceted relationship between identity and mission, as manifested in the role of churches as autonomous-autochthonous bodies within the Church universal.² This issue has been connected with larger topics such as 'religion and post-modernity', and church leaders are examining their active presence in social life and politics in Latin American society. Jorge Larrain expresses the importance of the 'religious factor' in the modern search for religious identity in Latin America: 'Religion is a crucial dimension of Latin American identity.'³ He examines the active role of Christianity in the formation of a Latin American cultural identity.⁴ Larrain concludes, 'The impact of Catholicism and Pentecostalism upon Latin American culture is very important.'⁵

In turn, Christian movements in Latin America also reflect the local culture and are shaped by the interaction between the various religious groups. Walter Hollenweger observes several roots of influence within the pentecostal movement in Latin America: a strong oral tradition, an

¹ In this article, Pentecostal is used as a noun and pentecostal, as an adjective.

² Valdir Steurnagel, *Obediencia Misionera y Práctica Histórica* (Grand Rapids, MI: Nueva Creación, 1996), 13-29.

³ Jorge Larrain, *Identity and Modernity in Latin America* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 201.

⁴ Larrain, *Identity and Modernity in Latin America*, 201-207.

⁵ Larrain, *Identity and Modernity in Latin America*, 206.

ecumenical frame of reference, a Catholic culture, pacifism, diversity, indigenization, a close relationship between theology and ethics, and a need for autonomy.⁶ The resulting search for identity is closely related to *la memoria histórica* [historic memory] – a capacity for examining the roots, development and destiny of a collective people.⁷

The emphasis on the experience of the Holy Spirit means the recuperation and appropriation of a vital force and presence of Christianity in history. The Holy Spirit has always been calling, challenging, signalling towards a better future and showing the way to transformation. This conviction affirms history as an instrument to discern God's mission in the world to transform the existing realities of sin and injustice.

Doing Mission in a Globalized World

Mission and unity are interconnected. One cannot understand the history of the ecumenical movement in the twentieth century without considering how mission and unity have combined in creative tension to shape present conditions. The significance of this dialectical tension is crucial for any theology of mission and for the emergence of a new 'missionary paradigm' towards the future.⁸

The theology of mission is better understood today as *missio Dei*, which requires a reciprocal relationship of mutuality⁹ in an ecumenical understanding of mission. The churches of North and South become mutually accountable. They are real partners in mission, and members of a worldwide community.

Koinonia as Sharing in Partnership

Koinonia made a definite impact in the ecumenical movement during the twentieth century. Its influence can be seen in numerous documents of conferences in which the church was the main theme.⁹

Koinonia describes the experiences of the Gospel and life in Christ and the Spirit, incorporating the social dimensions of the concept. It leads to solidarity with the suffering and the poor, and encourages love to the neighbour without prejudice. This kind of ecclesiology is relevant if the church is going to be successful cross-culturally.

⁶ Walter Hollenweger, 'From Azusa to the Toronto Phenomenon: Historical Roots of the Pentecostal Movement', in *Pentecostal Movements as Ecumenical Challenge*, Jurgen Moltmann and Karl-Josef Kuschel (eds), *Cocilium 3* (London: SCM, 1996), 3-7.

⁷ See Eduardo Hoornaert, *El Movimiento de Jesús* (Mexico: Editorial Dabar, 1996).

⁸ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 463-67.

⁹ Jean-Marie Tillard, 'Koinonia', in Nicolas Lossky et al (eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 568-74.

Justo L. González analyzes the context and mission of the early church, insisting that *koinonia* means partnership: sharing material goods, and participating in a communal fellowship.¹⁰ In his study of Paul's ecclesiology, Marcelino Legido shows that *koinonia* is a fellowship in obedience that is transformed into a fellowship of service.¹¹ Sharing in God's mission requires the ecumenical sharing of resources as a concrete manifestation of fellowship in worship and of caring for God's creation.

Sharing in Partnership: Ecumenical and Feminist Perspectives

Partnership is a concept that was introduced in the ecumenical movement in order to apply the biblical word *koinonia*. The concept served as a principle to enhance relationships between churches in the North and the South, particularly with missionary societies. It evolved into terms like 'autonomy', 'reciprocity' and 'respect'. Partnership was essential to establishing better interchurch relations and developing mission and unity among the churches. Finally, partnership was increasingly connected with issues of equality, justice and the integrity of creation.

More recently Andrew Kirk has written a book on the theology of mission containing an entire section on partnership.¹² He is able to combine a progressive evangelical perspective with a sensitive, balanced and sympathetic approach to Liberation Theology. He points to what mission means today and elaborates on some of the challenges that lie ahead. Kirk develops a theology of mission with the foundational principles of *missio Dei* and describes the church's response. 'This means that God's mission is carried out in both the world and the church; to a lesser degree in human history untouched by the Gospel, to a greater degree where the Gospel is believed and obeyed.'¹³

Kirk follows the history of and the contemporary discussion on partnership. His theological conviction is expressed in the following terms:

It may therefore be even harder to lay hold of the notion that 'partnership in mission' also belongs to the essence of the Church: partnership is not so much what the Church *does* as what it *is*. Churches (theologically) belong to one another, for God has called each 'into the fellowship (*koinonia*) of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord' (1 Cor. 1:9). Partnership is therefore not a nice

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¹⁰ Justo L. González, *Faith and Wealth: A History of Early Church Ideas on the Origin, Significance and Use of Money* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1990), 79-83.

¹¹ Marcelino Legido, *Fraternidad en el Mundo: Un Estudio de Ecclesiología Paulina* (Salamanca, Spain: Ediciones Sígueme, 1986), 210-86, 289-304.

¹² J. Andrew Kirk, *What is Mission? Theological Explorations* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 1-22.

¹³ Kirk, *What is Mission?* 37.

slogan that some clever committee has dreamt up; it is the expression of one, indivisible, common life in Jesus Christ.¹⁴

Kirk argues that *koinonia* is the closest biblical expression for partnership, and sees four characteristics of discipleship that express this idea: first as a common project, second as a sharing of gifts, third as the sharing of material resources, and fourth as a sharing in suffering. Kirk stresses the fact that this partnership in suffering is based on the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Kirk expands on the obstacles to partnership, raising very concrete and practical issues like dependency and freedom, mutual learning in trust, shared responsibility in the sharing of finances, and the exercise of power and accountability. He underlines that co-operation in mutual commitment to mission in Christ as the way to improve North-South relations. *Koinonia* as partnership became more identified with solidarity in unity and the sharing of resources.

Identity and Mission: Protestant Interpretations

José Míguez Bonino sees the relationship between history and mission as one of 'heritage-destiny', always searching for newness of life and a better future.¹⁵ Alberto Rembao interprets Protestantism as 'transcendent democracy' and 'cultural Protestantism'. These phrases exemplify Protestantism as a progressive ideology in Latin America, dealing with aspects of culture as well as with matters of faith.¹⁶ Sante Uberto Barbieri described Protestantism as a creative force for the education of the people, an alternative in the face of nationalism, communism and rationalism as the full realization of freedom.¹⁷ Julio de Santa Ana underlines the contribution that Protestantism can offer Latin America as the movement seeks to be faithful to a liberating Christ.¹⁸ Samuel Escobar and Orlando Costas see the connection between identity and mission as a clue to understanding the reality, life and future of Protestantism in Latin America.¹⁹

¹⁴ Kirk, *What is Mission?* 189. Copyrighted Material

¹⁵ José Míguez Bonino, *Historia y Misión*, in Carmelo E. Álvarez, José Míguez Bonino and Roberto Craig, *Protestantismo y Liberalismo en América Latina* (San Jose, Costa Rica: DEI-Latin American Biblical Seminary, 1983), 15-36.

¹⁶ Alberto Rembao, *Democracia trascendente* (Buenos Aires: La Aurora, 1945).

¹⁷ Sante Uberto Barbieri, *El país de El Dorado* (Buenos Aires: La Aurora, 1962).

¹⁸ Julio de Santa Ana, *Protestantismo, cultura y sociedad* (Buenos Aires: La Aurora, 1970).

¹⁹ Samuel Escobar, 'Identidad, Misión y Futuro del Protestantismo latinoamericano', *Taller del Teología* 3 (1978), 35-60; and Orlando E. Costas, *El protestantismo en América Latina hoy: ensayos del camino 1972-1974* (San Jose, Costa Rica: INDEF, 1975), 41-76.

Mainline Protestant Churches Searching for Identity

The first CCLA Congress on Christian Work in South America was held in Panama in 1916.²⁰ The delegates representing American missions divided up the southern continent among the different denominations, thus establishing a particular presence in each geographical area as part of a co-ordinated procedure to make better use of resources and to avoid duplicating efforts.²¹

The Panama Congress also improved relations between foreign missions and the national churches. Congress participants agreed to co-operate in several areas, including Christian literature, publishing houses and literacy programmes. They also agreed to develop a study guide for Christian education. This Congress became the pillar of the initiation of 'Religious Pan-Americanism', a kind of Protestant co-operation similar to the Inter-American co-operation movement between the United States and Latin America, which was promoted in a series of subsequent Pan-American conferences.²²

Although the participants at the Panama Congress agreed on the importance of co-operation among the churches, many pitfalls had to be overcome before their decisions could be put fully into practice. John Sinclair makes the following observation:

Six years of planning [after Edinburgh 1910] followed to prepare for the Congress on Christian Work in Latin America held in the Canal Zone in 1916. At the conference much of the ecumenical agenda was outlined. Yet one of the reasons for the Protestant presence in Latin America was only partially addressed: the witness of Protestantism to Roman Catholic Christianity. The ecumenical pioneers at Panama did not really face the issue culturally and theologically.²³

Zuinglio M. Dias summarizes from another perspective the promises and failures of the Panama Congress:

In general, the preoccupation with cooperation and the search for unity dominated the whole spectrum of the Congress. This was the main objective

²⁰ See Juan Kessler and Wilton M. Nelson, 'Panamá 1916 y su impacto sobre el protestantismo latinoamericano', in *Pastoralia*, 1 (2) (November 1978), 5-21.

²¹ Joyce Hill, *CCLA History*, 1. See also John Sinclair, 'The Congress of Christian Work, Panama, 1916', unpublished manuscript, May 1985, 1-5.

²² See Samuel Guy Inman, *Problems in Pan Americanism* (New York: George H. Doran, 1921); Harlan Beach, *Renaissant Latin America* (New York: Missionary Education Movement, 1916); and Erasmo Braga, *Panamericanismo, aspecto religioso* (New York: Missionary Education Movement, 1916). These three figures were the leading voices in the Panama Conference of 1916. For the role leadership provided by Samuel Guy Inman, Secretary of the CCLA, see Karla Koll, 'Samuel Guy Inman: Venturer in Inter-American Friendship', in *Union Theological Seminary Quarterly Review (UTSQR)*, XLII (3) (1988), 45-66.

²³ John Sinclair, 'The Unfinished Agenda and Unfulfilled Dream of Panama', unpublished manuscript, October 10, 1992, 3.

and as a result, in the years [that] followed, much effort was put into establishing local committees for cooperation. However, this desire for unity and cooperation, which so inspired the Panama congress participants, did not prosper. And it could not prosper. The lack of a unified theological education, the wide differences in theological approach between the missions belonging to the established churches and the independent missionary Protestant groups in their countries of origin showed what in Panama they refused to accept: the differences which divide the Protestant churches themselves is of the same order as those which divide Catholics and Protestants.²⁴

Zuinglio Dias highlights two problems that affected Protestant missionary movements in Latin America from their inception: their strong anti-Catholic sentiment, and Protestant divisions in the United States.

The Panama Congress was a step in the right direction: it encouraged co-operation and unity with the Latin American churches. The next decade was crucial for this process as the subsequent regional conferences²⁵ tried to promote national councils of churches and co-operation among denominations and local congregations.²⁶

The divisions among foreign missions did not originate in Latin America but were imported from the pluralist United States and Europe. José Míguez Bonino stressed the idea that Latin American Protestantism was a 'divisive and divided' movement from its inception.²⁷ He saw the positive role that Protestant churches could play as a paradigm of human unity based on the calling to reconciliation, unity and integration offered by Jesus Christ.

Missionary Protestantism within the framework of liberal ideology became the prevailing religious belief in Latin America. This ideology emphasized individualism, freedom for progress, liberal democracy and success.²⁸ These elements reflect both European Pietism and North American evangelicalism.²⁹ Samuel Escobar sets forth three major forces that he believes are the Protestant legacy for mission in Latin America and

²⁴ Zuinglio M. Dias, 'Cooperation and Unity: The Dreams (Unfulfilled) of the Panama Congress in 1916', unpublished manuscript, n.d., 6-7.

²⁵ *CCLA, Regional Conferences in Latin America* (New York: The Missionary Education Movement, 1917).

²⁶ Arturo Piedra Solano, '*Orígenes e importancia del congreso de Panamá*', *Vida y Pensamiento* (16) 2 (November, 1996), 8-16.

²⁷ José Míguez Bonino, *Integración humana y unidad cristiana* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, 1969), 57.

²⁸ See Carmelo E. Álvarez, 'Del Protestantismo Liberal al Protestantismo Liberador', in Carmelo E. Álvarez, Roberto Craig, and José Míguez Bonino (eds), *Protestantismo y Liberalismo en América Latina*, 37-56.

²⁹ See David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

the Caribbean during the 21st century: Pietism, the Wesleyan revival, and the pentecostal movement.³⁰

During the Montevideo Congress on Social Responsibility in South America in 1925, an attempt was made to analyze the social conditions in Latin America. During the 1916 Panama Congress, the missionaries presided and controlled the agenda. In Montevideo, however, a more Latin American perspective was evident within Protestantism. The main topic of conversation was the positive role that Protestant churches could play socially and politically in these nations.³¹ According to Samuel Guy Inman, the main architect of Latin Americanization, the emphasis was on 'social responsibility':

While at Panama there might have been a question in the minds of some as to the advisability of Protestant Missions working in Latin America, at Montevideo, the Evangelical church felt itself as an established part of the life of South America, an institution which is taken for granted. With its firmer establishment as a national institution, therefore, the big question at Montevideo had shifted to the Evangelical church itself, its own pressing problems, those of the community, and what relationships should be between the South American church and the foreign missionaries and Boards which had given it birth and fostered its life up to the present.³²

An incipient and timid criticism to imperialism was also voiced in Montevideo, as church leaders moved towards a reassertion of their local cultures and strived to stay focused on the authentically evangelical character of the Christian message. Inman was influenced by the Social Gospel movement and was optimistic because of his liberal and conciliatory approach on inter-American relationships.³³ However, he took a more critical stance against United States' intervention in Mexico and other parts of Latin America.

Inman summarized his vision in this way:

The whole question regarding future ventures in Inter-American friendship may be summed up thus: shall such ventures be made on the basis of economic determinism or on the basis of the principles of Jesus Christ? The one road leads to division, to despair, to chaos; the other leads to unity, to hope, to victory.³⁴

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³⁰ Samuel Escobar, *Changing Tides: Latin America and World Mission Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 100-10.

³¹ Wilton M. Nelson, 'En Busca de un Protestantismo Latinoamericano: De Montevideo 1925 a La Habana 1929', in *Pastoralia* (1) 2 (November, 1978), 22-33.

³² Samuel Guy Inman, *Ventures in Inter-American Friendship* (New York: Missionary Education Movement, 1925), 18-19.

³³ Karla Koll, 'Samuel Guy Inman: Venturer in Inter-American Friendship', 45-51.

³⁴ Samuel Guy Inman, *Intervention in Mexico* (New York: Association Press, 1919); and Samuel Guy Inman, 'Imperialistic America', in *Atlantic Monthly*, 133 (1) (July 1924), 143.

Four years later, at the Evangelical Congress in Havana (1929), the liberal influence was even more evident. 'Evangelical solidarity'³⁵ and the movement towards ecumenical co-operation within the framework of Pan Americanism³⁶ were the central themes.³⁷ Issues of education, social action and literature also re-emerged in Havana.³⁸

For the first time, at the Havana Congress, Latin American leaders were active participants and affirmed their national and regional identities; the missionaries were in the minority.³⁹ Liberal democracy was seen by Latin American Protestant leaders as an answer to the region's social, economic and political problems.

Samuel Guy Inman made the following remarks on the Havana Congress:

The outstanding result of the Congress was the decision to form a Federation of Spanish American Evangelical churches [including Portugal and Spain]. The proposed Federation will have as one of its major objects the working out of the teachings of Christ to Spanish America. Only then will its religious life take on the fullness, the vigor and the expansive force of which it is capable; only then will its leaders cease to be considered mere echoes of foreign missionaries and appear in their real light, as native of their own soil, redeemers of their own culture.⁴⁰

The Havana Congress of 1929 was the turning point in Latin American Protestantism.⁴¹ In the first stage of Latin American Protestantism, up to 1929, the missionary heritage was strongly felt, but in Havana the seeds of a more indigenous Latin American and ecumenical faith were sown.⁴² After the Havana Congress, Protestant mission and evangelism began to find a place in Latin American history.⁴³

Throughout the 1930s the liberal Protestant movement intensified its work, primarily in education for the upper classes to communicate the

³⁵ See Samuel Guy Inman, *Solidaridad Americana* (Madrid: Editorial Daniel Gorro, 1924).

³⁶ Sabanes Plou, *Caminos de unidad*, 14-19.

³⁷ Samuel Guy Inman, *Inter-American Conferences 1826-1954: History and Problems* (Washington, DC: University Press of Washington, DC, 1965).

³⁸ Wilton M. Nelson, 'En Busca de un Protestantismo Latinoamericano: De Montevideo 1925 a La Habana 1929', in *Pastoralia 1* (2) (November 1978), 29-30.

³⁹ See Samuel Escobar and Luis D. Salem (eds), *Gonzalo Báez-Camargo: Una Vida al Descubierto* (Mexico: CUPSA, 1985); and Gonzalo Báez Camargo, *Hacia la Renovación Religiosa en Hispanoamérica* (Mexico: CUPSA, 1930).

⁴⁰ Samuel Guy Inman, 'Young Churches in Old Lands', in *International Review of Mission* 19 (1930), 119.

⁴¹ Dafne Sabanes Plou, *Caminos de unidad*, 16-17.

⁴² Luis E. Odell, 'Sesenta y Cinco Años de Ecumenismo en América Latina 1913-1988', in *Pasos* 25 (September-October 1989), 6-7.

⁴³ Pablo Deiros, *Historia del Cristianismo en América Latina*, 720-30.

Gospel to the Latin American people.⁴⁴ However, from 1930-1940 ecumenical work decreased, and as the World War II escalated, only the youth groups played a significant role in the ecumenical movement.⁴⁵

The most significant international ecumenical event of that decade was the Madras (India) Conference, 12th-29th December 1938 – also known as Tambaram.⁴⁶ This event was organized by the International Missionary Council and included the first Latin American delegation of distinguished ecumenists as participants. The Latin American message was summarized in this way:

Protestant missions in Latin America rest directly upon the claims of urgent human need and the Christian consciousness of obligation to make disciples of all nations.⁴⁷

The report resulting from this 1938 conference affirmed that Latin America had a role to play in the ecumenical world of the day and showed that Protestantism was a powerful transforming force in Latin America. Protestantism in Latin America continued to be challenged by the intellectual and upper classes to be an enlightened religion. The International Missionary Council was encouraged to implement a series of recommendations enabling these 'younger churches' to play a relevant role in the changing societies of Latin America. The Protestant churches of Latin America were, again, voicing their search for identity and mission in their region as well as asserting a place for themselves in the global ecumenical movement.

Alberto Rembao identifies a transition from the predominant role of foreign missionaries to the leadership of Latin American leaders. He saw the 1929 Congress of Havana as the turning point for Latin Americans.⁴⁸

The first Latin American Evangelical Conference (CELA), held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1949, opened a new era for the Protestant churches in the region. Besides discussing education and theological formation, participants raised an insistent call for an analysis of the social, economic and political situations in the region, examined within the framework of the traditional liberal ideology. CELA raised an awareness of

⁴⁴ Agustín Battle, 'El Advenimiento del Protestantismo a América Latina', in *Historia de la iglesia en América Latina*, Enrique Dussel (ed) (Barcelona, Spain: Nova Terra, 1972), 330.

⁴⁵ Nestor Míguez, 'De Rosario a Oaxtepec: Los Movimientos ecuménicos y la Búsqueda de unidad Cristiana en América Latina', in *CLAI, Oaxtepec 1978* (San José, Costa Rica: CLAI, 1980), 122-31.

⁴⁶ Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 117-24.

⁴⁷ *International Missionary Council*, Madras, India, 12th-29th December 1938, Latin American Group (Special Group 2), 2.

⁴⁸ Alberto Rembao, *Mensaje, movimiento y masa* (Buenos Aires: La Aurora, 1939), 32-106.

the need for a commitment of the churches to a relevant evangelism that took the social problems of the grassroots and poor sectors seriously.⁴⁹

The 1949 to 1959 decade was a crucial one for Latin America. Among other important international events, the People's Revolution in China closed the doors to western missionaries and many were relocated to Latin America.⁵⁰ Protestant groups like the pentecostals and evangelicals grew very quickly in this decade. The Cuban Revolution became the most significant political event of the decade, changing the religious and socio-political scenario in the region.⁵¹

The second Latin American Evangelical Conference (CELA) was held in Lima, Peru, in 1961. While affirming that Christ is the hope for Latin America, the Conference highlighted the need for an effective testimony, an attitude of humility in carrying out mission, and sufficient theological background for proclaiming the Gospel. The participants concluded that the work of carrying out God's mission should be done with both personal action and social militancy.⁵² They also stated that the churches must increase their presence in national life and in international ecumenical collaboration.⁵³

Councils and federations of churches from the different countries in Latin America and the Caribbean initiated a group called Evangelical Unity in Latin America (UNELAM) in Río de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1963. The main purpose of this provisional commission was to promote Christian unity among the churches.⁵⁴ UNELAM was an efficient instrument for dialogue, consultation and planning.⁵⁵ When the assembly convened in Oaxtepec, Mexico, in September 1978, UNELAM ceased to exist; it took seriously the provisional character of its mission.

Two new ecumenical movements were founded between 1960 and 1970: Church and Society (ISAL) and the Evangelical Commission on Christian Education in Latin America (CELADEC). Two youth movements had played important roles during the two previous decades: ULAJE (The Evangelical Union of Latin American Youth), and WSCF (World Student Christian Federation).

⁴⁹ CELA, *El cristianismo evangélico en América Latina* (Buenos Aires: *La Aurora*, 1949).

⁵⁰ Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, 78-86, 135.

⁵¹ Jean-Pierre Bastián, *Historia del Protestantismo en América Latina* (Mexico: CUPSA, 1986), 198-200.

⁵² CELA, *Cristo la Esperanza para América Latina* (Buenos Aires: *Confederación Evangélica del Río de la Plata*, 1962).

⁵³ José Míguez Bonino, *Hacia un Protestantismo Ecueménico: Notas para una Evaluación Histórica del Protestantismo entre la I y la II CELA (1949-1960)*, CLAI, *Oaxtepec 1978* (San Jose, Costa Rica: CLAI, 1980), 65-80.

⁵⁴ Marcelo Pérez Rivas, 'El ecumenismo en América Latina' in Norman Goodall (ed), *El Movimiento Ecueménico* (Buenos Aires: *La Aurora*, 1970), 226-28.

⁵⁵ Orlando E. Costas, *Theology at the Crossroads* (Amsterdam: RODOPI, 1976), 237-40.

In 1964 Richard Shaull⁵⁶ wrote the most influential article on ecclesiology ever written in Protestant circles in Latin America. Shaull raised questions on the role of churches in crisis and prophetically envisioned a new era for the church in which God created a new people through the active presence of a community based in Christ's incarnation.⁵⁷

This type of renewal was the most promising and crucial element of contemporary theology in Latin America. A church willing to openly discuss its challenges need not fear the consequences and the radical implications of living God's will. Shaull saw the action of the Spirit as a corrective element and constant source of renewal.⁵⁸

The Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI), founded in Oaxtepec, Mexico, in 1978, adopted a yet more prophetic position, pursuing more progressive issues like solidarity with the poor, the defence of human rights, liberation, and the role of women in the churches. This Conference resulted in many programmes and services that are clearly liberationist in content and praxis. CLAI's position is that evangelization and mission have a transforming presence and are committed to abolishing existing structures of injustice. CLAI was the fulfilment of the dream sparked during the Havana Congress in 1929: an ecumenical organization searching for identity and mission, and promoting unity.⁵⁹

The decades between 1960 and 1980 were times of crisis and of hope. The political, economic, social and religious circumstances in the region created a new *kairos* in which the churches had an opportunity to become more contextualized and relevant. The Protestant churches found a way to respond and be faithful.⁶⁰ Between 1983 and 1992 these groups organized theological consultations and shared their reflections in books, forums and seminars.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Richard Shaull, 'Las CEBs Y La Ecclesia Reformata Semper Reformanda', in *Cristianismo y Sociedad* 115:122 (1993), 52.

⁵⁷ Richard Shaull, 'La Forma de la Iglesia en la Nueva Diáspora', in *Cuadernos de Marcha* 20 (September 1969), 69-70.

⁵⁸ Carmelo E. Álvarez, *Una iglesia en diáspora: Apuntes para una eclesiología solidaria* (San Jose, Costa Rica: DEI, 1991), 87-98.

⁵⁹ Dafne Sabanes Plou, *Caminos de unidad*, 118-32; and Pablo Alberto Deiros, *Historia del cristianismo en América Latina*, 810-12.

⁶⁰ Carmelo E. Álvarez, 'Latin American Protestantism (1969-1978)', in *The Challenge of Basic Christian Communities*, ed. Sergio Torres and John Eagleson, 103-106.

⁶¹ This process of organizing consultations was sponsored by the Ecumenical Research Department in San Jose, Costa Rica, through a programme called Protestant Traditions in Latin America, under the co-ordination of José Duque and Carmelo E. Álvarez. The following books were published as part of the programme: José Duque (ed), *La Tradición Protestante en la Teología Latinoamericana, Primer Intento: Lectura de la Tradición Metodista* (San Jose, Costa Rica: DEI, 1983); Jorge Pixley (ed), *La Mujer en la Construcción de la Iglesia: Una Perspectiva Bautista desde América Latina y el Caribe* (San Jose, Costa Rica: DEI, 1986);

Pentecostals in Search of Identity: Ecumenism of the Spirit

The Pentecostal movement in Latin America is very diverse. The search for a pentecostal identity and mission can be observed on four levels: first, what do Pentecostals mean by an 'Ecumenism of the Spirit'? The second level points out to leading voices in the search for identity and mission. The third examines how the process of mission and unity evolved. The fourth distinguishes between the diverse pentecostalisms and their various searches for identity and mission.

The 1961 New Delhi Assembly of the World Council of Churches was a turning point for the ecumenical movement⁶² because both pentecostal and orthodox churches were received as full members of the World Council. Two pentecostal churches joined this unique ecumenical body: the Pentecostal Church of Chile, and the Pentecostal Mission Church of Chile.⁶³

The context and theological framework for Pentecostals' relationships with other denominations are what many interpreters call an 'Ecumenism of the Spirit'. The phrase caught momentum during the organization of the CEPLA in Chile in 1990, and later at the General Assembly of CLAI in Concepción, Chile, in 1995. Several historic churches have taken seriously the importance and relevance of the pentecostal churches by doing research and promoting dialogues, exchanges and forums.⁶⁴

What is meant by 'Ecumenism of the Spirit'? The late American Methodist theologian and ecumenist Albert C. Outler relates this idea to specific moments in which the Spirit acts in the 'fullness of time' as 'ecumenical epiphanies', moments of unexpected divine revelation, loaded with joy and enthusiasm. These 'ecumenical epiphanies' are always opportunities to live intensely the promise of an ecumenical dialogue in which the Spirit opens new 'frontier spaces of pneumatology'.⁶⁵

José Míguez Bonino introduced the concept during the General Assembly of CLAI in Concepción, 1995:

Ashton Jacinto Brooks (ed), *Eclesiología: Presencia Anglicana en la Región Central de América* (San Jose, Costa Rica: DEI, 1990); and Carmelo E. Álvarez (ed), *Pentecostalismo y Liberación: Una Experiencia Latinoamericana* (San Jose, Costa Rica: DEI-CEPLA, 1992).

⁶² John A. Mackay, *Ecumenics: The Science of the Church Universal* (Old Tappan, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1964), 197-98.

⁶³ Marta Palma, 'A Pentecostal Church in the Ecumenical Movement', in *The Ecumenical Review* 37 (2) (April 1985), 223-29.

⁶⁴ See Benjamín Gutiérrez and Dennis A. Smith, *In the Power of the Spirit: The Pentecostal Challenge to Historic Churches in Latin America* (Louisville, KY: Latin American Center for Pastoral Studies [CELEP]-Alliance of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in Latin America (PC-(USA)/WMD, 1996).

⁶⁵ Albert C. Outler, 'Pneumatology as an Ecumenical Frontier', in *To the Wind of God's Spirit*, ed., Emilio Castro (Geneva: WCC, 1990), 19-20.

An Ecumenism of the Spirit, although it does not determine institutional forms nor structural commitments nor formal decisions, dares its participants to not only pray and sing together (which is more than enough) but also to share experiences and explore new ventures.⁶⁶

Ofelia Ortega reflects on this concept:

Ecumenism in pentecostalism is permeated with 'ecumenism of the Spirit' in which the concept of unity is a faithful reflection of the unity of the Spirit; this includes all God's creation and its stewardship and integrity, and emerges from the same authentic experience of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁷

All these definitions strive for an ecumenical agenda in which the 'Ecumenism of the Spirit' is a concrete commitment to a praxis and life in the Spirit as witnesses in the world, and an openness to the constant action of the Spirit calling to newness of life in all its fullness.

With regard to the implications of this 'Ecumenism of the Spirit' for Latin America, Guillermo Cook comments:

Christian unity, for pentecostals, is a theological fact based upon the unity of the Trinity, the present and the future hope that drives them, both a factor in and a requirement for the growth of the church and – for an increasing number of perceptive leaders – an imperative in the contemporary era of the divine *kairós*.⁶⁸

This definition provides an inclusive and holistic approach to Christian mission based on the action of the Holy Spirit, manifested in experience and expressed in the commitment to promote unity in the church and the world.

In Search of Pentecostal Mission and Unity

The CEPLA (Latin American Pentecostal Evangelical Commission) process started in 1960. A national crisis in Chile, the 1960 earthquake, provided the ecumenical opportunity for action by both pentecostal and evangelical churches in Chile. The Evangelical *Ayuda Cristiana Evangélica* (ACE) [Evangelical Christian Aid] was established and became an incentive for two pentecostal churches of Chile to join the World Council of Churches in 1961. Several pentecostal churches and mainline

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⁶⁶ José Míguez Bonino, '*Ecumenismo y unidad de la iglesia*' (General Assembly, CLAI, Concepción Chile, 1995), 4.

⁶⁷ Ofelia Ortega, 'Ecumenism of the Spirit', in *In the Power of the Spirit*, Benjamin F. Gutiérrez and Dennis Smith (eds) (Louisville, KY: Latin American Center for Pastoral Studies-Latin American Center for Pastoral Studies-PC(USA)/WMD, 1996), 183.

⁶⁸ Guillermo Cook, 'Interchurch Relations: Exclusion, Ecumenism, and the Poor', in *Power, Politics, and Pentecostals in Latin America*, Edward L. Cleary and Hannah W. Stewart-Gambino (eds) (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 80.

denominations started a programme for theological education in Chile known as the Theological Community of Chile.⁶⁹

The first EPLA (Latin American Pentecostal Encounter) was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1971. This conference, 'Pentecostal Unity in Latin America', was the starting point for an ongoing process of dialogue among pentecostal leaders of Latin America. Fifteen pentecostal leaders from Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Colombia, Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela established this unique opportunity for future encounters, and a special commission was formed to organize future events.

The second EPLA took place just before the Assembly of Churches in Oaxtepec, Mexico, 1978. Twenty-two pentecostal churches from different countries in Latin America were present. This pre-Assembly event gave an important impulse and visibility to the pentecostal churches, both at the Assembly and in the formation of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI).⁷⁰ That same year, immediately after the Oaxtepec Assembly, a group of pentecostal leaders from Colombia and Venezuela decided to convene the first Bolivariano Pentecostal Encounter. The *Encuentro Pentecostal Bolivariano* was held in Bogotá, Colombia, in March 1979.⁷¹ The theme 'Unity and Growth of the Pentecostal People in Latin America' shows that the emphasis was on the implications of church growth in Latin America and the challenges for pentecostal churches to witness and understand the socio-political reality.

In November 1979, during the second Latin American Congress on Evangelism (II CLADE) in Huampaní, Peru, thirty-one pentecostal leaders, representing churches in Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and Venezuela, met for dialogue on common issues. The focus of the resulting document was openness to a 'new era' of fraternal relationships. Participants recognized the divisions within the body of Christ, and the need for a joint testimony to address both personal sins of individuals, and the structural sins and injustices present in Latin America. This document carried an open expression of a pentecostal theology of social concern.⁷²

In 1982, during the founding of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI), another Pentecostal Encounter took place to examine the role of

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⁶⁹ CEPLA: *Proceso de Unidad y Cooperación Pentecostal en América Latina, 1960-1992* (Maracaibo, Venezuela: CEPLA, 1992), 3.

⁷⁰ Roger Cabezas, 'Despertar Ecueménico del Pentecostalismo Latinoamericano', in *Jubileo, Fiesta del Espíritu: Identidad y Misión del Pentecostalismo Latinoamericano*, Gamaliel Lugo and Manuel Quintero (eds) (Quito: CEPLA-CLAI, 1999), 103.

⁷¹ Comisión de Fraternidad Evangélica Pentecostal Bolivariana, 28 de julio de 1978, 'Carta de San Cristóbal', in *Principia* (January-February 1979), 30.

⁷² 'Encuentro Pentecostal Latinoamericano, Huampaní, Perú, 26 al 30 de octubre de 1979', in *Pastoralia* 2 (4-5), 240-41, 1980.

pentecostal churches in CLAI. Three pentecostal leaders were elected in the new board of CLAI and many pentecostal churches joined the Council.⁷³

In January 1988 another dialogue took place in Salvador, Bahía, Brazil. This included official representatives of CLAI and the WCC. They wanted know about pentecostal identity and understand the place and role of pentecostals as a growing movement. They also addressed the issue of social responsibility. The next pentecostal encounter took place during the first General Assembly of CLAI in Indaiatuba, Brazil, 1988. The meeting focused on two issues: 'ecumenical vocation' and 'prejudices against pentecostals'.⁷⁴

A series of national and regional events took place between 1989 and 1990. The first Cuban Pentecostal encounter was held in February and March 1989, with the topic 'Sharing the Experience of Latin American Pentecostal Encounters and the Challenges of Cuban pentecostals'. The next EPLA encounter in Buenos Aires, 1989, made a clear appeal to pentecostal and historic churches to 'hope in unity, in fellowship and love, in the communion and solidarity that unites us in Christ'.⁷⁵

In 1990 a group of leaders, sponsored by several ecumenical agencies called by the Ecumenical Research Department of Costa Rica (DEI), convened to discuss 'pentecostal theology' and to analyze the processes that the churches and people of Latin America were confronting in their daily life and work. The result was a volume of articles on pentecostalism and liberation addressing the following issues: 'Pentecostal identity, pentecostal pastoral ministries, the work of the Spirit and life in the Spirit'.⁷⁶ The final article in the volume, stresses the importance of continuing to contribute in an ecumenism of the Spirit, from the perspective of the poor, to the ecumenical movement and the mission of the church.

CEPLA was founded and organized during the EPLA 1990 encounter in Chile. The newly constituted CEPLA commission designed a process that culminated in EPLA 1992 in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Two important issues confronted Pentecostals: 'An ecumenism of the Spirit' as a momentum for churches committed to an 'ecology of the Spirit'. These terms were not used during the event, but they were implied in the conference. The future of theological education for Pentecostals was another topic during the event. CEPLA has played an enormous role as a venue for ecumenical dialogue.

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In 1994 an important consultation, sponsored by the WCC and supported by CLAI, concluded with this statement: 'In an atmosphere of fellowship

⁷³ Carlos A. Valle, *Semilla de Comunión* (ed) (Buenos Aires: CLAI, 1983), 155-64.

⁷⁴ Roger Cabezas, 'Despertar Ecuménico del Pentecostalismo Latinoamericano', 105.

⁷⁵ 'A Nuestros Queridos Hermanos y Hermanas Pentecostales de América Latina', in *EPLA, 18 al 23 de abril de 1989*, mimeographed.

⁷⁶ Carmelo E. Álvarez (ed), *Pentecostalismo y Liberación: Una Experiencia Latinoamericana*, 17-250.

and Christian love we have reflected on pentecostal identity, spirituality, evangelism, social responsibility, participation of women, co-operation and dialogue.⁷⁷

The process that started in 1960 as a response to a concrete national crisis in Chile evolved to become a more consistent and constant attempt to create an atmosphere of mutuality and respect, to create a process of discernment to affirm a pentecostal identity, and to promote an integral and holistic evangelism that included an openness to dialogue and ecumenical co-operation.

Pentecostal Churches Searching for Identity in Latin America

The pentecostal movement in Latin America is part of the great missionary effort that followed the missionary movement of the nineteenth century. In Latin America it started as sporadic renewal movements within the so-called mainline churches: Methodists in Chile, and Baptists and Presbyterian in Brazil.⁷⁸

Three models of pentecostal mission were predominant in Latin America in the twentieth century.

Classic Pentecostalism came from the United States and brought its own mission methods. It is economically and structurally dependent on foreign missions, and although the pastoral bodies were indigenous, ministerial education and training were based on foreign models.

Indigenous Pentecostalism grew out of the local mainline Protestant churches. With strong roots in popular Catholic culture, it is economically and structurally independent of all foreign missions and has an indigenous pastorate.⁷⁹

The Neo-Pentecostal churches emphasize exorcism and prosperity. They are the offspring of dissident movements within the churches. Modelled on Messianic patterns, they have an entrepreneurial structure with a weak Latin-American pastorate and are dependent on the local charismatic hero-*empresario*-leader. One issue related to Neo-Pentecostals is the prosperity gospel. According to Kate Bowler: 'The prosperity gospel is a wildly popular Christian message of spiritual, physical and financial mastery that

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⁷⁷ Consulta Pentecostal Latinoamericana, *Viviendo en la Unidad del Espíritu*, Peru, 14th-19th November 1994.

⁷⁸ Áureo Bispo dos Santos, *Origens históricas da pentecostalização do protestantismo brasileiro* (Salvador: Presbitério do Salvador, 1989), 1-21.

⁷⁹ Juan Sepúlveda, 'Pentecostal and Liberation Theology: Two Manifestations of the Work of the Holy Spirit for the Renewal of the Church', in *All Together in One Place*, Harold Hunter and Peter D. Hocken (eds) (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 53.

dominates not only much of the American religious scene but some of the largest churches around the globe.⁸⁰

Pentecostal churches in Latin America emphasize the worship service in their liturgy.⁸¹ The life of the community is embodied in worship, a celebration of life in the midst of suffering and pain. Worship is the context for testimony and faith-sharing stories. Pentecostal testimonies express gratitude and tell of a testing of faith. The responsibility to testify begins at the moment of conversion and continues throughout life through witness, first to one's own pre-conversion circumstances, and then proceeding to the miracle of salvation.⁸²

Pentecostal churches believe that their most fundamental task is to evangelize. For Pentecostals, church is mission – the Mission of God.⁸³ This missiological dimension exists in creative tension with the eschatological dimension – a tension between the old and the new, between present joy and the expectation of the joy to come.⁸⁴ The believer lives in the expectation of the miraculous.

Yet pentecostal churches continue to struggle amidst divisions, doctrinal confrontations and misunderstandings by other Christian confessions. During the EPLA Encounter of 1998 in Havana, they expressed their conviction and hope, affirming that in discerning God's calling pentecostal churches find a continent that is suffering but 'impregnated with hope'.⁸⁵

The pentecostal churches initiated a journey in search of identity and mission during the first half of the twentieth century. They embraced the 'Ecumenism of the Spirit', which was promoted through the active participation of key leaders in the ecumenical movement, both regionally and internationally. This action moved them into specific partnerships of ecumenical co-operation with mainline denominations. This 'Ecumenism of the Spirit' affirms that Christian mission and unity requires an openness to the action of the Holy Spirit as an agent of that unity in the struggle for justice, hope, and peace.

⁸⁰ Kate Bowler, *Blessed. A History of the American Prosperity Gospel* (New York: Oxford Press, 2011), 3.

⁸¹ Cecilia Castillo, 'Pentecostal Worship: A Healing Community', in *Seeds of Living Hope: Reflections and Challenges in the Churches in the Road to Concepción*, Manuel Quintero (ed) (Quito: CLAI, 1994), 83-94.

⁸² See Manuel Canales, Samuel Palma and Hugo Vilella, *En tierra extraña II* (Santiago, Chile: AMERINDIA SEPADE, 1991).

⁸³ Murray A. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen (eds), *Called and Empowered: Global Mission In Pentecostal Perspective* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 44-58, 67-97, 203-24, 242-58, 285-98.

⁸⁴ Samuel Soliván, 'Hispanic Pentecostal Worship', in *¡Alabadle! Hispanic Christian Worship*, Justo L. González (ed) (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 43-56.

⁸⁵ Manuel Quintero, *Jubileo, fiesta del Espíritu* (ed) (Quito: CEPLA-CLAI, 1999), 194.

Forward in Mission: An Ecumenical Partnership

At the beginning of this article, the author set forth the theoretical framework, and introduced the concepts of *missio Dei* and *koinonia*. It showed the importance of the search for identity and mission, both as a defining factor for denominational identity and as the foundation of relationships between groups. This article described two models of mission strategy (mainline Protestant and Pentecostal), analyzed the joint mission strategy of the partnership, and highlighted the Ecumenical Sharing of Resources model of partnership. The theological elements of mission are provided in an examination of different traditions and diverse theological positions, while searching for consensus in the key concept of *missio Dei* as God's missionary action, and emphasizing the integral and inclusive dimensions of mission.

The conciliar process was shown to follow the same path of affirming mission as *missio Dei*. Another predominant motive in ecumenical circles has been *koinonia* as communion in Christian fellowship, worship, and witness in service. The analysis showed that since the church is called to a commitment to solidarity and unity while caring for God's creation, *koinonia* as partnership is seen as ecumenical co-operation in concrete sharing of resources.

The mission strategy of Pentecostal churches in Latin America was delineated, defining their identity and mission as an ecumenism of the Spirit. Pentecostal church leaders were active participants in promoting this style of ecumenism and in establishing partnerships with mainline denominations. Mission and unity were envisioned as a gift of the Spirit that resulted in the promotion of justice, hope and peace.

As inheritors of 'Ecumenism of the Spirit' blowing in the Azusa Street movement and other revivals and spiritual movements in the United States, Latin America received inspiration and a missionary impulse in what was already a diverse and complex pentecostal movement. The three predominant mission models listed were the 'missionary expansive' model connected primarily with United States-based missions, a 'divine healing Neo-Pentecostalism', and the 'indigenous autonomous' movement. All three mission models responded to the pressing needs of the poor and oppressed that have comprised the majority of members in the pentecostal churches of Latin America today.

CATHOLIC AND PENTECOSTAL CONVERGENCE ON PRACTICAL THEOLOGY AND MISSION

Calixto Salvatierra Moreno

The current impulse of Catholic mission in Bolivia could be accredited to two factors: the pastoral renewal initiated at Vatican II (1962-1965), and the phenomenon of secularization. The first factor resembles the typical evangelical and missionary awakening of the twentieth century, and the second has to do with the loss of validity in the integration of functions between religion and society.

The twentieth century witnessed the rise and development of Pentecostalism. This religious movement generated the formation of new expressions of religion worldwide, which had sociological, anthropological and spiritual influence on contemporary societies. Pentecostalism innovated and created various ways to express the religious beliefs that affected significantly the cultural and spiritual ethos of humanity in Latin America.

We Catholics must admit that these spiritual awakenings, seen among evangelical and particularly among Pentecostal Christians, have revitalized reflection and practice of faith to the missionary task.

In recent years Latin American Christians have become gradually involved in mission. This is evident as people come together through associations, movements and institutions dedicated to reflection on topics ranging from evangelism to social and political participation.¹ Such is the case of Bolivia, which emerges as an example of transformation, as observed in Cochabamba.

This motivated mission scholars to understand and appreciate the Christian message, encouraged by both Catholic and Pentecostal churches. We should keep in mind that Cochabamba's spiritual and social development was forged in the 'womb' of missiological reflection. The model of Cochabamba could be presented as an example of transformation that occurs after people embrace the gospel message and the way they implement it in the community.

Methodologically, once I had dealt with the fundamental mission assumptions of each church, I proceeded to select literature and documents on this theme and looked also at some unpublished files, which documented reflection on mission activity in the churches and their institutions. I also had an opportunity to exchange views with evangelical and Pentecostal missiologists who were directly involved in mission. Furthermore, I gathered information based upon participant observation

¹ See John Gorski and J. Montero (eds), *Introducción a la Misionología* (Cochabamba, Bolivia: UCB/ISET, 2004).

among Pentecostals and Catholics over a year and a half. I did all of this using my experience in the field of ecumenism. I was also involved in prayer meetings for Christian unity, and I carried out this research when I was serving as President of the Commission for Dialogue and Ecumenism of the Archdiocese of Sucre in 2007.

The missionary mandate may be embodied in history in several ways, but the announcement of the gospel is central to mission. That is why, in this context, I use proclamation as a synonym for mission.

I submit my findings in order to contribute to knowledge and to appreciate diversity in the proclamation and practice of Christian mission in our land. This report opens an objective dialogue that appreciates different models of mission practice. It invites Catholics and Protestants to abandon obsolete often outdated and therefore unproductive stereotypes and prejudices, which are contrary to the essence of every Christian community in our land.

Priority in the Proclamation of Mission

Mission is the involvement of Christians in the gospel of Jesus, which consists primarily in embodying the Gospel. The announcement has priority in mission. No community can deprive men and women from proclaiming the Good News of salvation as a gift of love, grace and mercy of God, who – incarnated in Jesus Christ – offers redemption to the community.²

The priority of mission is based on the fact that all forms of mission activity are directed to this proclamation, which reveals the salvific mystery hidden for centuries and manifested fully in Christ (cf. Eph. 2:8) who is the centre of mission in every Christian community.³

To demonstrate the power of the gospel, this was proclaimed and accompanied by signs and wonders that prepared and confirmed the message of the witnesses. In Old Testament times the prophets announced God's message, accompanied by signs and wonders (e.g. Deut. 34:11). In the New Testament the apostles credited God for the signs and wonders that occurred among the people (cf. Acts 2:23; Rom. 15:19; Heb. 2:3-4). Recent studies prove that the book of Acts was drafted in the light of this

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² Cf PABLO VI, *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii nuntiandi* (1975), n. 22; and David J. Bosch, *Misión en Transformación. Cambio de Paradigma en la Teología de la Misión* (Grand Rapids, MI: Nueva Creación, 2000), 631.

³ Cf VATICAN II, Decret *Nostra Aetate* (1965), n. 2; Pontifical Orientations of the Pontifical Council of Interreligious Dialogue and the *Congregation for Evangelization of the People. A Dialogue and announcement* (Roma, 19 Mayo de 1991), reprinted in 2002 by the Institute of Missiology, UCB, Cochabamba, No. 1:58, 75; see also D. Senior and C. Stuhlmüller, *Biblia y Misión, Fundamentos Bíblicos de la Misión* (Estella, Navarra: Verbo Divino, 1985), 450-52.

structure: words and signs.⁴ In those days no one accepted a message unless there was some miraculous evidence, which in most cases consisted of signs or wonders that reinforced it.

Evangelization and evangelism

Reviewing some documents of the Catholic Church⁵ and some reflections of missiologists such as Jacob Kavunkal who, after making a biblical and historical analysis of the terms ‘mission’ and ‘evangelization’, argues that both terms can mean the same thing.⁶ David Bosch writes that evangelicals almost unanimously use the term ‘mission’ to refer to ‘evangelism’.⁷ Donald McGavran clearly states that ‘theologically, mission means evangelism by all possible means’.⁸ Jonathan Lewis defined it ‘as the activity of evangelism to reach people from a church existing within the same sphere to its limits’, and argues that this is the more usual pattern of mission activity as understood today.⁹

Mission as evangelization in the Catholic Church

There have been many years of theological reflection on mission which helped clarify the mission of the Catholic Church.¹⁰ The source of mission is found in the ministry of the Holy Trinity: ‘In short, the source of mission is the Father’s love. He sent Jesus, his Son, who was anointed by the Holy Spirit (John 10:36). The apostles were called and commissioned to establish the foundation of the new people of God as a Catholic community, which is Pentecostal, to carry the sacrament of salvation to all the world.’¹¹ Christ himself is the source of ministry in the church. He has instituted the church; he gave her authority and mission, orientation and purpose.¹²

⁴ L. O’Reilly, *Word and signs in the Acts of the Apostles: A Study of Lucan Theology* (Rome, Vatican: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1987), 89.

⁵ Cf *The Apostolic Exhortation*, 10. In the Apostolic Exhortation, most scholars translate *Evangelii Nuntiandi* as ‘dialogue’ or ‘announcement’. However, the document calls for a mission that reaches the entire person in his or her real world.

⁶ Jacob Kavunkal, ‘Mission or Evangelization?’, in *Mission Studies*, 21:1 (2004), 54-64.

⁷ Bosch, *Misión en Transformación*, 499-500.

⁸ Donald McGavran, *What is Mission?* in A.F. Glasser and Donald A. McGavran (eds), *Contemporary Theologies of Mission* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1983), 17.

⁹ Jonathan P. Lewis, *Misión Mundial*, Vol. II (Bogotá: Unilit, 1990), 61-62.

¹⁰ John Gorski, *Fundamentos Bíblicos de la Misión* (Cochabamba, Bolivia: Curso de la Universidad Católica, Cochabamba, 2005).

¹¹ See Roger Aubry, *En el Gozo del Espíritu: Caminar Misionero y Nueva Evangelización* (Madrid: Covarrubias, 1997).

¹² Aubry, *En el Gozo del Espíritu*, 17.

Mission as evangelism in the Pentecostal Churches

In our time, mission could be better understood if we look carefully at the model of the Pentecostal movement, especially classic Pentecostalism, which is marked by the gift of tongues as evidence that the person has received a special blessing from the Holy Spirit.¹³

José Míguez Bonino, in considering the work of Walter Hollenweger, assumes a 'pluralistic' interpretation of the Pentecostal event in his mission theology.¹⁴ That is why Donald Dayton called it the 'Quadruple model', which represents the common theological commitments of Pentecostalism. Their missionary mandate focuses on four themes found in the person of Jesus as the Saviour, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, Healer and coming King.¹⁵ This confession is sounded forth in the streets and squares, taking advantage of every opportunity.¹⁶

This approach to the mission presents Jesus as the model for every believer (John 17:18). He was in the world but he was not of the world (John 17:16). Believers are also sent by Jesus into the world to proclaim the Good News of the gospel. Together with Pentecostals, we Catholics will have to proclaim that the first missionary was God who sent his Son on a mission.¹⁷

Important Aspects of the Pentecostal Faith in Latin America

Pentecostalism was born in Latin America,¹⁸ although there is talk of a Pentecostal explosion that took place simultaneously on several continents, not only in the United States of America. According to some historians, William J. Seymour (1870-1922), son of former slaves in Louisiana, should be regarded as the founder of American Pentecostalism. For others the pioneer of this movement is Charles Fox Parham (1873-1929).¹⁹ In Latin

¹³ Samuel Escobar, 'La Misión Cristiana y el Poder Espiritual: Una Perspectiva Misiológica', in *Poder Misión: Debate sobre la Guerra Espiritual en América Latina*, Edward Rommen (San José, Costa Rica: IINDEF, 1998), 117.

¹⁴ See José Míguez Bonino, 'Pentecostalismo', in *Nuevo Diccionario de Teología*, Sinclair B. Ferguson, J.I. Packer and David F. Wright (eds) (El Paso, TX: Casa Bautista de Publicaciones, 2005), 740-45.

¹⁵ Donald Dayton, *Raíces Teológicas del Pentecostalismo* (Buenos Aires: Nueva Creación, 1991), 123-25.

¹⁶ Moisés Morales Mercado, *Denominaciones Cristianas no Católicas en Bolivia: Una Aproximación Tipológica desde las Divisiones del Cristianismo del Siglo XVI* (La Paz: Conferencia Episcopal Boliviana, Secretariado de Diálogo, 2002), 63-65.

¹⁷ André Robert, *Conciencia Misionera II: Soluciones para la Problemática Misionera de la Iglesia Local* (Luz, Santa Fe, 2005), 50-51.

¹⁸ Dayton, *Raíces Teológicas del Pentecostalismo*, 124.

¹⁹ W.R. Read, V.M. Monterroso, H.A. Johnson, *Avance Evangélico en la América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Casa Bautista de Publicaciones, 1971), 21; Elizabeth Conde, *História das Assambléias de Deus no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Casa publicadora das

America, the growth of Pentecostals is one of the most significant aspects of the evangelical advance in general.²⁰

Pentecostal mission in Latin America could be playing an important role among the churches that are growing numerically.²¹ Without exception, they believe their message is exactly what men need. *Christus Victor* [Christ victorious] as the Saviour is what they present in their message. Aware of the presence of the Lord and firmly convinced of the truth of their message, they are eager to take it anywhere and everywhere.

It was not until the 1920s, that some Pentecostal churches from overseas started mission work in Bolivia. The first Pentecostal churches were affiliated to the Swedish Free Mission (that arrived in Sweden in 1920), the Foursquare Gospel Church (from the US in 1929), the Evangelical Pentecostal Church (from Chile in 1983), and the Assemblies of God of Bolivia (from the US in 1946). These movements were primarily responsible for the Pentecostal presence in the country. During the 1950s numerous churches from the United States and other countries of Europe and Latin America also arrived.²²

The Catholic and Pentecostal Mission in the City of Cochabamba

The aim of this research is to understand and appreciate the Catholic and Pentecostal Christian missionary force present in Cochabamba. Christian proclamation is not confined to Pentecostal and Catholic Christian denominations, but these are an important part of a wide range of other Christian organizations.²³

Cochabamba has been favoured by large enterprises and institutions that made the city a venue for reflection that led Christian leaders to update their mission and message that offer new directions to Christianity in Latin America.²⁴ Geographically, Cochabamba is the 'heart' of Bolivia and South America. Its heart beats in tune with new movements leading the church to mission. This mission activity can be seen in the following fields of influence:

Assambléias de Deus, 1960), 12; Maclovio Gaxiola López, *Historia de la Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús de México* (Mexico: Librería Latinoamericana, 1964), 17.

²⁰ Dayton, *Raíces Teológicas del Pentecostalismo*, 112.

²¹ Read, Monterroso, Johnson, *Avance Evangélico en la América Latina*, 304.

²² Gilles Riviere, 'Bolivia: El Pentecostalismo en la Sociedad Aymara del Altiplano', in *Gracias a Dios y a los Achachillas: Ensayos de Sociología de la Religión en Los Andes*, Alison Spedding Pallet (ed) (La Paz: ISEAT/Plural editores, 2004), 262-63.

²³ Morales, *Denominaciones Cristianas no Católicas en Bolivia*, 167.

²⁴ Francis T. McGourn. 'Palabras de Bienvenida al Simposio', in *La Misión en el Tercer Milenio* (Kipus, Cochabamba: Simposio Latinoamericano de Misionología, 2002), 5-8.

Missionary procedures of the Catholic Church in Cochabamba

By 'Catholic Church' I am referring specifically to the parish communities of our study.²⁵ In order to understand the Catholic Church, one has to concentrate on the centrality of the Catholic Creed or apostolic faith, and the celebration of the sacraments, precepts, commandments and the Lord's Prayer.²⁶ Catholics also practise devotion to the Virgin Mary and the saints. Now, let's take a look at the following items:

The Christian community

The Catholic Christian community of Cochabamba is related to the institutional head of the Archdiocese, who has doctrinal and legal ties with uniformity so that all parishes will show the same patterns of community life. In that way, it is easier to mobilize believers on specific occasions, such as the celebration of a patron saint festival, the reception of sacraments or parish anniversaries.

Few believers are counted as active members of a group in the parish. There are some parishioners that do feel part of the local church, but they lack solid interpersonal relationships and some do not feel nurtured by the Word of God. There is no evangelistic zeal among believers. The transmission of the faith from parents to children is almost forgotten or simply left to the catechists.

There are parishioners with pluralistic views of the Catholic faith. In their religious life they include popular practices based on religious experience and devotion to the saints, such as requests, retribution, miracles, blessings, punishment, promises and pilgrimage. Syncretistic Catholics practices add to the devotion of the saints, for example, certain rituals of pre-Hispanic origin, like incense, *koas* and the cult of Pachamama.

Contrary to those practices, the new charismatic movements and other ecclesial movements, mostly affiliated with the Evangelical and Pentecostal movements, emphasize the action and anointing of the Holy Spirit as an apostolic zeal that builds up loyalty to the hierarchy of their movements.

Catholic theology as an academic discipline is very developed in Cochabamba. However, such rich content is not accessible to most parishioners. Theological reflection has yet to embrace the local context. Most of its content seems to be inherited from literature published outside

²⁵ Here I mention the parishes of Santo Domingo, San Juan de Dios and la Compañía de Jesús; all of them located in Cochabamba. I also mention Monsignor Tito Solari, Archbishop of Cochabamba, and the priests Father Germán Sainz Hinojosa, Estanislao Boffil and Victor Benavente, as well as qualified parishioners who are actively involved in mission and reflection.

²⁶ Cf Decret *Christus Dominus* (28th October 1965), 11; and 'Exhortación Apostólica', *Christifideles laici* (30th September 1988), 25.

Latin America, and in other instances the books are part of the official documents of the church.

The Scriptures continue to be central in the documents of the church, but in their daily confession and practice, Catholic believers observe a popular religiosity, which they link with the reception of the sacraments and the veneration of the saints. They also practise their devotion to Virgin Mary with greater zeal.

In their social and political orientation, Catholics promote mediation as a tool for resolving great conflicts, something that is highly respected and taken into account by political authorities. However, this successful social work tends to neglect the strength of the catechism. Catholics may have to balance social work with spiritual formation if they are to succeed in their mission to society.

It is no secret that most parish priests consider the parishes as traditional and conservative. They continue to follow the guidance of the Bolivian Episcopal Conference, especially in social concerns. Bolivia has been through difficult times and prophetic voices need to be heard. Historically, the Catholic Church has been a prophetic voice raised against social and economic injustice, but at the present time the Church has not uttered strong statements against political authority. Consequently, the Church is neither addressing the spiritual issues of the community nor using its prophetic mission against socio-political injustice.

Commitment to the Good News

There are no particular evangelistic projects similar to those practised by Evangelicals and Pentecostals which could be highlighted here. In the Catholic Church one can observe a remarkable focus on social concerns and mediation. These actions we prefer to call 'visible signs of God's love' rather than instruments of evangelization.

For Catholics, confession could be signalled as a place of privilege. It is the moment when the faithful find forgiveness, freedom and spiritual guidance. This is the moment when the faithful believer truly reunites with himself and consequently with the Lord Jesus.

There are some missionary activities initiated by the Archdiocese's office, as in the case of the School of Pastoral Agents and the Office of Mission and Ecumenism. We also have the Mission Council, which lacks much impact in the community because it fails to meet a modicum of the endless need for mission among the poor.

Printed materials are produced in line with missionary activities planned by the priest, but the great majority of the faithful have little or nothing to do with them.

Catholic communities are not using contemporary Christian music and body language, except in religious festivities (such as those which take place in The 14th of September Square). These festivities develop a

Catholic Christian conscience and membership around the bishop and his priests. They are also considered powerful opportunities for evangelization and pastoral care.

Diverse institutions facilitate orientation and missionary training, both in academia and outside. Those institutions provide holistic training and are staffed by very capable and gifted personnel.²⁷ They offer great support and hope, but they are slow to join forces with the Archbishop and entrepreneurial individuals in the parishes. Despite there being so much reflection on mission in the academic field, this missionary initiative is insufficient, and the number of active missionaries is limited in relation to the potential that is being generated by the mission agencies that operate in Cochabamba.

Timeliness and prospects

Latin America has already had more than 500 years of Catholic Christian presence. The fruits of this presence are recognized. Some are valued or repudiated, depending on the occasion. Some still speak of a colossal relocation of the European Catholic Christian system and not so much of the true essence of it.²⁸ Nonetheless, the Catholic Church is still numerically the largest religious body.

The Catholic Church does not seem to be moved to increase its numerical membership. It appears that attending mass and church festivities is enough to maintain the traditional attention of the faithful. The Church has made significant efforts to inculturate the gospel, but progress in this respect has been limited. Tradition and religious pluralism prevail in the parishes.²⁹ Incidentally, priests seem to be more inclined to write letters to foreign entities requesting financial aid to develop humanitarian projects instead of training the faithful in their full Christian commitment in the community. If this pattern continues, Catholic evangelization will be linked with community development under the auspices of foreign entities.

Neo-catechumenal or charismatic movements are seen as spiritual awakenings that ignite missionary zeal.³⁰ These groups do not always receive the support and approval of the priests, but are gaining strength and

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²⁷ Some of these mission agencies are the Superior Institute of Theological Studies, the Institute of Distance Theological Education, the Institute of Missiology, the Maryknoll Mission Center for Latin America, Radio Stations, Editorials and Bookstores, Apostolic Movements, and other educational agencies.

²⁸ See José Míguez Bonino, 'Latin America', in *The Prospects of Christianity Throughout the World*, M. Searle Bates, Wilhelm Pauck and Henry P. Van Dusen (eds) (New York: Scribner, 1964), 165-216.

²⁹ Manuel Marzal, *Tierra Encantada. Tratado de Antropología Religiosa de América Latina* (Madrid: Trotta, 2002), 403-408.

³⁰ Interview with Monsignor Roger Aubry, Cochabamba, Bolivia, June 2006.

stability. They are emerging as a present and future form of continuity for the Catholic Christian community.

According to the last continental conference at Aparecida,³¹ the Church is called to rethink and re-launch its mission in the new Latin America. We are summoned to confirm, renew and revitalize the newness of the Gospel, which was rooted in our ancient history based on a personal encounter with Christ. It does not depend on programmes or structures, but on new men and women who embody that tradition and newness, as disciples of Jesus Christ and missionaries of his Kingdom. The Church must be in permanent mission in Latin America.

Missionary Procedures of the Pentecostal Churches

Speaking of Pentecostal churches, we are not referring to all denominations, for the Pentecostal movement is complex and heterogeneous; here we refer only to those that are the subject of our study.³²

Pentecostals consider the work and leading of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures as the standard for life and conduct. Those who have been baptized are convinced that they have received the gifts of the Holy Spirit; the impartation of those gifts does not necessarily follow the order of speaking in tongues, healing and prophecy. This spiritual anointing gives them a new identity, a new birth in Christ Jesus, and enables them to be effective in evangelism and discipleship.

For the purpose of this article I will focus on the following points:

The Christian community

The Pentecostal communities of Cochabamba are known for their pluralistic form of government and organization. They are not bound by doctrine but by a Pentecostal religious experience, which they interpret in different ways, but with the commitment to follow the model of the first Christian communities as described in the Acts of the Apostles. The assembly of believers is very enthusiastic and very demanding as regards excellence in worship. They keep the expectation of receiving and adding people to their communities. Their doctrines are not complex, although the

³¹ CELAM, *Aparecida, Conclusive Document*, V Conference of the Latin American Episcopal Conference (Cochabamba, Bolivia: Agosto 2007); see especially Nos. 10-14 and 365, 548.

³² Here we make reference to the Evangelical Pentecostal Church at Uruguay Street, the Ekklesia Church of Bolivar Street, and the Community of the Shekinah Church at M. Rodríguez Street. All these Pentecostal congregations are located in the urban zone of the City of Cochabamba. The interviews were conducted with the pastors Edgar Ortuño, Zacarías Salas and Andro Velarde.

religious structure and its maintenance is slowly becoming significantly institutionalized.³³

Progress in theological fields is still underdeveloped. They do not engage in theological reflection, but rather to the practical context in which the leader or pastor is to develop and carry out his ministry. Pentecostal leaders are always suspicious and distrustful of academic theology or discussions that may undermine the authority of the Bible.³⁴

For Pentecostals, the centrality of biblical truth is crucial and vital for the recognition and establishment of spiritual gifts and ministries, such as pastors, prophets, teachers, evangelists, apostles and disciple workers. These are recognized by the local community, which commissions them to proclaim the gospel and God's gifts to the church, without any kind of social or gender restrictions.³⁵

The congregation accepts responsibility for the care of their pastors and leaders who maintain its spiritual health. All believers are encouraged to follow the teachings of Jesus, as enshrined in the Scriptures. They also seek God's will intensely through Bible study and emotional celebrations of worship. Most Pentecostals favour large church crowds and attend services with great expectations of supernatural and personal blessings.

Contemporary Pentecostals seem to be aware of the need to harmonize the spiritual with the material. Some of them have begun to show concern for social issues and for the poor. At some point they perceived the imbalance between their spiritual life and social work.³⁶ Even though few Pentecostals are committed to social work, it seems that they now pay more attention to it. Hence, if they were willing, they would find good teaching in Catholic programmes of social action.

Commitment to the Good News

Pentecostals practise 'personal evangelism' and 'cell groups' in their ministry. Observing those elements help us to understand their motivation in the proclamation of the Gospel – leading individuals to personal salvation and building a community of believers around their teaching and practices. Here it is important to highlight the growing numbers of believers participating in ministry which is visible through healings, other manifestations of spiritual gifts, and dedication to the church.

Personal evangelism and cell groups are foundational in contemporary Pentecostal ecclesiology. These methods were used by the early Christian communities and now are being re-activated in the church, even in times of

³³ Heinrich Schafer, *Protestantismo y Crisis Social en América Latina* (San José, Costa Rica: DEI, 1992), 56.

³⁴ Darío López, *El Nuevo Rostro del Pentecostalismo Latinoamericano* (Lima: CENIP, 2002), 60.

³⁵ López, *El Nuevo Rostro*, 125-52.

³⁶ López, *El Nuevo Rostro*, 132.

advanced technology and cyber communication. It is clear therefore that personal contact and face-to-face communication, followed by family testimonials, remain essential when witnessing to the Good News of salvation. The results have been excellent, as believers come to develop and use the gifts they have received from God, and thus their personal and community commitment increases.

The preaching of pastors and leaders constantly calls believers to witness to their experience with Christ and to share their testimony of how they experienced the grace of God. Such sharing stimulates people to listen to the gospel message and to invite their friends to come and participate in the services offered by the church.

A timeline in perspective

The Evangelical movements arrived in Latin America 400 years after the Roman Catholic Church. Although some Protestant missions arrived sporadically in the eighteenth century, the Catholic Church remained overwhelmingly stronger in most Latin American societies. But the arrival of Pentecostalism in the twentieth century may be considered as the time of a second Christian conquest, for it revolutionized the political, social and religious structures of Latin America. Just as Protestantism had done in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Pentecostals also changed the rules of the continent in the course of the twentieth century. In this respect, Heinrich Schafer points out that this 'new religion' may be replacing the role played by Catholicism in colonial times.³⁷ Of course, there is much more to be said about this, but the discussion is on the table so that Catholics and Pentecostals may find some points of convergence in their parallel ministries across Latin America.

Moreover, Paola Bolognesi has raised the possibility that Pentecostalism may be considered the third branch of Christianity in Latin America, besides Catholicism and Protestantism.³⁸ She noted that classic Protestantism was never known as a religious force in Latin America. So it was not until the arrival of Pentecostalism that the spiritual 'boom' of the 1960s and 1970s in the continent began. Pentecostalism has now become a religious force that has even challenged four centuries of Catholic dominance on the continent. Nobody questions the Christian identity of Pentecostalism; what is in doubt is the Protestant identity of Pentecostalism although, historically, Pentecostalism is considered part of the Protestant family.

³⁷ Schafer, *Protestantismo y Crisis Social en América Latina*, 13.

³⁸ 'Centroamérica: Evangélicos Pentecostales: Un Retrato', in *Pentecostalidad* (19th July 2015). <http://pentecostalidad.com/index.php/2015/07/19/centroamerica-evangelicos-pentecostales-un-retrato> (accessed 10th August 2015).

Here it is important to mention that most Pentecostal congregations studied in this article reflect an indigenous experience of the gospel. Pastors and laity show an autochthonous incarnation of the gospel in the community. Pentecostalism knows how to evangelize the poor and marginalized and lift them to new socio-economic levels. These churches do not seem to be linked into international networks and therefore do not depend on foreign economy, which is why we think of them positively. They seem to be living an authentic Latin American Bolivian and Cochabamban spirit.³⁹

Official Catholic and Pentecostal Approaches

It is convenient to report on the process of the formal interchange that is taking place between the Catholic Church and the Pentecostal churches. There is a diversified commission of study sponsored by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity [now Pontifical Council] and the World Council of Churches.⁴⁰

This dialogue began with individual contacts between members of Pentecostal churches with the Vatican Secretary for Christian Unity in 1969 and 1970. The initial conversations started with common themes suggested by David du Plessis, a well-known international Pentecostal authority. He was a distinguished guest at Vatican II. The leader of the Catholic team was Father Kilian McDonnell, OSB, director of the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research in Collegeville (USA).

This dialogue between Catholics and Pentecostals promoted good relations among Christian leaders. Participants emphasized mutual understanding and respect for the beliefs of the other. Members of the dialogue were able to single out the differences and the commonalities between Catholics and Pentecostals. Participants found ways to avoid sharp statements and responses towards one another, and instead they focused on answering questions regarding the real mission of the church. They concluded that God's mission was entrusted to all believers in Christ. One way to assist each other was to ponder the strengths of each other rather than emphasizing the weakness of the other.⁴¹

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³⁹ See A. Coloque Jiménez, 'El Caminar Hacia Las Teologías Andinas', in *Teología Andina: El Tejido Diverso de la Fe Indígena*, Vol. I, J. Eastermann (ed) (La Paz: ISEAT, 2006), 124-25.

⁴⁰ Manuel Guerra Gómez, *Diccionario Enciclopédico de las Sectas* (Madrid: BAC, 1998), 684.

⁴¹ It is not difficult to find contradicting publications, such as Eliecer Salesman, *50 Respuestas a los Protestantes* (Bogotá: Editorial Salesiana, 1990); or the work of Thomas F. Heinze, *Respuesta a mis Amigos Católicos* (Ontario, CA: Chick Publications, 1996).

This kind of dialogue must continue among Catholics and Pentecostals, for they need to find ways of convergence in order to mutually recognize each other in Latin America.

Spaces in Common

New technology and communication media have made it possible for regional and global encounters to take place more frequently. Those activities are helping church leaders to recognize that there is no exclusivity or primacy of one Christian church over another. Leaders are finding common topics for dialogue and avoiding issues that separate them. In most cases, they wisely address those themes related to doctrinal differences and ministerial practices.⁴² They are pondering those topics that are common to them. They prefer to study the life and teachings of the Lord that recognize their identity in mission; and they justify their existence and validity as part of the Christian church. We agree with the position of José María Vigil who emphasizes that, if a religion does not favour life and justice, but opts for the poor, it must be a religion that makes this particular command of Jesus a reality. In the end, there may be something good in it.⁴³

Our context of study was made in the urban areas of the city.⁴⁴ We observed social problems and excessive numerical growth in the poorest zones. We observed landscape issues as well as housing, education and health problems. We also looked into water and sanitation, transportation, precarious employment, family problems, crime and violence in the city. Despite the existence of these problems, city-dwellers look at life with wishful optimism. They are looking for opportunities to improve their present situation and to reach higher levels of human dignity in general.

Some churches are being ignored, especially by an indifferent younger generation that does not find any linkage with them.⁴⁵ Yet religiosity is developing outside the traditional institutions. Other religious groups have arrived with new methods of evangelism and worship patterns.⁴⁶ The

⁴² José María Vigil, 'Muchos Pobres, Muchas Religiones, La Opción por los Pobres, Lugar Privilegiado para el Diálogo entre las Religiones', in *Por los Muchos Caminos de Dios II, Hacia una Teología Cristiana y Latinoamericana del Pluralismo Religioso*, José María Vigil, Luiza Tomita and Marcelo Barros (eds) (Quito: Editorial Abya Yala, 2004), 18-25.

⁴³ Vigil, 'Muchos Pobres', 20.

⁴⁴ See Francisco Niño Súa, 'La Pastoral Urbana como Desafío Evangelizador', in *Evangelizar la Gran Ciudad un Desafío Prioritario – Documents of CELAM* (Bogotá: CELAM, 2000), 9-52.

⁴⁵ See Juan Martínez Velazco, *Increencia y Evangelización* (del diálogo al testimonio) (Madrid: Sal Térrea, 1988), 104-106.

⁴⁶ See Rafael Antonio Loayza Bueno, *La Industria de la Salvación, Evangelismo y Medios de Comunicación en Bolivia* (La Paz: Caraspas, 1999), 138; and Samuel Escobar, 'Fundamento y Finalidad de la Educación Teológica en América Latina, in *Teología Evangélica para el Contexto Latinoamericano: Ensayos en Honor al Dr*

challenge is real for the Catholic and for the traditional Protestant churches, for there seems to be a significant religious confusion taking place in the city; and the head leaders do not seem to be aware of it, or are simply ignoring or minimizing the scope of the problem.

In short, most people of the city have the potential to assume social and political duties. The opportunities are set for everyone to be successful in life. The problem is that most leaders will come to power without any proper spiritual formation. We are now led by leaders with doubtful beliefs and ambiguous spiritual core values. New leaders do not seem to hold on to solid Christian ideals, so that they are vulnerable to immorality in the exercise of power. These are fields of common concern that both Catholics and Pentecostals must dialogue about with urgency and with a great sense of responsibility.

Current Challenges for Catholics and Pentecostals

The bold innovations of Liberation Theology of the 1970s were mostly initiated by the efforts of sincere Catholic theologians who called the church to return to the Bible and to identify with the poor of Latin America. Some of the most distinguished accomplishments of Liberation Theology, even against the bad press and negative propaganda from the conservatives of Latin America, proposed by those courageous theologians, achieved powerful outcomes. Among them we can mention the initiation of the Church Base Communities and a much greater involvement of the laity in various areas of ministry and Christian service in the church. Since there were not enough clergy to serve an involved community of the faithful, more lay leaders arose.

Liberation Theology called for a live and less ritualistic religious experience and for intentional refusal of the most conservative sector of the Church with its religious practices. The Catholic Church opened up to religious pluralism. This new approach to Christianity cleared the way for Evangelicals and Pentecostals to grow quickly in the region. Unfortunately, those efforts were stopped by the bishops and any progress that had been made collapsed. All the efforts initiated by liberation theologians were capitalized on by Pentecostals⁴⁷ who took advantage of those ideals to reach the poor and marginalized.

The impact of Pentecostalism in Latin America is the most important phenomenon in the Christian world, especially in countries such as Chile, Brazil and Guatemala. They have been remarkably successful in identifying with the marginalized and those Catholics who are seeking for solutions to

Emilio Antonio Núñez', Emilio Antonio Núñez C and Oscar A. Campos R. (ed) (Buenos Aires: Kairos, 2004).

⁴⁷ See Pablo A. Deiros, *Historia del Cristianismo en América Latina* (Buenos Aires: FTL, 1992), 93.

their religious ambiguity, especially those who have no access to wealth or political influence.⁴⁸ David Stoll argues that mega-churches of the Southern Cone have the potential to become the sources for social reform and further change in the region. He adds that the surest and most probable answer is not the quietism of Pentecostals but their active presence in the community, although they are not as active as their numbers suggest. Stoll also suggests that the incursion of Christians in society has been passively unnoticed as if they were raptured, and it would take a week or two for people to realize it.⁴⁹

However, the Pentecostal explosion is so great that in many countries it exceeds the population growth, and this suggests that for the first time in the history of Latin America Protestantism could become the religious majority. Unfortunately, most evangelical and Pentecostal churches are only concerned about numerical growth. Schools of church growth and evangelism are everywhere. The numerical growth of evangelicals carries certain dangers, one of the most obvious being superficiality. Converting cinemas into temples and arenas in huge tents, with contemporary marketing strategies, may only serve to institutionalize a popular evangelical religion.⁵⁰

Worship and doctrine

The gospel of faith and prosperity as offered by most Neo-Pentecostal movements presents a gospel without a cross and without suffering. Many leaders have been captivated by this theology of prosperity. Such a theology is diminishing the relationship between the witness and testimony. We are getting used to scandals about bishops, pastors and leaders accused of financial and moral affairs. Even in politics, Christians have not given the best examples. Some are looking for positions of privilege in an unobtrusive or overt way.

Today, people are prone to believe and follow a charismatic leader who may offer seminars on spiritual warfare, contemporary music concerts or interesting lectures – according to the group's particular interest. People are no longer interested in the purity of doctrine or solid theological teaching. Instead they welcome any emphasis on immediate satisfaction to immediate needs, which makes them vulnerable to the teachings of doubtful doctrines. This is accentuated by the phenomenon of migration from the Catholic

⁴⁸ See José Oscar Beozzo, 'Grandes Questões da Caminhada do Cristianismo na América Latina e no Caribe' in *Cristianismo na América Latina e no Caribe*, Wagner López Sánchez (ed) (Sao Paulo, Brazil: Paulinas, 2003).

⁴⁹ David Stoll, *¿América Latina se Vuelve Protestante?* (Quito: Abya-Yala, 1990), 347.

⁵⁰ See José Comblin, *La Teología de la Misión, la Evangelización* (Buenos Aires: 1974).

Church to the evangelical churches, but there is also internal migration from evangelical to evangelical congregations.⁵¹

Relations with the state

The prophetic role of the church has always been present in response to social injustice at the hands of the state. The struggle for integral human and Christian justice continues to be present in the political arena. However, the corrupt in power continue to feel comfortable and at ease with Christians. Obviously the Christians' prophetic voice is not strong enough for the government to pay attention to it.

Lucas Cerviño indicates that Christian education must aim to train citizens to respect and value the different cultural and religious experiences of all. Christians are called to promote and consolidate a pluralistic cultural and religious education, leaving aside any doubtful ties to the state. They are called to guard those principles that are compatible with the teachings of the gospel and oppose any attempt to legislate against them.⁵²

The urgent reality

The residents of the city that in most cases are injured, hungry, thirsty, sick, exiled, imprisoned and persecuted (cf. Matt. 25:35-36), by the nature of their condition, are very close to the ministry of the church. Hence, by their condition they are entitled to expect and receive that assistance which was entrusted to the followers of Jesus (cf. Mark 16:15-18); Jesus is revealed to them in their neighbours, and it happens that the faithful always meet with their neighbours in need on their own territory. Every Christian community is called to meet the needs of neighbours whom they encounter during the course of each day. Christian mission aims to make available the Good News and the good of the world to others, especially to those experiencing suffering.

Indicators of Progress

Here is a rough list of indicators that seem to make Evangelicals and Pentecostals successful in Latin America.

⁵¹ See Darío López, 'El Nuevo Escenario Evangélico: Dilemas Misionológicos en el Mundo Globalizado', in *CLADE IV* (Cochabamba, Bolivia: CLADE, 2002).

⁵² Lucas Cerviño, '¿Religión, Ética y Moral Fuera de la Escuela?' in *Caminar*, año 3, No. 4 (Cochabamba, Bolivia: Cuadernos Interculturales, 2006), 29-34.

Social concern

In recent years, social conscience and social action have become remarkable among evangelicals. At this time it is common to find a medical clinic, a school, a soup kitchen for the needy, and other services alongside the churches. This is a new pattern that is becoming normal among evangelicals and often among Pentecostals too. The Good News is evidenced through integrated service, that is, the work of evangelism goes hand-in-hand with social responsibility, thus precipitating changes and transformation in the lives of people and in communities.

The priesthood of all believers

The progressive implementation of the universal priesthood of all believers is practised by these churches. As a result, every Christian gets involved in Christian service with dedication and a sense of urgency. They do this, believing that they have a share in the mission that announces Christ's message to the community. Ironically, this reflection has been historically developed by Catholics but is now being largely practised by Evangelicals and Pentecostals. This is because each one is aware of his or her responsibility for the task, and each church aims at involving all believers in God's work in the world as an essential aspect of the mission of the church.

Theological reflection

Theological reflection among Evangelicals, Pentecostals and Catholics has grown slowly in Latin America. Although some may argue that our reflection was based upon a 'borrowed theology', the reality is another one. In the past, our theological reflection incorporated ideas of Northern European and North American thinkers, and even of some Latin Americans trained by teachers from those regions. But gradually Latin American thinkers began to emerge and now we have Christian literature written by Latinos. This theology embraces the Latin American reality with its strengths and weaknesses, but Latin American nonetheless, which also influences hymnody, sacred art, preaching and social concerns.

Women in ministry

In Latin America, there is a growing recognition of the emergence of women as active ecclesial leaders, not only in the field of theology, but also in the birth, growth, organization and liveliness of the Christian community. It is they who bear the responsibility of leading most of the services provided by the organization, co-ordination, animation and evangelism of the churches. Women have understood and know how to demonstrate a unique dimension of a complete and successful church in the

community. Today, women in mission outnumber male missionaries in many countries.

Embracing diversity

The diversity of participants in church ministries among Catholics and Pentecostals has increased exponentially in recent years. They are now engaged in promoting mission in fields of research studies, theological reflection, and training and sending cross-cultural workers to plant churches among unevangelized people groups.

An updated proclamation of the Gospel

Latin Americans found a message that meets the needs of people, within their own time and space. In the history of the Latino Christian communities one can find many ways to proclaim Christ. That is why Pedro Borges suggests that the essence of mission transcends any religious system, and for that reason effective evangelists must find creative ways to proclaim the Good News.⁵³ All Christians are called by the Holy Spirit to evangelize and make disciples for Jesus. This is very clear in the Catholic and Pentecostal churches in Cochabamba.⁵⁴

Clarity of vision and reflection may not be enough for a successful proclamation of the gospel. Much of its success depends on the methods employed by evangelists responsible for this proclamation. As I said earlier, people are today looking for immediate solutions to immediate needs, and that is why most Neo-Pentecostal congregations are succeeding today. Those churches are meeting the needs of people in their own place. It is obvious that we Catholics need to study these contexts of ministry with a teachable attitude so we can improve even more in the near future.

Conclusion

The reality of life in the city demands new ideas for effective ministry. We have a mission! The Catholic Church has its place in the mission of God for Latin America. I wrote this paper with that idea in mind. We need to update our methods and strategies for church life. We need to review our concept of evangelism, church growth and ministry. If Pentecostals are growing, it is because people are responding to their message. That means they are approaching people with strategies that work for their ministries. Rather

⁵³ See Pedro Borges, *El Envío de Misioneros América Durante la Época Española* (Salamanca, Spain: Ediciones Sígueme, 1977).

⁵⁴ See Juan Gorski, 'Misioneros para América Latina y Desde América Latina', *Yachay* 9:16 (1992), 59-92.

than ignoring or criticizing them, we should take a closer look at what they are doing so that we too can improve our mission.

Pentecostals are also learning from us. They are reading and studying our doctrine and theology. Our history cannot be hidden from intelligent and successful people. Catholic scholars, even from Latin America, are being studied at Evangelical and Pentecostal seminaries across Latin America. Our doctrine and theology are providing the foundations for their creed, doctrine and theology.

There is a need for Catholics, Evangelicals and Pentecostals to sit down together to think and reflect as fellow servants of the living God. There is only one gospel, one church, one Spirit and one Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Latin America needs the goodwill of Christians, working together, to lift the continent out of poverty and marginalization. I am not dreaming – this is what the Holy Spirit wants. So I submit this paper with the conviction that some will hear this call and will respond with further action to accomplish what the Spirit calls for today. There is a legitimate call for unity, collaboration and fellowship among Latino Christians that can only take place in the context of the unity provided by the Holy Spirit. Dear fellow Catholics and Pentecostals, the ball is now in your court!

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PART TWO

**MISSION AMONG
WOMEN, CHILDREN
AND YOUTH**

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ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING! DEFENDING THE CAUSE OF LATIN AMERICAN WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Mireya Alvarez

This presentation aims at showing how Latina ministers stand out as exemplary leaders in the church despite the challenges, barriers and limitations encountered in some denominational structures and policies. In recent years, more female pastors are leading growing churches across Latin America. However, some denominations, like the Church of God, are yet to recognize the full ministry of female leaders and have not totally ordained them into denominational leadership or ministry. In spite of the achievements of women in social, educational and political fields of contemporary society, the church still lags behind in promoting the value and dignity of women in ministry. This paper calls for a renewed reading of the Scripture and church policies. It invites denominational leaders to recognize clergywomen and to formally empower them into church leadership.

While some churches do not set women free to exercise the full privileges of leadership, society has allowed opportunity and space for capable women in administrative and executive positions in many companies and government agencies. 'Several nations have elected women into the presidential office. However, the church does not yet favor a full leadership of women, restricting their development and depriving the church of their great contributions.'¹

Women obtained the privileges of redemption, which allows them to partake of an unrestricted ministry within the church. How, then, can we speak of redemption if the church continues to deny complete redemption to women? The salvation obtained on the Cross does not exclude people because of race, nationality or gender. It is no longer possible for the Christian church to perpetuate injustice against women. 'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3:28, NIV). Baptism marked a new dimension of equality and freedom for every believer into the Body of Christ. Racial differences (Jew and Gentile), social status (free and slave), and gender (man and woman), introduced by sin, are superseded by the coming of the Kingdom of God, which is 'righteousness, peace... in the Holy Spirit' (Rom. 14:17, NIV).

The Pentecostal tradition celebrates the fulfilled promise of the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh, so that 'your sons and daughters...

¹ Yattenciy Bonilla. '¿Hablamos de Redención sin Redimir a la Mujer?' in *Boletín Latinoamericano de Estudios Pentecostales* 1:1 (2012), 91-101.

both men and women... will prophesy' (Acts 2:17, 18 NIV). Although the Pentecostal movement continues to expand around the world, some Pentecostal churches have lost the initiative of including women in leadership. Women are excluded in relation to decision-making in the administrative leadership and government of the church. Church policy justifies restrictions by one single phrase about silence (1 Tim. 2:12) rather than expanding upon the promise of empowerment by the Spirit (Acts 2:17).

The Initial Inclusiveness Pentecostal Movement

We will use the Azusa Street revival as the point of reference for the expansion of Pentecostalism in the American continent, although there are evidences of revivals in Mukti, India, led by Pandita Ramabai in 1894 to 1906, and in Valparaiso, Chile, led by Willis C. Hoover in 1902.² On the other hand, the revival of Azusa Street 1906-1913, initiated by the African American William Seymour, contributed to the overall global impact of the Pentecostal message. Many people travelled to the city of Los Angeles, California, to attend services and then carried the Pentecostal message to many other cities. Women played an influential role in the expansion of the movement, which took place in an atmosphere of social and racial diversity.³ Women exercised their ministry gifts, prayed and ministered at the altar. The Azusa revival emphasized the power to perform the work in churches and missionary service.⁴ Pentecostals believed that it was the Holy Spirit who enabled them to minister. Women prayed for world evangelization and for the conversion of lost souls.⁵ The growth of Pentecostalism is attributed in large part to the mobilization and participation of women in ministry.

Pentecostals broke with the traditional schemes by giving women freedom to preach and prophesy. Unfortunately, the Church of God closed the doors to higher levels of authority to women gifted in the Spirit. In the first meeting of 1907, it was noted that the number of women surpassed the number of men in attendance. Women were granted credentials as evangelists but were restricted from performing ministerial functions. Women were forbidden to officiate at baptisms, and in the General

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² Juan Sepúlveda, Conference 'Renewal Across the Americas: Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements in Latin America and Among Latinas/os. Regent University, 28th February-1st March 2014.

³ See Estrela Alexander and Amos Yong, *Phillip's Daughters: Women in Pentecostal-Charismatic Leadership* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009).

⁴ David Roebuck, 'Women in God's Army', in *History and Heritage* (Fall 1997), 1-2.

⁵ See Grant McClung, *Azusa Street and Beyond* (Gainesville, FL: Bridge-Logos, Inc., 2006).

Assembly of 1916 women were banned from exercising their right to vote in the General Assembly.⁶

Despite the active participation of women in ministry, Pentecostals missed the opportunity to set the stage for granting them ministerial credentials with all the rights and privileges of ministry. Instead, denominational policies restrained women from positions of authority which led to the exclusion of women in leadership. Moreover, they issued credentials that allowed women to preach but restricted their field of operation to other ministerial roles. Only male ministers were granted ministerial credentials with privileges to officiate marriages, baptism and the reception of new members.

The Church of God created a department for the organization of women to engage in prayer groups, Bible studies and charitable projects. These groups were designated as Voluntary Workers, Ladies Auxiliary, and Women's Ministry. Such departmentalization constrained the circle of influence of women in the whole mission of the church. It was a way to domesticate the energy and potential of a lot of women. Boundaries were set for women not to overstep the limits of the positions reserved for men. An entire bureaucracy alienated woman from pulpit ministry and administrative leadership positions. Gender segregation was clearly observed in the general council meetings. While male bishops deliberated over church matters, women were marginalized spectators.

During the 1940s the Church of God in the United States joined the interdenominational evangelical movement in its campaign to rescue sacred family values.⁷ This new movement, in which Billy Graham was a leading figure, promoted the role of women as the centrepiece of the family.

In traditional evangelical churches male leadership was emphasized. A woman was assigned a submissive role in the order of creation: home, family and church. It was assumed that the tradition of respect and submission of women in marriage should apply as normative for the church. Clearly, what the Bible teaches is the voluntary submission of women to one man, to her husband, who in turn must exercise dedicated, loyal and consistent leadership. Essentially, marriage partners operate within a relationship of servanthood and mutual submission.

Several writers of the Church of God in recent years suggest a return to our Pentecostal roots, which implies greater inclusion of all members and a greater dependence on the Holy Spirit for the training of believers. As a result, an increase in the participation of each church member would naturally occur, regardless of gender. In addition, such participation would

⁶ Abraham Ruelas, 'A Sociological Perspective on Women, Ordination, and Church Polity: Empowerment or Gender Apartheid?' in *Crucible Theology and Ministry*, 1:2 (October 2008), 14.

⁷ David Roebuck, 'Limiting Liberty: The Church of God and Women Ministers, 1986-1996'. PhD dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1997.

be consistent with one of the tenets of the Reformation, that is, the priesthood of all believers.

Unfortunately, the arguments against the full participation of women in ministry have prevailed and are based on biblical texts interpreted in a dogmatic and traditional way. The very formulation of arguments against the ministry of women is indicative of a sinful, unjust and destructive attitude towards woman since she is created in the image and likeness of God.

It is no longer possible for the church to continue closing the door to the ministerial participation of women. There are many women who exercise ministry as pastors, teachers and evangelists despite the restrictions imposed on their gender. The mission of the church is incomplete if women are deprived of ministerial credentials or if ministerial duties are reserved for males only.

The following section highlights the role of women in the first-century church as observed in the gospels and the New Testament letters. It is essential to review these passages because they emphasize the ministry of women in the early church. This review reveals the manipulation of biblical passages that makes men the protagonists of ministry to the detriment of the names and deeds of extraordinary women in early church history.

The Ministry of Women in the New Testament

The ministry of Jesus reinforced the equality and participation of women in the Kingdom of God. Several women are mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus such as Rahab, Ruth and the wife of Uriah, indicating that Christ came to save all kinds of people. The gospels show that Christ supported women. He conducted his teachings not only to men but also to women who longed to learn (Luke 10:38-42), afflicted and tormented women (Luke 13:10-17; Matt. 15: 21-28), and women who were despised (Mark 5:23; John 4). The Son of God received assistance from female followers 'who supported him with their own means' (Luke 8:2-3).

Jesus defended the rights of women by revealing his thoughts on marriage and divorce (Matt. 5:27-32; 19:3-9). It was the women who remained close to Jesus during his crucifixion and burial while his disciples deserted him (Matt. 27:55-61). Women were the first to see the risen Christ and were sent to tell the good news to the disciples (Matt. 28:8-10; John 20: 14-16). The fact that women were commissioned as evangelists is very significant because in the first-century Jewish context, women could not be considered as witnesses in courts of law.⁸

Mary and Martha exemplify Christian discipleship (Luke 8:1-3; Matt. 12:49-50). Jesus kept a close friendship with them and their brother

⁸ Stanley Grenz, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1995), 93.

Lazarus (John 11:8). Mary poured out expensive perfume on Jesus, and he recognized her action (John 12:7). Martha proclaims one of the greatest Christological confessions, ‘Yes, Lord... I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world’ (John 11:27). However, it is Peter’s confession that has received the attention of preachers.

After Jesus’ ascension, the apostles remained in prayer ‘with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus’ (Acts 1:14). It was these women who made up the core of the church and, on the day of Pentecost, the prophecies were fulfilled when the Spirit of God was given equally to men and women (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:4). The Apostle Peter declared the inclusion of women as heirs of the promise: ‘Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy’ (Acts 2:17c).

Women were part of the fellowship of early believers and were fully integrated into the Christian communities (Acts 5:14; 8:12; 17:4, 12). In Samaria both men and women believed and were baptized (Acts 8:12). The church of Thyatira began with a women’s group that met at Lydia’s house (Acts 16:13-15). Among the first converts, there were many widows who depended on the church for their provision (Acts 6:1-6). Women were also persecuted for keeping the faith and were arrested and put into prison by Saul (Acts 8:3; 9:2; 22:4). Obviously, women were considered a threat to the Jewish faith as they shared the gospel with other women in public places like the market-place and laundry.⁹

In Joppa, many believed when Peter prayed for Tabitha who was brought back to life (Acts 9:36-41). In Jerusalem, the disciples prayed together in the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12). In Philippi, the women gathered outside the city where they prayed by the river (Acts 16:13). Paul and Silas met with other believers in the house of Lydia, a new convert (Acts 16:40). In Thessalonica and Berea, Paul preached in the synagogue where he persuaded Jews and Greek women of nobility (Acts 17:4, 12). In Athens, a woman named Damaris believed in the gospel message (Acts 17:34). In Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla laboured and travelled with Paul. The narrative discloses that Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos ‘the way of God more adequately’ (Acts 18:3, 18.26; Rom. 16:3). The mention of Priscilla’s name before Aquila may indicate that she was the more influential of the two.

Several women in the New Testament fulfilled a prophetic mission. Luke referred to the four daughters of Philip who prophesied (Acts 21:9). Mary (Luke 1:46-55), Elizabeth (Luke 1: 41-45) and Anna (Luke 2:36-38) prophesied during the events of Jesus’ birth. Paul recognized that women prophesied in the church and instructed them to do so in an orderly manner (1 Cor. 11:5).

⁹ Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), 178.

In his letter to Rome, Paul greets several women who worked in the church there, and describes their particular function in the church. Paul refers to a servant (*diakonos*), a patron (*prostatis*), a co-worker (*synergos*), a labourer (*kopian*), and an apostle (*apostolos*). Phoebe is mentioned as a deacon (*diakonos*) of the church in Cenchræa (16:1) and a helper (*prostatis*) to many people (16:2). Priscilla is recognized for being a 'co-worker (*synergos*) in Christ Jesus' (16:3). Paul greeted Mary, 'who worked (*ekiopasen*) very hard among you' (16:6). Junia is mentioned as being outstanding among the apostles (*apostoloi*) (16:7). Paul referred to Tryphena, Tryphosa and Persis for their 'hard work in the Lord' (16:12). He also mentioned the mother of Rufus (16:13), Julia, Nereus and his sister (16:15).

One of the positions of greater authority in the first century was the office of apostle. The term is used to refer to the twelve disciples chosen by Jesus, and Matthias who replaced Judas (Acts 1:26). The apostles were witnesses of the resurrection and commissioned by the church to preach the gospel (Acts 13:2-3; Acts 14:4, 7, 14). In the case of Paul, he was chosen as an apostle to reach the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; 1 Cor. 15:1-7; 2 Cor. 12:11; Gal. 1:17, 19).

The diversified ministry of the apostles included: (a) planting churches (1 Cor. 3:10-11); (b) preaching the gospel in new regions (Rom. 15:20); (c) the appointment and training of leaders (Acts 14:21-23); (d) promoting unity among the churches (Eph. 4:1-16; Rom. 15:25-27); and (e) working miracles (2 Cor. 12:12).

Paul commended Andronicus and Junia as outstanding among the apostles (Rom. 16:7). They were his relatives and fellow prisoners and were Christian converts before Paul (Rom. 16:7). Commentators debate two issues: whether Junia was a female name and if so, was she an apostle? For Tucker and Liefeld, no evidence has been found against Junia being a woman.¹⁰ Both John Chrysostom and Jerome referred to Junia as a woman, and it was not until the fourteenth century that any reference was made to Junia being a man. Most commentators agree that Junia is the feminine form of the longer masculine name Junianus or Junilius, just as Julia is the feminine version of Julius.¹¹

Greek and Latin writers before the twelfth century referred to Junia as a woman. The Bible translators of the twelfth century changed the original name Junia for *Junias* since a woman apostle was unacceptable. This practice of setting restrictions was common during the medieval church. Currently, the contribution of women is still restricted through arguments and justifications based on the interpretation of isolated texts inevitably

¹⁰ Ruth Tucker and Walter Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church: Women and Ministry from the New Testament to the Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 13

¹¹ Grenz, *Women in the Church*, 94. Tucker and Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church*, 73.

leading to the sidelining of women. It is unfortunate that the very thought of restricting the right of a woman and her ministry in the church endures to this day.

Paul's other letters also recognize the contribution of women among the believers. In Corinth, a church met in the house of Chloe (1 Cor. 1:11). Paul defended the right of the apostles and believers to be accompanied by their wives in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 9:5). Within the marriage relationship, Paul taught that husband and wife should respect each other, quite an egalitarian position in the context of first-century society (1 Cor. 7:3-5). In a similar passage, Paul tells husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her (Eph. 5:21-33).

Paul refers to Euodia and Syntyche who 'laboured side by side with me in the Gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers (*synergoi*)' (Phil. 4:2-3). Paul greets Nympha and the church in her house (Col. 4:15), and mentions Apphia who attended church in Philemon's house (Phmn 2). During the time of the New Testament church, believers had designated groups of women to serve actively in the church. Among these women were deaconesses (Rom 16:1-2; 1 Tim. 3:11), widows and virgins, to all of whom Paul gave specific instructions (1 Cor. 7:25-40).

The first Christian communities appointed women for ministries of service associated with the diaconate.¹² The pastoral epistles were the basis for defending the role of women as deaconesses.¹³ Paul wrote in relation to deacons: 'The wives must be of good character' (1 Tim. 3:11). Some commentators conclude that this is evidence of a specific service of women deacons.¹⁴ Others suggest that Paul is referring only to the wives of deacons, since the Greek word *guné* may refer to wife or woman.¹⁵ Although there is no specific Greek word for deacons, the term deaconess appeared in the second and third century for women who exercised that role. Clearly, the reference is to duties that required moral qualities for wives of deacons or for deaconesses.

Widows were recognized as a group of women who ministered at the church and were known as 'the altar of God',¹⁶ Paul instructed the church to provide assistance to widows of sixty years of age or older, who had no family assistance (1 Tim. 5:3). Such women were known for their good deeds such as 'raising their children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the Lord's people, helping those in trouble' (1 Tim. 5:10).

¹² Grenz, *Women in the Church*, 87.

¹³ James B Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 229-230. See also Tucker and Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church*, 86.

¹⁴ Grenz, *Women in the Church*, 87.

¹⁵ See Philip Graham Ryken, *I Timothy* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing Company, 2007).

¹⁶ Tucker and Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church*, 91.

Paul clarified the state of marriage and singleness as gifts given by God and referred to the blessings and benefits of each (1 Cor. 7:7). The apostle exalted virgins who engaged in the work of God rather than surrender to the obligations of marriage (1 Cor. 7:34). Though Paul advised that the unmarried state allowed greater commitment to ministry, he never forbade marriage (1 Cor. 7:25, 32, 34). Concerning such women as widows and virgins, it was anticipated they would be single.

There are references to women of faith such as Eunice and Lois, the mother and grandmother of Timothy who were his mentors in the way of the Lord (2 Tim. 1:5). Titus advised older women to mentor younger women in their Christian life (Tit. 2:3-5). The book of Hebrews mentions two women of the Old Testament, Sarah and Rahab, as examples of faith (Heb. 11:11; 31). Women of faith received their dead ones back after they were raised to life (Heb. 11:35). The apostle Peter counselled husbands to treat their wives with respect as heirs of salvation (1 Pet. 3:7). Paul used the feminine figurative language to refer to the church as the bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2, Eph. 5:25-27). The book of Revelation refers to the church as a bride and a wife (3:12; 21:9).

In the early Christian communities, women received baptism and worked in the churches because they too were born of the Spirit (John 3:3). As churches spread throughout the Roman Empire, women participated and emerged as leaders.¹⁷ We can conclude that, unlike many churches today, first-century believers honoured women as they fulfilled their ministry.

The Contribution of Women in the Expansion of Pentecostalism

The Pentecostal movement began in the context of holiness revivals of the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries. It then became stronger as the contemporary Pentecostal movement grew early in the twentieth century. Pentecostals have been characterized by their passion for the Word of God, their emphasis on a sanctified life, Christ-centred preaching, powerful worship, and their evangelistic devotion.¹⁸ The growth of Pentecostalism is attributed particularly to the mobilization of women in ministry.

In 1901, Agnes Ozman, affiliated with the Assemblies of God, was the first to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the manifestation of speaking in tongues during a prayer vigil in Topeka, Kansas. This event helped establish the doctrine that the initial evidence of the fullness of the Spirit was speaking in tongues. It is undeniable that women were

¹⁷ Mary Malone, *Women & Christianity: The First Thousand Years* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 80.

¹⁸ Barbara Cavaness, 'God Calling: Women in Pentecostal Mission', in Grant McClung (ed), *Azusa Street and Beyond* (Gainesville, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2006), 53-66.

instrumental in the growth and strengthening of the Pentecostal movement. Women preached, prophesied and ministered at the altar.

The Azusa Street revival stressed the importance of the empowerment of the Spirit to do the work of the church and mission. The participation of women in evangelism, prophecy, ministry and prayer at the altar was the acceptable standard, for the promise embraced, 'Your sons and your daughters will prophesy' (Joel 2:28). During the nascent stage of Pentecostalism, the backing of the power of the Spirit was the acceptable credential for service.

Holiness churches interpreted Scriptures in favour of women in ministry. Luther Lee and B.T. Roberts taught that women could hold office in the church as they had the authority to do so. For both, the subordination of women was a result of the Fall; however, women had received their redemption in Jesus Christ according to Galatians 3:28.¹⁹ Within the Holiness movement of the nineteenth century, two women, Phoebe Palmer and Catherine Booth (a founder of the Salvation Army), were defenders of the ministry of women in the nineteenth century.

Women were also founders of Pentecostal denominations. Florence Crawford established the Apostolic Faith Mission in Oregon, and Aimee Semple McPherson founded the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel (ICFG). Two African-American women, Magdalena Tate and Ida Robinson, founded churches and were ordained bishops in their Pentecostal denominations.

Fundamentalist Patterns within the Church of God

Several Pentecostal denominations, including the Church of God, joined the North American evangelical movement embracing traditional values that led Pentecostals to slowly eradicate the initial Pentecostal practice of supporting women preachers. A woman's place was in the home, while secular values promoted the emancipation of women. Pentecostal women were excluded from governing positions within the church. Women however continued to plant churches, lead prayer groups or Bible studies, in spite of lacking the ministerial privileges granted to men.

In the United States, female ministers continued to lose their freedom after World War II when Pentecostals followed the traditional evangelical movement which argued for the exclusivity of male leadership. Evangelicals warned about the erosion of family values creating concern in Christian circles. Therefore it was generally accepted that women had to carry out domestic duties rather than public participation. The voice of women was silenced and the image of a woman preacher soon became a forgotten figure. In many churches today, the voice of women is not heard in public and their participation is unnoticeable in religious services. What

¹⁹ David Roebuck. 'Limiting Liberty', 5.

message are we sending as a church by publicly silencing the voice of women?

On the other hand, the origins of the Church of God in the rural South, often referred to as the region of the Bible (or the Bible Belt), exerted a powerful influence in policy towards women in ministry. The fundamentalist framework in the history of our denomination, based on the North American evangelical movement, contributed to slowing down the process of the full integration of women in the mission of the church. It was in the early twentieth century that the conservative Protestant churches in the United States reacted to the teachings of theological liberalism and modernism. The so-called fundamentalists defended conservative Christianity, fearing that the church would accommodate to the demands of the modern, secular world. They adopted and promoted doctrinal standards and guidelines, fearing that Darwinism and evolutionary theory postulated a threat to the Christian faith.

Fundamentalism promoted a literal interpretation of Scripture which coincided to a certain degree with a Pentecostal approach to the Word of God. Foundational beliefs and values were adopted at face value, and any association with formal or scientific studies was rejected. Fundamentalists taught that the gifts of the Spirit, including the gift of tongues and divine healing, had ceased in the first century, but Pentecostals embraced the fundamentalist doctrine of the premillennial rapture and the second coming of Christ. It was common in Pentecostal circles to reject any formal education, for fear that those who studied could lose their faith. The famous 'Monkey Trial' (1925) in the city of Dayton, a few miles from Cleveland, Tennessee, contributed to the discrediting of fundamentalism. Evangelical followers were perceived as anti-intellectuals who prevented the advancement of society.

In the 1940s, fundamentalist leaders tried to establish a council of Christian churches, since most conservative evangelical leaders chose to move away from the image of the fundamentalist warlike past. In 1942, the new evangelical leaders established the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), and included the participation of Pentecostals. Consequently, the Church of God joined the new evangelical movement in 1946.

Through the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), traditional evangelical values prevailed. American Pentecostalism adopted the conventional perspectives of evangelical churches, perhaps unconsciously assuming discriminatory attitudes against women's ministry. Among the attitudes, beliefs and values of the North American evangelical church, exclusive male privilege was emphasized. Proponents of male leadership argued that the government of the church was a matter for men, because Christ chose twelve male disciples. A few restrictive verses defined the role of women, not only at home but also in the church: women were to be

subject, and learn in silence. What a contrast with the freedom that the Spirit grants women to minister!

Fundamentalism promoted patriarchy or male privileges because of restrictive hermeneutics or a literal interpretation of Scripture. The fundamentalist theological interpretation influenced the social and political perspective of its followers, often characterized by conservative positions and reflected in racial segregation, the subordination of women and, in the United States, being a member of the Republican Party.

Currently, female ministers of the Church of God do not have a voice in the Executive Council meetings of the General Assembly. During the 2010 General Assembly, more than 62% of the male bishops voted against adopting a new church policy that would make way for the ordination of women.²⁰ In the book, *What Women Want*, Kimberly Alexander and James Bowers stress that the voice of Pentecostal women could no longer be ignored. From their interviews among female ministers they gathered insights on the experiences that these women undergo. For example, one woman said, 'I do not attend ministers' meetings, etc. because they are aimed at the men ministers and their wives. My husband... considers the COG "a white, good ol' boys' club" and has pretty much had it with the denomination.'²¹ Women are highly involved in church planting, evangelism and educational opportunities, and it is time for the church to 'support, bless and commission women for greater ministry leadership'.²² It is time for the church to recognize women as strategic leadership partners for the challenges of the 21st century.

To conclude this section, the cultural patterns of American evangelicalism and fundamentalism were imposed on Pentecostal churches to exclude women from public office. It is time to distinguish between the authority of Scripture and the traditions inherited in the last hundred years. The following section will review the reality of Pentecostal Latinas in ministry.

Pentecostal Latinas

In the case of Latin American nations, issues of gender equality have impacted society and more women are participating in politics. In several Latin American countries about 50% of women occupy political positions of legislature, mayor and council offices.

In the religious sphere, at least half of classic Pentecostals in the world are in Latin America with an estimated population of 141 million adherents

²⁰ Adrienne Gaines, 'Church of God Debates Role of Women', in *Charisma Magazine*. 2010: www.charismamag.com/site-archives/570-news/featured-news/11656-church-of-god-debates-role-of-women (accessed 2nd May 2015).

²¹ Kimberly Alexander and James Bowers, *What Women Want: Pentecostal Women Ministers Speak for Themselves* (Langham, MD: Seymour Press, 2013), 111.

²² Alexander and Bowers, *What Women Want*, 128.

in the year 2000.²³ Pentecostal Latinas have been known for exerting influential leadership as preachers, teachers and missionaries. The political context of gender inclusiveness and the stimulus generated in thriving Pentecostal congregations could possibly exert influence on women pastors to engage in leadership.²⁴ As church leaders in the global South, women can most likely become agents of change, as seen in women in the corporate world and women in impoverished settings.²⁵

Even though Latina Pentecostals have contributed with solid and spiritual leadership in their churches, there are still obstacles to overcome in order for them to gain equality in leadership with males in the church. Women have learned to navigate a system which does not give them full opportunities, yet they advance in leadership and contribute to the edification of their churches and consequently the Kingdom of God. Several regions have appointed COG women as district overseers or educational directors, positions generally reserved for male bishops.

Latinas are making history and continue to make history within their denominational circles. Seasoned female leaders are setting examples to the younger Latina women who will walk closely in their footsteps. Latinas are indeed hard-working, courageous, and engaged in raising the consciousness of gender equality in the church.

For Espinosa, Latinas in Pentecostal churches have practised paradoxical roles, that is, as prophetesses in the public sphere, and devoted wives and mothers in the private sphere.²⁶ Women in the Assemblies of God were ordained but they were kept out of administrative positions until the 1980s. Within the Church of God in Latina America, women ministers engage in liturgical practices, including some in administrative positions. However, women are still denied the ultimate level of ordination, a status reserved for male bishops.

Pentecostal churches have opened a way for women to participate publicly in ministry. Women in Latin America have been given opportunities to preach, pray and evangelize in home groups.²⁷

²³ Allen Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), 63.

²⁴ Erik Tryggesstad, 'As Churches Mature in the Global South, U.S. Christians Find Supporting Roles', in *The Christian Chronicle* (2009): www.christianchronicle.org/article/as-churches-mature-in-the-global-south-u-s-christians-find-supporting-roles (accessed 1st June 2015).

²⁵ Cynthia Lee Andruske, 'Self-Directed Learning Projects of Women on Welfare as Political Acts', in *Adult Learning*, 14:1 (2003), 13-16.

²⁶ Gaston Espinosa, 'Third-class Soldiers: A History of Hispanic Pentecostal Clergywomen', in *Phillip's Daughters: Women in Pentecostal-Charismatic Leadership*, in Estrelida Alexander and Amos Yong (eds) (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 98, 106, 110, 111.

²⁷ Verónica Pérez, 'Educación y Liderazgo de la Mujer Pentecostal, Signo de Esperanza para la Iglesia: Una Reflexión', in Daniel Chiquete and Luis Orellana (eds), *Voces del Pentecostalismo Latinoamericano* (Haulpen, Chile: RELEP, 2011),

Pentecostalism's teaching and preaching opportunities allow a greater status for women. Pentecostal *cultos a domicilio* [services held in the home] or *células* [cell groups] are largely led by women. Through such activities, women are trained in practical skills, including public speaking, and they may also gain an important measure of confidence.²⁸

Women like Maria Atkinson (1879-1963) who was the first woman to take Pentecostalism to Mexico, set a role model for early Latino Pentecostals.²⁹ Many of the pioneering Pentecostal women dedicated their time and effort to sustain the church in several ways: praying, fasting, offering, cleaning, cooking, and carrying out evangelism and visitation. Pentecostal women gladly adopt roles as servant leaders in the way they approach ministry.

Early studies on Pentecostalism concluded that churches grew because they were closely-knit communities that helped people cope with industrialization and urbanization.³⁰ Pentecostal groups seem to offer people unique resources that enable them to cope with personal and family problems like alcoholism, poverty and illness. The charismata of the Holy Spirit are also meaningful and relevant resources. People make changes in their ethical behaviour and they show an increase in personal discipline.

Gender relations in Latino Pentecostal churches have undergone a transformation in comparison with the traditional culture of *machismo*. The average Pentecostal church attendant is usually under thirty, more often female than male, and of a low to lower middle-class background. Women seem to become more independent in the home and in the public domain. Males shift away from drinking, gambling and adulterous relationships. Pentecostalism is considered a main social force against *machismo*.³¹ A hierarchical male clergy and a high degree of institutionalism characterize North American Pentecostalism. On the other hand, Latino Pentecostalism exerts greater flexibility in gender relations and has the potential to bring about societal transformation.³²

While the Church of God and many other denominations in North America still debate over the role of women in ministry, a number of Church of God regions in Latin America continue to open opportunities for women to exercise authority, as members in church councils, district overseers and educational directors. Several female pastors have been

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²⁸ Elizabeth Brusco, *Reformation of Machismo: Evangelical conversion and gender in Colombia* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1995).

²⁹ Verónica Pérez, *Educación y Liderazgo de la Mujer*, 478.

³⁰ Henry Gooren, 'The Pentecostalization of Religion and Society in Latin America', in *Exchange*, 39:1 (2010), 355-76.

³¹ Elizabeth Brusco, *Reformation of Machismo: Evangelical Conversion and Gender in Colombia* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1995), 141.

³² Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy Among the Oppressed* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 19.

leading growing churches in Mexico, Honduras, Colombia and Brazil. Both Latino churches and individual female pastors have challenged denominational standards by allowing greater freedom and inclusion of women in governing boards. In the capital city of Honduras, Tegucigalpa, there are ten female pastors, and one of them is a district overseer, a position reserved for male bishops. A woman minister presides over the Education Department in the Central Region.³³

From a Pentecostal perspective, leadership is viewed as a gift to one who responds to be a follower of Jesus and a vessel for the power of his Spirit. Leadership is not just a characteristic that can be obtained or learned, since God chooses human leaders in a sovereign way. The greatness of human leadership is measured by how well the leader is a follower of God. Based on Acts 2, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches believe God pours out the ministry and operational gifts equally on all who earnestly seek the Spirit. Within the Pentecostal movement, every member is a potential leader. All genuine leadership is based on spiritual power coming from the Spirit of God, and it is realized in the context of a unified community. Every member is encouraged to learn and publicly recite Scripture and express their gifts of the Spirit in service. Guidance and nurture are offered along with mentoring.

In Pentecostalism everybody in the congregation is a potential contributor to the liturgy because the movement empowers marginalized people.³⁴ The participation of women with charismatic gifts was widespread in Pentecostalism. Early Pentecostals affirmed that the same Spirit who was poured out on men also empowered women. Cox affirmed that women, more than men, were the principal carrier of the Pentecostal gospel to many parts the world.³⁵

Barred from the pulpit, they preached in the streets. Refused ordination, they became missionaries and went to places where men were afraid to go. They became healers and teachers, writers and editors. Without them, Pentecostalism would have died out long ago.³⁶

From my ministerial experience in Latin America, I have observed the motivation and persistence in Latina clergywomen of the Church of God in Honduras. Although women still face leadership barriers in the church, it is important to stress that they have overcome barriers and have gained respectable ministerial achievements. Feminine characteristics such as caring, collaboration, sensitivity, helping, have all contributed to the success and ability of women leaders to fit in with a less hierarchical structure in an organization. These feminine principles had little chance of

³³ Pedro Guardado, email message to author, October 2012.

³⁴ Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 272.

³⁵ Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1995), 124-25.

³⁶ Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 138.

influencing in times when such organizations were ‘strictly male cloning production’.³⁷

In spite of the barriers and the socio-economic hardships that women face in a Third World country, female clergy seem to have positive outcomes, such as growing congregations, leadership formation, empowered staff, lifelong-learning opportunities, spiritual formation and others.³⁸ Some of the obstacles these women encounter include monetary constraints, lack of encouragement from church officials, consuming role demands and an absence of mentoring.³⁹ The Honduran national bishop stated that several women pastors are currently leading congregations of more than 200 members. One female pastor in a church called *Oasis de Amor* (Oasis of Love) reports more than 3,000 members.⁴⁰ The church’s website describes their pastor as a woman who has broken church paradigms in a church society generally led by men.⁴¹

Because male leadership roles, also in the church, have been the norm for so many years, leadership tends to be perceived as a masculine domain exemplified by masculine characteristics such as confidence and dominance.⁴² However, female leaders interact in alternative ways in leadership: encouraging participation, sharing information and power, and enhancing others’ self-worth.⁴³ Generally, as organizations shift away from a traditional view of leadership and towards a more democratic and participatory view, women should experience reduced prejudice and gain increased acceptance in leadership roles.⁴⁴

Women employ democratic relationships, participatory decision-making, delegation, and team-based leadership. In addition, females tend to empower others in making decisions, improving the quality of their work, and removing sources of fear and intimidation from the workplace.⁴⁵ Generally speaking, Honduran female pastors have exhibited leadership

³⁷ Sally Hegelsen, *The Female Advantage: Women’s Ways of Leadership* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 39.

³⁸ Aparna Ohlott, Patricia Bhandary and Joan Tavares Avent, ‘What Women Want: Comparing Leadership Challenges in Europe and the US’, in *Leadership in Action*, 23:1 (2003), 3.

³⁹ Celia Rivera Lobo, email message to author, March 2014.

⁴⁰ Pedro Guardado, email message to author, September 2013.

⁴¹ Oasis de Amor, Honduras: www.oasisamor.org/Ana.html (accessed 2nd June 2015).

⁴² Shawna Lafraniere and Karen Longman. ‘Gendered Realities and Women’s Leadership Development: Participant Voices from Faith-based Higher Education’, in *Christian Higher Education* 7:1 (2008), 388-404.

⁴³ See Judy B. Rosener, *America’s Competitive Secret: Utilizing Women as a Management Strategy* (Oxford: OUP, 1995).

⁴⁴ Alice H. Eagley and Steven Karau, ‘Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice Toward Female Leaders’, in *Psychological Review*, 109 (3), 2002: 573-98.

⁴⁵ See Edwards Deming, *Out of the crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for Advanced Engineering Study, 1986).

attitudes, bringing their female qualities to enrich and deepen church ministry.

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**MISSION AND CHILDREN IN LATIN AMERICA
A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE FROM THE LATIN
AMERICAN CONGRESS OF EVANGELIZATION –
CLADE**

Enrique Pinedo

Humanity's History that Brings Hope

Thank God for the portion of humanity's history that shows the honourable fight to uphold human rights! That fight of those subjugated, segregated, alienated who have been excluded from full human dignity, created in God's image.

This remarkable part of history, for example, tells us about the fight to abolish slavery. How could anyone ignore William Willberforce's selfless work? He was a Protestant politician and philanthropist who, as a member of the British Parliament, led a campaign against slavery in the British colonies until slavery was outlawed throughout all British territories.¹ These were times when, sadly, it was believed that a person of African descent was barely a human being.

History also tells us of the Dominican friar, Bartolomé de las Casas, who defended Latin American natives from the cruel abuse they received from the Spanish in the *encomiendas*.² This was a time of Spanish colonies during the sixteenth century when it was under debate whether indigenous peoples had a soul or not.

That history, thank God, also mentions other fights for human dignity, such as that for women's rights and the rights of people with physical disabilities, among others.

It's the Children's Turn

The same happened with children. Throughout many chapters of history, boys and girls were not valued as people, or they were considered half-people at best. After many efforts, however, their rights were recognized and set forth in various documents with international validity. Among them

¹ John Piper, *Amazing Grace in the Life of William Wilberforce* (Chicago, IL: Crossway Books, 2006), 36.

² See Pedro Borges, *¿Quién era Bartolomé de la Casas?* (Sevilla, Spain: Ediciones Rialp, 1990).

the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1924) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

It is noteworthy that, even though childhood studies existed before the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it was because of the public debate arising from the Convention's ratification that new studies and approaches regarding children increased and gained global relevance.

For example, although important literature in childhood history has been available since 1960, such as the work by Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, it is only due to the extensive public debate over the Convention that works on childhood's history begin to proliferate.³ The same happened in other areas of knowledge: philosophy, law, literature, sociology and anthropology.

In Latin America, for instance, childhood has constituted a paradigmatic object in the social and human sciences, inviting the study of its historical perspective in dialogue with other disciplines.⁴

In the midst of this modern debate, when the question arose on what Christian theology could contribute, it was not hard to suspect that there was very little to offer. According to Marcia Bunge, the discussion regarding children had been marginal in almost all fields of modern theology.⁵ For example, systematic theology and Christian ethics had little to say about children and had not considered them a priority in their agenda for serious reflection. This book was one of the first proposals for a systematic, historical analysis about the contribution of Protestant churches in the field of childhood studies.⁶

It has been more than two decades since the Convention on the Rights of the Child was ratified, and the growing interest in children's issues is solidifying. As a result, there has been an extensive production of interdisciplinary studies focused on children, including of course studies in the field of Biblical theology.

Bunge clearly describes this reality: 'Bible scholars, as well as from other fields and disciplines, recently began to pay attention more directly to children, thus contributing to the growing field of studies focused on childhood.'⁷

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³ See Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965).

⁴ Sandra Carli, *El campo de estudios sobre la infancia en las fronteras de las disciplinas. Notas para su Caracterización e Hipótesis Sobre sus Desafíos* (Buenos Aires: Teseo, 2011), 32.

⁵ Marcia J. Bunge, *The Child in Christian Thought* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 3.

⁶ Bunge, *The Child in Christian Thought*, 8.

⁷ Marcia J. Bunge, *The Child in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), xv.

New Movements and Initiatives in Favour of Children

Likewise, during the last two decades, the church has witnessed the start of many global and regional initiatives, commitments and movements in favour of boys and girls. These include the Oxford Statement of Children at Risk (1997), the Godly Play initiative by Jerome W. Berryman and the Center for Children and Theology in Houston (1997), the Master's Degree in Holistic Child Development by the Baptist Seminar in Penang, Malaysia (2001), the Child Theology Movement (2002), the Movement Together with Children and Youth in Latin America (2002), the CHILD Center for Resources and Investigation in Penang (2003), the Spirituality Conferences in Chicago (2003), the Global Children's Forum (2004), the Master's Degree in Holistic Child Development by SEMISUD in Quito, Ecuador (2006), the Global Alliance of Academic Holistic Child Development (HCD) Programs (2007), the Regional Alliance of HCD (DINA) Academics Programs in Latin America and the Caribbean (2008), the Declaration and Global Commitment of the Nazarene Denomination for Children (2008), the HCD (DINA) Diploma Degree by the CETI-Kairos Foundation in Argentina (2008), the 4-14 Window Movement (2009), the Section about Children in the Cape Town-Lausanne Movement Commitment (2010), the 20/20 Vision-6R for Children by the Church of God in Latin America and the Caribbean (2011), among others.

In this paper, I will try to give a short and panoramic review about the presence that childhood has had on the agenda and programmes of the Latin American Congresses on Evangelization (CLADE), and also the evolutionary history the topic of childhood has had in these congresses.

Children in the Latin American Congresses of Evangelization (CLADE) Agenda

As we know, in 1910 the Edinburgh Missionary Conference, which called by mission agencies working in the world of that time, stated that Latin America had already been evangelized by Catholic Christianity and was no longer a mission field. The North American Faith Missions, disagreeing with this conclusion, decided in 1913 to form the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America (CCLA)⁸

In 1949, the CCLA organized 'CELA I' (the first Latin American Evangelical Conference) in Buenos Aires, Argentina. That was considered the first truly Latin American Conference since the preceding ones in Panama (1916), Uruguay (1925) and Cuba (1941), had been called by foreign missions. Instead of missionary organizations studying the field, the

⁸ See José Migueles Bonino, *Faces of Latin American Protestantism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 6.

Buenos Aires conference was an attempt by the Latin American churches to understand their task.⁹

CELA II took place in Lima, Peru, in 1961, and was the last congress convened by CCLA. CELA III was convened in 1969 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Speaking of these congresses, Peruvian historian Tomas Gutierrez says: ‘The dichotomy between conservative and radical evangelical is perceived in the presentations and discussions of CELA III as the one that allowed the polarization of Latin American Protestantism.’¹⁰ Daniel Salinas described this polarization in the following manner:

Samuel Escobar classified the two main branches as (1) ‘Ecumenical Protestantism’, which was closer in its theology and ethos to European Ecumenism; and (2) ‘Evangelical Protestantism’, a more conservative Protestantism, linked to the new missionary forces and fueled by a strong evangelical zeal. By 1969, the two branches of Latin American Protestantism were following different tracks. The ecumenical branch organized CELA III in Buenos Aires, Argentina, while the evangelical side gathered in Bogota, Colombia, as CLADE I.¹¹

The First Latin American Congress on Evangelization (CLADE I)

CLADE I was held in 1969, in Bogota, Colombia. The central theme was ‘Action in Christ for a Continent in Crisis’. That congress was part of an international series of meetings sponsored by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, which began with the World Congress of Evangelization at Berlin in 1966. This is why the agenda was heavily influenced by this international association.¹²

The programme consisted of the presentation of twelve position papers and a thirty-year plan for the evangelization of Latin America. A plan for ‘Evangelizing through Evangelical Schools and Literacy Work’¹³ was presented. It proposed the evangelization of future generations in the region through the spread of evangelical schools. Significantly, only a very superficial approach to the topic of children was observed in the twelve main presentations.

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⁹ Daniel Salinas, ‘The Beginnings of the *Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana: Courage to Grow*’, in *Journal of Latin American Theology: Christian Reflections from the Latino South* 2:1 (2007), 8-16.

¹⁰ Tomas Gutiérrez, *Los evangélicos en el Perú y en América Latina: Ensayos sobre su historia* (Lima: Ediciones AHP: 1997), 209-11.

¹¹ Salinas, ‘The Beginnings of the *Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana*’, 10.

¹² Salinas, ‘The Beginnings of the *Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana*’, 14.

¹³ Clyde Taylor, ‘*Records of Primer Congreso Latinoamericano de Evangelización (CLADE)*’, in *BGC Archives in Wheaton, Illinois, USA. Collection 324, Records; 1951, 1968-1970, 1975 (May 2001) (accessed March 29, 2015, Academic OneFile).*

The Second Latin American Congress on Evangelization (CLADE II)

CLADE II was held in 1979, in Lima, Peru. Its theme was Latin America and the Evangelization in the 80s. The Latin American Theological Fellowship (FTL) organized this congress and, as Ruth Padilla DeBorst said, Latin American Christians proposed the programme and the subjects. Unlike CLADE I, ‘this time the table was set by Latin American Christians. They determined the menu and invited the guests,’ said Sidney Rooy. A limit of 10% of the invitees was set for Americans who would be welcome at the conference.¹⁴

In CLADE II, one could still observe certain polarizations; on the one hand there were still some remnants of the old way of planning evangelization, which were reflected in reports by regions and countries; but on the other, a concern for contextual evangelization, theological and incarnational mission were seen in several presentations. However, the participation of women, indigenous peoples and Pentecostals, among others, was not included in the programme.

According to Tomas Gutierrez, ‘CLADE II addressed the social, political and economic problems that Latin America lived tangentially.’¹⁵ Within this context, it is interesting to note that the issue of childhood was approached several times in presentations and reports, though again in a superficial way. The final letter of CLADE II to evangelicals in Latin America says:

‘We have heard God’s Word... we heard the children’s cries... who suffer from hunger, neglect, ignorance and exploitation.’¹⁶ Also, in the sections devoted to reports by region, you can see that none of the regions or countries addressed the issue of childhood as a priority; only the Andean region and three countries, Brazil, Cuba and Mexico, did. Worthy of mention is the Brazil’s regional report, where evangelization efforts initiated through Sunday School classes as recorded:

In 1854, Dr Kalley and his wife – Congregationalist missionaries who founded the Evangelical Church there – arrived in Rio de Janeiro... with them, the evangelization began with Sunday school.¹⁷

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¹⁴ Ruth Padilla DeBorst, ‘*Congresos Latinoamericanos de Evangelización (Los CLADE) 1969-2012*’, *EL Blog de Bernabé*, January 2012 (accessed 30th March 2015):

www.elblogdebernabe.com/2011/03/congresos-latinoamericanos-de.html

¹⁵ Tomas Gutiérrez, *Los evangélicos en el Perú y en América Latina: Ensayos sobre su historia* (Lima: Ediciones AHP, 1997), 213.

¹⁶ Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana (CLADE II), *Congreso Latinoamericano de Evangelización América Latina y la Evangelización en los años 80* (Lima: FTL, 1979), xix.

¹⁷ CLADE II, 4.

This Brazilian report also identifies some areas of mission/evangelization, including childhood:

Minor abandoned: orphans, children of unknown mothers or just living with uninvolved parents. Primary: In general, children in the personality formation phase; Secondary: Teenagers on the vocational and personal values definition phase.¹⁸

Meanwhile, the report of the Andean region, Cuba and Mexico in the 'Approaches to Evangelization' section mentioned: Andean Region: the importance of community service programmes as channels for people's openness to the reception of the gospel, such as 'Schools or homes for children, soup kitchens for children, camps, vacation Bible schools and ministry of para-church groups (evangelization of children, young men)'.¹⁹

Cuba: 'In addition to traditional methods like campaigns, summer schools, we also practice the age group approach (departmentalization). The main evangelizing agency is home.'²⁰

Mexico: In the rural areas, schools, boarding schools, child and family care. Middle class vacation Bible schools, children camps.²¹ Only one mini-presentation directly addressed the issue of childhood; it was entitled 'Child Evangelization' and presented by Rubén Del Re, representative of the Alliance for Child Evangelism (LAPEN). I think this is a historic presentation on the subject of childhood since it occurred at the end of the 1970s and within a regional conference of Latin American leaders.

Del Re began his presentation by pointing out that the United Nations, expressing their concern about the rising generation, had just decreed the year 1979 (the same year as CLADE II) as the 'International Year of the Child'. Then he went through history and some statistics on children in the region, as well as some biblical passages showing the importance of children in the mission and evangelization of the church. Also, given his ministerial experience with LAPEN in Argentina, and faithful to his evangelizing vocation, he described some existing models and proposed new ones for coming years.²²

The Third Latin American Congress on Evangelization (CLADE III)

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CLADE III was held in 1992, in Quito, Ecuador. Its theme was 'The Whole Gospel to all Peoples from Latin America'. It was undoubtedly the most representative assembly of Latin American evangelicals. Although it was organized by the Latin American Theological Fraternity (FTL), as José

¹⁸ CLADE II, 6-7.

¹⁹ CLADE II, 12.

²⁰ CLADE II, 17.

²¹ CLADE II, 25-26.

²² CLADE II, 75-82.

Miguez Bonino said this congress went 'beyond the FTL's limits to become a true Latin American Protestant Congress due to both the breadth of representation and the richness of materials and freedom of discussion'.²³ One could tell that it was a platform that reflected the different faces of Protestantism, such as conservatives, liberals, Pentecostals and indigenous groups, among others.

Female participation also increased and was reflected on the board of the FTL and in some papers at the conference. Mexican Carmen Perez Camargo was the Vice President of the FTL, and Dorothy de Quijada, an American missionary based in Peru for many years, was the Treasurer. Indigenous peoples also took a more prominent place in the lectures and congress seminars. A Bible study was presented by Pedro Gualoto, a theological plenary by Fernando Quicaña, and a seminar by Marcelino Tapia. These are examples of how the congress heard these new voices. A few days before CLADE III, the IV Latin American Indigenous Evangelical Congress was conducted in Otavalo, Ecuador; its formal declaration was part of the Appendix Book published by CLADE III.²⁴

About that time, almost all countries in the region that had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted in 1989 and implemented on 2nd September 1990, were adapting their laws and governmental structures to the new paradigm proposed by the convention.

In CLADE III, the issue of childhood was also indirectly addressed by theological presentations, such as Robinson Cavalcanti's 'Gospel and Politics in Latin America'. He said that, in the political field, in the structural area, in everything, 'black people, the indigenous, the marginalized, children, the homeless, landless, breadless or hopeless; they all expect answers from Christians'.²⁵

In Juan Stam's theological exposition 'The Gospel of the New Creation', Isaiah 65 was studied from the prophet's vision of the new creation. 'Isaiah 65 speaks, with a subtle irony, about the end of infant mortality (65:20). If you die a hundred years old, they will wonder what sin caused them to die so young.'²⁶

Also, Humberto Lagos in his conference presentation, 'The Mission of the Church and the Social, Economic and Political Structures of Latin America', referred to the deprived life experienced by a large percentage of children in the region. 'Human and natural life trembles in Latin America. Hundreds of thousands of children, youth, women and men are accustomed today to being *children of denial*. They are denied their daily bread, education, the dignity of a roof over their home, a family atmosphere...

²³ José Miguez Bonino, *Rostros del Protestantismo Latinoamericano* (Buenos Aires, Nueva Creación, 1995), 56.

²⁴ Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana, *CLADE III. Tercer Congreso Latinoamericano de Evangelización* (Quito: FTL, 1992), 865.

²⁵ *CLADE III*, 226.

²⁶ *CLADE III*, 247.

they are denied life, condemning them to the slavery of misery.²⁷ These are the harsh realities that challenged the mission of churches and evangelical organizations in the region in the 1990s, and unfortunately still apply today.

A member of the Round Table who commented and reacted to Lagos' presentation, was Luis Césari. Given his experience with street children through Youth for Christ in Uruguay, his was the only presentation that directly addressed the issue of childhood and was directed at the entire audience of CLADE III.

Early in his presentation, Césari had already proposed a change in terminology: 'Before continuing, I would like to change the expression 'street children' (as if they have been born on the streets) to 'children of the people'.²⁸ In that way he dignified and humanized this population. After sharing the raw statistics of children living on the streets of Latin America, he suggested a link between the children of the people with the reality of fragmented families, the educational system, the churches, the legal system and economic and social policies.

He then proposed some challenges for the church's mission in the region, such as:

1. Going from 'alternative' institutions to institutions that 'alter' inefficient and sinful structures – being salt and light in society and taking courageous prophetic action.
2. Having a capacity of proposal that arises from biblical principles.
3. Building networks with those who share the same task in society, and ultimately being willing to:
4. Be transformed also while we perform mission.²⁹

Another important presentation was the seminar called 'Pastoral of Childhood' by Edesio Sánchez. In my view, this was the first serious pastoral and theological approach on childhood addressed on an evangelical platform in Latin America.

In his presentation, Sánchez developed the following points:

1. Biblical and theological approaches from the Old and New Testaments on the importance of children in the Kingdom of God, and the family as the primary focus of evangelization and Christian education.
2. Theology from the children and for the children, stating that in evangelism and teaching, children should be the subjects and objects of theologizing. Such theology must include such statements as, 'Family is the ideal place to teach and learn theology in the context of "playing", and not as a constrained formal and inflexible academic task'.³⁰

²⁷ CLADE III, 298.

²⁸ CLADE III, 310.

²⁹ CLADE III, 312.

³⁰ CLADE III, 559.

3. Sánchez also shared some examples of Bible versions for children, and outlined some biblical texts that were appropriate for children, since they could be read and understood by them.
4. And finally he proposed some guidelines for the Pastoral Care of Children – in the context of Luke 2:52. He suggested that if we took Jesus as the model of a human being, an integral evangelization would propose that the formation of the child was not only in piety and devotion but also in physical, cognitive and social aspects. He further stated that pastoral care must seriously contemplate the playful element, which was essentially a dimension of life that children knew and loved, where adults went from leading to being led by them. He also argued that in the midst of a violent society such as that found in Latin America, a pastoral ministry that promoted non-violence and love for the children was of vital importance.³¹

The Fourth Latin American Congress on Evangelization (CLADE IV)

CLADE IV was held in 2000, in Quito, Ecuador. The central theme was ‘The Evangelical Testimony towards the Third Millennium: Scripture, Spirit and Mission’. It gathered nearly 1,300 leaders.

It was held at the campus of the South American Seminary (SEMISUD) of the Church of God, so the Pentecostal face was present along with some appearances on the programme by David Ramírez, Angelit Guzmán, Rosario Inmenso and Laura Saá.

Also, on one of the panels, the Neo-Pentecostals had their first-ever appearance. At this time the Latin American Theological Fellowship (FTL) had its first woman as president, the Colombian Lilia Solano.

The CLADE IV programme had six plenaries based on the book of Acts; six interdisciplinary conferences and four panels on present-day issues. But the novelty of this congress was that it also had eighteen parallel thematic workshops, including: Integral Mission and Poverty, Christian Presence in the Academic Environment, Publishing Ministry, History and Church, Theological Education, Youth and Children’s Ministries.

The co-ordinators of CLADE IV proposed that the thematic workshops should generate unity. So CLADE IV generated four networks, including RENAS (*National Evangelical Network for Social Action*) in Brazil, Letra Viva (a publishing network), Red del Camino (*Integral Mission Network*), and the Christian Movement *Juntos por la Niñez* [Together for the Children], now known as *Movimiento Juntos con la Niñez y la Juventud* [Together with Children and Youth Movement].

³¹ CLADE III, 561.

It is worth mentioning that the Final Declaration of CLADE IV included a confession and commitment to children and other social groups:

WE CONFESS THAT: There has been discrimination and marginalization against women, indigenous people, blacks, children, youth and other groups within the life of the church. In that way we have denied that they are made in the image and likeness of God, and have ignored their enormous human and missionary potential.

WE COMMIT TO: Valuing and including all excluded social and cultural groups (children, youth, women, blacks, indigenous and disabled people, immigrants, etc.) as subjects to whom the gospel of the Kingdom of God is also directed.³²

The fact that children were among the eighteen thematic workshops of CLADE IV was a historic step towards their ‘inclusion’ in the Latin American church’s mission agenda. I had the honour of co-ordinating this consultation and saw firsthand how this topic was welcomed by the organizers of CLADE IV. The consultation also attracted much attention from the Congress delegates to the point that it was one of the most attended consultations, with 105 participants.

The objectives and reflections of the consultation stated that the Latin American church was marked by ‘adult-centrism’, which had made children invisible in church life and mission. The final declaration stated the following: ‘The church has been involved in making children invisible in everyday life. We must start with this confession and begin, with faith and devotion, a new stage of repentance and correct this reality.’³³

The delegates proposed that the church should have a different attitude and approach to childhood, responding to the dramatic reality of children in the region and the abundant scriptural teaching on children and childhood.

The Church in Latin America requires an urgent awareness, commitment and dedication towards children, a true conversion of attitude towards them. It requires a reading of the current environment and what the Word of God demands from us in order to change our current vision on work with children, and to change the order of our priorities.³⁴

The year before CLADE IV (1999) marked ten years since the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In almost all regions of the world, including Latin America, assessments of its implementation were undertaken, and for that reason, this was an important topic of reflection before and during the Consultation.

³² Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana, ‘DECLARACION CLADE IV – Testimonio Evangélico hacia el Tercer Milenio-Rumbo a CLADE V’, *EL Blog de Bernabé* (accessed 10th April 2015): www.elblogdebernabe.com/2011/09/declaracion-clade-iv-testimonio.html

³³ Movimiento Juntos con la Niñez y la Juventud, ‘Declaración Final de la Consulta Sobre la Niñez’, *CLADE IV*: <http://movimientonj.org/documentos> (accessed 10th April 2015).

³⁴ *CLADE IV*, ‘Declaración Final de la Consulta Sobre la Niñez’.

The Consultation had both theological and missiological presentations. It included the presentation of models in the field of holistic ministry to the children. It also covered subjects like the biblical perspective of children and their importance, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Mission of the Church (which started with an electronic Forum, before the Consultation), and the prevention of sexual abuse in the church, among others. Some of the speakers were Luis Andres Noya, Darío López, Alicia Casas, Maria Eugenia Goyret, Fausto Re, Alfredo Mora and Enrique Pinedo.

The results of the Consultation were, in addition to the CLADE IV declaration, a ten-year regional agenda and a declaration addressed to the presidents and heads of governments of Latin America who met in November of that same year in Panama City.

In response to the ten-year regional agenda, a Latin American and Caribbean Consultation on Children, Adolescents and Church took place in Barba de Heredia, Costa Rica, in 2002.³⁵ As a result of this consultation, the 'Movement Together with the Children and Youth' was born. This regional movement organized and developed significant initiatives for the children, including two Contextual Biblical Theological Conferences on Children, the first in 2004 and the second in 2015. Several other theological and missiological consultations took place, while theological and pastoral books have been written about children, mission and violence in Latin America.

Violence is one of the primary causes of death among youth in Latin America and the Caribbean; with the highest homicide rate in the world for those aged between 15 and 26. Every year, nearly six million children are victims of abuse and violence at home. Over 80,000 become casualties of abuse and violence.³⁶ In 2008, responding to this challenge, the Together with Children and Youth Movement launched a regional campaign called *Love your Neighbor: The Good Treatment of Children and Youth* to promote a culture of such treatment and the prevention of violence and abuse against boys, girls and youth in Latin America and the Caribbean.³⁷ It lasted four years and officially ended in 2012, during CLADE V.

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³⁵ Movimiento Juntos con la Niñez y la Juventud, 'Consulta Latinoamericana y del Caribe sobre Niñez, Adolescencia e Iglesia', *Consulta Latinoamericana y del Caribe*:

<http://movimientonj.org/documentos> (accessed 10th April 2015).

³⁶ See Children and Youth Movement, *Love your Neighbor: Good Treatment of Children and Youth*, *Código de la Niñez y la Adolescencia*:

www.law.yale.edu/rcw/rcw/jurisdictions/ams/ecuador/Ecuador_Code.htm (accessed 24th March 2015).

³⁷ Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, 'World Report on Violence Against Children', *United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children*: [www.unicef.org/lac/full_text\(3\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/lac/full_text(3).pdf) (accessed March 20, 2015).

As result of this Campaign, the book *Hablemos de la Niñez: Niñez, Biblia-Pastoral y Un Buen Rato* [Let's Talk About Childhood: Childhood, Bible, Pastoral and Proper Treatment] was published and distributed at CLADE V and throughout the region. Harold Segura and Wellington Pereira were the editors of this project, and invited a group of Latin American theologians and Bibliacists (Spanish and Portuguese speakers) to collaborate in writing this book.³⁸

The Fifth Latin American Congress on Evangelization (CLADE V)

CLADE V was held in 2012, in San José, Costa Rica. The central theme was: 'Let's follow Jesus in his Reign of Life. Guide us, Holy Spirit.' It gathered over 800 men and women leaders.

Very few formal plenary sessions with academic rigour were conducted in CLADE V, a feature which had characterized previous CLADEs and the FTL, but instead it was chosen to give broad participation to the sub-continental regions in the programme. They responded to a 'participation workbook' that had been circulated previously. This workbook contained three sections with discussion questions:

1. Following Jesus along the road of life
2. The Kingdom of God in society
3. The Spirit of Life

This approach allowed the possibility of listening to new faces exposing the communal theological reflections of each region and significantly expanding participation. Each morning there were Bible studies in groups, and for the worship time the songs chosen had a strong theological message and context deeply rooted in Latin America. Arts were used significantly to enrich the liturgy (poets, painters, singers, composers, dancers and musicians), that as a result of reflection from previous regional consultations on Art, Liturgy and Mission organized by FTL.

Female participation was widespread in the programme. By that time FTL's Secretary General was also a woman, Ruth Padilla DeBorst. Indigenous faces were present in the programme on one evening but the participation of Pentecostals as an evangelical expression was not present as on other occasions.

On this occasion, sixteen parallel thematic workshops took place, such as the Church and the Mission in Latin America, Historical Heritage and Current Mission, New Perspectives for Theological Education, Youth Protagonists for Transformation and the Consultation on Children: 'Let's Talk about Children: Church, Society and Fullness of Life', which was co-ordinated by the Movement Together with Children and Youth (MTWCY).

³⁸ See Harold Segura and Wellington Pereira (eds), *Hablemos de la Niñez: Niñez, Biblia-Pastoral y Buen Rato* (San José, Costa Rica: Movimiento Juntos con la Niñez y la Juventud, 2012).

Another important and historic aspect in CLADE V was the inclusion of eleven teenagers under 18 years of age from different countries of Latin America who were part of the 800 conference delegates. They also participated very actively in the Consultation on Children. One of the specific objectives of this consultation was:

... making room for meaningful participation of eleven youngsters who will be part of the consultation; the methodology of the consultation will encourage their participation in the program through various artistic, recreational and technological expressions.³⁹

Another aspect to highlight about CLADE V was that the organizers agreed to let the MUWCY to present the 'Love Your Neighbor: The Good Treatment of Children' regional campaign to the all the attendees of the conference. The teenagers had active and meaningful participation during this presentation.

Also, as part of the methodology, forty teenagers (including 29 from Costa Rica) had the opportunity of inviting the 800 delegates to receive a symbolic vaccination to prevent mistreatment and to promote a new culture of peace and the good treatment of children.

The Consultation on Childhood had among its objectives that of reviewing, from a contextual, theological and biblical perspective, the most significant trends of the situation facing children and adolescents in the region, as well as the new paradigms of children in society and the challenges they posed to the mission of the church.

Lastly, the book published out of CLADE V included two articles on childhood: *Wolves Disguised as Sheep that Corrupt Children*,⁴⁰ written by Malena Manzato. In it she describes the characteristics of adult sex offenders, of young sex offenders, of women surrounding offenders, and of girls and boys who are the victims of abuse. It also proposes preventative and protective measures within the church and its families.⁴¹

The other book was *Girls, Boys and Adolescents: Active Agents in God's Mission*⁴² written by Enrique Pinedo. He describes the several representations of childhood in history, both in the social sciences and in Christian theology over the years. He also describes concepts emerging from the Convention of the Rights of Children, especially the historical changes that the right of child participation proposed where, for the first

³⁹ Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana, 'Sigamos a Jesús en su Reino de Vida: Reflexiones Teológicas Pastorales' *CLADE V* (La Paz, Lampara-FTL, 2014), 187-207.

⁴⁰ Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana, *CLADE V*, 190-96.

⁴¹ See Malena Manzato, *Lobos Vestidos de Ovejas que Corrompen a los Niños* (San José, Costa Rica: CLADE V, 2012).

⁴² Enrique Pinedo, 'Girls, Boys and Adolescents: Active Agents in God's Mission', in *CLADE V* (San José, Costa Rica: FTL, 2012), 171-86. See also Enrique Pinedo, *Niñez, Adolescencia y Misión Integral: Nuevos Desafíos a la Educación Teológica en América Latina y el Caribe* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Kairós, 2012).

time in western history, children are legally recognized as subjects of (a) enunciation and (b) self-identity; those two rights were rights of the first generation, configured in the eighteenth century, and then in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 for all human beings. Pinedo said that, although they arrived late, in the end they affirmed the child as a human being. Also, basing what he said on the Scriptures, Pinedo showed how God used children and teenagers extensively in his mission, and then proposed the principle of co-participation, an intergenerational walk between adults, children and adolescents in the mission of God.

Conclusion

In CLADE, one can observe how the various faces of evangelicalism have co-existed in Latin America during the last few decades, some being included in the later stages while others were still waiting to be included. One can also appreciate how dealing with the topic of children has evolved and how this has become one of the most important missional issues in this region, as seen in these three stages of development:

1. Being, at first, ignored within God's mission, or seen in a superficial way.
2. Then being seen as missional subjects, to whom we must minister, evangelize or speak on behalf of God.
3. And finally being considered as subjects and companions in God's mission, who are also important agents of that mission.

Mission to, for and with children still has to develop in Latin America. Surely holistic evangelization and discipleship to them and with them has to be revitalized and prioritized? A prophetic voice and action on their behalf has still to be raised within unjust societies such as those in Latin America. In short, children's inclusion as participants and protagonists in God's mission has to be promoted and affirmed by the church in order to move on from the time when children did not always enjoy the acknowledgement of being players in God's mission.

VIVIENDO EN BABILONIA: GOD'S MISSION AMID EMERGING LATINO YOUTH

Daniel Alvarez

The Pew Research Center released a disturbing report on Christianity in the United States. It is following the European trend and becoming more secular. The statistics are staggering: in just seven years since its last poll, Christianity has decreased by 7.8%. In turn, Christianity is becoming more racially diverse.¹ Christians are increasingly people from minority groups. Consequently, Latinos are an increasing part of the Christian demographic.

When we describe Latinos, we are referring to a diverse group of people from different countries of Latin America. My study here will focus on recent immigrants to the US and their families. These immigrants are structurally similar to the poor and marginalized that Jesus identified with. In turn, in many ways they fulfil the mission of Christ in the world. In what follows, I will discuss characteristics of many of these immigrants and their identity. Secondly, I will also discuss the ways in which Latino youth fulfil the Great Commission in the US. Finally, I will give a theological framework from which to carry out this mission.

Characteristics of Latino Youth

Currently, Latinos are the second largest minority in the US. Furthermore, one in four Americans under 18 is Latino.² Latinos are also relatively young. Their average age is 27, compared with the average age of 41 for Whites.³ It is readily apparent that by these demographics, the kinds of adults these Latinos become will fashion the society that America becomes in the 21st century.⁴ Nonetheless, Latinos face unique challenges, such as poverty and violence. The Pew Center reveals some interesting

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¹ Pew Research Center, 'Increasing Racial and Ethnic Diversity Within Christianity': www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/pf_15-05-05_rls2_diversity640px (accessed 12th May 2015).

² Mark Maddell, 'America's Latino future': www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-22578183 (accessed 1st May 2015).

³ Pew Latino Center, 'Between Two Worlds: How Young Latinos Come of Age in America': www.pewLatino.org/2009/12/11/between-two-worlds-how-young-latinos-come-of-age-in-america/#en1 (accessed 12th May 2015).

⁴ Pew Latino Center, 'Between Two Worlds'.

characteristics of Latino youth. For example, 26% of Latino girls become mothers by the age of 19.⁵

Education is a challenge as 17% drop out of high school.⁶ This rate is nearly twice as high as that for Blacks, nearly three times as that for Whites, and nearly four times as that for Asians. It is not surprising, then, that 23% of them live in poverty.⁷ They also experience a high exposure to gangs. 40% of native-born Latinos of the ages of 16-25 know someone in a gang, compared with 17% of Latino immigrants. Of the same age group, 17% of native-born Latinos got into a fight at some point in the last year.

These are challenges the church faces in its mission, but it has plenty of scope for optimism. The same survey found that young Latinos are more often than not satisfied with their lives and optimistic about their futures.⁸ They place a high value on education, hard work and career success. They live between two worlds as they are a part of the immigrant experience, but at the same time they are not immigrants. Two-thirds of them are born in the US.⁹

Another interesting characteristic is that Latinos are extremely diverse. They may be stereotyped, as being a monolithic block of the population, when in reality they are more diverse than it seems. For example, they prefer to refer to themselves by their country of origin.¹⁰ Instead of saying Latino, they prefer to say that they are Colombian, Honduran or Mexican. Of Latinos aged 16 to 25, 52% identify themselves first by their family's country of origin, whether it is Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador or any other Spanish-speaking country.¹¹ An additional 20% generally use the terms Latina/o first when describing themselves. Only about one in four (24%) generally use the term American first.¹²

Also, the traditional composition of Latinos is also changing drastically. For example, Salvadorans have surpassed Dominicans and are likely to overtake Cubans as the third largest Latino group of origin in the US.¹³ Central Americans, a broad variety of people from Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador, compose over 4.5 million people in the US. They are roughly half a million less than the second largest Latino

⁵ Pew Latino Center, 'Between Two Worlds'.

⁶ Pew Latino Center, 'Between Two Worlds'.

⁷ Pew Latino Center, 'Between Two Worlds'.

⁸ Pew Latino Center, 'Between Two Worlds'.

⁹ Pew Latino Center, 'Between Two Worlds'.

¹⁰ Pew Latino Center, 'Between Two Worlds'.

¹¹ Pew Latino Center, 'Between Two Worlds'.

¹² Pew Latino Center, 'Between Two Worlds'.

¹³ Pew Research Center, 'Nativity, by Detailed Latino Origin: 2013':

www.pewLatino.org/2015/05/12/statistical-portrait-of-Latinos-in-the-united-states-1980-2013/ph_2015-03_statistical-portrait-of-Latinos-in-the-united-states-2013_current-05 (accessed 12th May 2015).

group, Puerto Ricans.¹⁴ Central Americans as a whole may soon overtake the Puerto Rican population in the US.

The demographics within Latinos are in flux. It is important to remember that each country south of the US-Mexico border and in the Caribbean is unique, with its own characteristics. These in turn have diverse people groups within them. For example, I started a Bible study for Latinos in Cleveland, Tennessee. Soon, I came to the realization that not only the majority in my congregation were Mexican, but they were also Zapoteco-speaking Natives from Veracruz. They had their own indigenous culture and a way of life in which I became a cross-cultural missionary. Some of them did not even speak Spanish. Later, as a pastor in Staten Island, New York, I worked with Garifunas from Honduras (who spoke Spanish, English and Garifuna). I also had to do ministry among Mixteco and Chinanteco-speaking natives from Oaxaca, Mexico.

In this teeming environment, many churches provide a de facto type of hospitality to new immigrants and their families in a variety of ways. The most obvious is that Latinos will plant churches to reach new immigrants and their families. Spanish becomes a lingua franca by which to reach a variety of people groups. Simultaneously, White or Black churches start Latino outreach services in which a Spanish-speaking person will lead their ministry to Latinos. These outreaches and church plants tend to be culturally diverse. Pastors must be trained to be aware of the diversity and variety that the term Latino encapsulates. Latin American people have similar but different characteristics and cultures.

Politically, Latinos have a different perspective on a number of topics. They tend to be conservative in some areas while very liberal in others. For example, they are conservative because they tend to be family-oriented; they experience very little divorce and tend to not practice abortion.¹⁵ They are also industrious and tend to own many small businesses.¹⁶ However, Latinos tend to be liberal on issues such as immigration, education, the death penalty and women's roles in the church.¹⁷ Mark Mardell states that Latinos 'might be more like Americans used to be than Americans are today'.¹⁸

¹⁴ Pew Research Center, 'Nativity': Central Americans at one point in time were a single nation, the Central American Federation. Panama is not included in these statistics because it was under the control of Colombia. Belize is also not included because it was influenced by Great Britain. Geographically, Mexico is considered a part of North America.

¹⁵ Mark Mardell, 'America's Latino future': www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-22578183 (accessed 18th May 2015).

¹⁶ Mardell, 'America's Latino future'.

¹⁷ Larry Ortiz, 'Latino Migration to Protestantism: A Historical, Socio-cultural, Ecclesiastical Analysis', in *Journal Of Sociology & Social Welfare* 41:3 (September 2014), 23-48.

¹⁸ Mardell, 'America's Latino future'.

These characteristics make them face tremendous challenges as they deal with the majority culture in the US. Of Latinos aged 16-25, 38% say that they, a relative or close friend has been the target of ethnic or racial discrimination, a higher percentage than older Latinos (31%).¹⁹ Finally, perceptions of discrimination are more widespread among native-born than foreign-born young Latinos, with a 41% total to a 32% total.²⁰

If one reflects on the work of the church among Latinos in the US, one must also look beyond the numbers and data sets and consider the ways in which they carry this mission. There are intangibles that numbers do not tell us. We seek not just rational knowledge, but to understand the stories behind the numbers. Ultimately, we look beyond numbers to the relationships Latinos forge with themselves and with mainstream North American culture. Ultimately, real lives are at stake in the discussion of Latino youth and their future in the US.

Dreamers and Possibilities

In order to understand the church and its mission among Latinos in the US I describe three different ways Latino Pentecostals carry out their mission in the US. This is not to say that this is an exhaustive list of how the church fulfils its mission, but rather observations from three different ways in which Latinos are working in the US. First, I interview José Álvarez, a pastor of a storefront church. I describe some of the challenges and opportunities he faces. Second, I interview Héctor González, a pastor who has started a Spanish-speaking service as a member of an English-speaking congregation. Finally, I interview a young pastor who is the lead pastor of a majority White and English-speaking congregation. Through this example, one can see that Latinos are adapting to mainstream North American culture and are capable of becoming leaders, not just for Latinos but also preparing to be intercultural leaders in the US. Latino presence and their participation in the work of mission in the US comes in a variety of ways and can contribute to the whole of Christianity in the US. Not only do Latinos have unique demographic characteristics, but they also have unique ecclesiastical contributions to make as they work to fulfil the Great Commission.

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José and the Storefront Church

The first person I interviewed was José, a pastor in the New York metropolitan area.²¹ In his mid-twenties, he started a church in a storefront. In his ministry we see a pattern that is very similar to other churches and

¹⁹ Pew Center, 'Between Two Worlds'.

²⁰ Pew Center, 'Between Two Worlds'.

²¹ José Álvarez, interview by author, New Brunswick, NJ, April 2015.

congregations across the US. His church is mostly composed of first-generation immigrants and is a relatively young church. Most of his members are young families and single young adults. Mission among these immigrants is sacrificial. José describes how they are not doctors, lawyers or bankers, but rather those with low-income jobs such as janitors, cooks and waiters. They are a minority in what, for them, is a foreign society. While they navigate many different sociological characteristics of the US, they still sacrificially fulfil the Great Commission.

José became a Christian in this country. He was converted and discipled through a dramatic experience. After a few years, due to work opportunities, he moved to a new town and noticed that they did not have a church in which they felt at home. Through prayer, circumstances, and what he describes as the Lord's calling, he started a Bible study in his own home. Initially he hesitated to start this endeavour, but nonetheless he felt compelled to lead this congregation.

He describes how he started the church. For a few weeks he met in his living room with his family. Soon he reached out to his extended family and friends. After a period of establishing the routine of a Bible study, this small meeting grew to have enough people and had enough donations so that they could start paying rent at a small storefront. They decided to look for a place to rent. Through much sacrifice they found an available store to rent in a busy part of his town where many other Latino immigrants had settled. His town has a large population of Guatemalan, Mexican, and Honduran immigrants.

At the storefront his ministry has continued to grow. Currently, he has a lot of youth in his church. They have creative services and outreaches where they minister to new Latino immigrants and also established immigrants. He creates a sense of community for his parishioners through small group Bible studies. He also incorporates many of them into leadership at the church. José states that many immigrants see the church as their home away from home. In their meetings, they speak Spanish, and are free to express their emotions and struggles in a way that is culturally acceptable to them. There is a sense of newfound purpose because they know that they do not only do menial labour, but that they (including some that may be undocumented) are full citizens in God's Kingdom and are accepted as such. The church also creates microenterprise opportunities through activities such as fund-raising. The women organize themselves and will sell home cooked meals from their specific countries, such as *baleadas*, *gorditas*, and *pupusas*.

Pastor José says that it has not been an easy journey. He knows he is not adequately trained and he wishes he had more experience. Probably, the biggest challenge he faces is that the church struggles to pay the rent and give him an adequate salary. He has another job besides pastoring and it has been very stressful for him to lead the church. The contributions are enough to pay for the rent of the storefront church, but not enough to give

him a full-time salary. Also, his church faces interesting conflicts between the new immigrants and their children who are growing up speaking mostly English and who are acculturated to mainstream North American culture. This creates interesting tensions in his church. For example, the new immigrants tend to be very conservative theologically. In church they have an unspoken dress code of suits and ties. The youth don't mind going to church with jeans, T-shirts, and sneakers.

This is a similar narrative to other churches in the northeast of the USA. First, a small group of believers gathers. Secondly, they grow the church by conversions until they can rent a facility. The church is far from what most North Americans expect from their churches. For example, the restroom is right beside the stage. The seats are regular folding chairs with no padding. The music is loud. However, they are glad that they are saved and are growing. Some people cry publicly. They say that they feel the presence of the Holy Spirit and will shout, jump and dance to the music. So the church worries less about aesthetics because the important thing to them is the priority of evangelism and salvation in their church. Their purpose is to gain new converts. Otto Maduro sums up the way these churches fulfil their mission by being a refuge: 'The individuals go from nobodiness to being known as somebodyness. They are warmly welcome, recognized and greeted by their names in their own language, enquired about their lives and loved ones, and confirming that their existence is real, makes sense, has meaning, a worthwhile and sacred reality, and purpose.'²²

Pastor José's church has about between 30 to 40 people per service. They are packed to capacity until they can rent a bigger facility. In more established neighbourhoods such churches may also rent a church from another denomination or a large hall until they can move somewhere else. The churches that do grow eventually buy their own property or may even buy a church building because its membership may have moved out of the urban centre. However, the temptation for many such churches is to try to buy property too soon. They may incur large amounts of debt, thus putting pressure on the pastors and parishioners that already have pushed their finances to the limit. For example, Pastor José says that many of his first-generation immigrant parishioners send half their pay cheque to their home countries, as remittances for loved ones.

Also, first-generation immigrants tend to stick to their own kind. Probably because of their comfort zone, Guatemalans gravitate towards fellow Guatemalans, Mexicans towards fellow Mexicans, and so on and so forth. Gradually, people in his congregation have learned from each other's cultures. Pastor José envisions that for his church to grow, they must overcome their cultural baggage and minister to a variety of Latino

²² Otto Maduro, 'Religion Under Imperial Duress: Postcolonial Reflections and Proposals', in *Review Of Religious Research* 45, No. 3 (March 2004): 221-34. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost (accessed 20th May 2015), 225.

cultures. I also think pastors in his situation need theological training and intercultural training to effectively minister to the diverse cultures they work with.

As much good as these churches are doing, there are many fine tensions that require further reflection and observation. For example, there are many questions about the way these Latino churches fit into the greater denominational structure of North American churches. They function separately from the White church. Their strength is that they are autochthonous and ministering to people in their own particular context. However, this same strength can also be a weakness. Isolation can be troublesome for many pastors. These churches exist in the same country as the US and should participate in the life of the North American church somehow or another. I think that North American Christianity desperately needs an infusion from the culture, youth and vitality of these Latino churches. But in reality, I do not see much interaction probable. These churches rarely if at all influence mainstream North American Christianity. They remain in isolation from mainstream culture.

Héctor's Mother Church Outreach

Another type of church is the White or Black church that establishes a Latino service. This is a good model primarily because the Latino church plant will not have to deal with the financial pressures that Pastor José has to navigate. Often, these churches already have everything needed for ministry. Host churches let these Latino outreaches use the building, sound equipment and other valuable resources in their outreach at no cost. The drawback is that some areas of the US do not have Pentecostal churches, or churches that may be open to hosting a congregation of Latino religious fervour.

I interviewed a Latino pastor, Héctor González, who planted a church using this model.²³ He stated that he started attending the host church and eventually told the lead pastor that he wanted to begin a Spanish-speaking service. The pastor let him start the service, charging him no rent. Pastor Héctor has done a lot of work in this congregation. He has had to be creative because the church has to work around the main English-speaking services and programmes. For example, Pastor Héctor conducts home Bible studies instead of a Wednesday night service and has an unorthodox worship schedule. The main Sunday service starts at 1:00 pm rather than 10:00 am. Pastor Héctor is grateful, however, that there are no financial pressures on him. The church is composed of many young families and youth. Pastor José mentions he is sometimes amused when he sees the age difference between his congregation and the host congregation.

²³ Interview with Héctor González, Virginia, 7th May 2015. Name changed to protect his privacy.

As with the first approach, this church provides many positive qualities for Latino immigrants and their families. However, in the long run there are many questions as to how this will play out in their theology and self-outlook. For example, it will be interesting to see how these Latino members incorporate themselves into the life of the host church. The Spanish-speaking membership does not readily or easily associate with the English-speaking church. However, Latino youth readily associate with English-speaking youth. I asked Pastor Héctor what is the future of his congregation if their youth should become absorbed into the English-speaking host church. This, in turn, is something he had not considered. In a way, it splits these families. Furthermore, many members will not interact with the English-speaking host church members. Such a partition does not reflect the nature of the body of Christ. It would appear that creating a Spanish-speaking outreach is a pragmatic option that has a lot more potential to intentionally express the Kingdom of God through intentional cross-cultural and intercultural interaction. However, there is something more important at stake and that is evangelism and salvation.

In many ways, Latinos are struggling to work out their partnership with their English-speaking counterparts. Rudy Girón explains that for many Latinos partnership is a foreign word.²⁴ The Spanish word, *socio*, is the closest term to translate partnership. In these situations it seems that they follow what Girón calls the Golden Rule: ‘The one who owns the gold sets the rules.’²⁵ Host churches must be more intentional in fostering trust and friendship with the Spanish-speaking church plant.

Pastor Héctor talks about some of the problems he faces. Sometimes the people of Pastor Héctor’s congregation are accused of being too messy or of not taking care of the sound equipment. Pastor Héctor thinks that the host church worries too much about appearance and that they should instead be glad that people are getting saved and attending the church. Sometimes he has a problem with the host church’s rules. Girón has observed that there is often a tension between Latinos and Whites because of the latter’s obsession with rules, law and order.²⁶ He also thinks that they have a general inability to improvise or work with ambiguity.²⁷

In this type of model the church fulfils its mission, and provides hospitality to the Spanish-speaking congregation. However, the host church must guard against having an utilitarian perspective on them where they use the church plant to inflate numbers for church growth.²⁸ There has to be

²⁴ Rodolfo Girón, ‘COMIBAM: Three Interdependent Partnerships in Latin America’, in *Kingdom Partnerships for Synergy in Missions*, William D. Taylor (ed) (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1994), 198.

²⁵ Girón, ‘COMIBAM: Three Interdependent Partnerships in Latin America’, 204.

²⁶ Girón, ‘COMIBAM: Three Interdependent Partnerships in Latin America’.

²⁷ Girón, ‘COMIBAM: Three Interdependent Partnerships in Latin America’.

²⁸ Kevin Park, ‘Beyond Ornamental Multiculturalism: Toward a Theology of the Beauty of God’, in *Unity in Mission: Theological Reflections on the Pilgrimage of*

more intentionality in building a relationship with the minority groups. Mutual respect and trust should be fostered over time.

Josué's Intercultural Leadership

In my final interview, I talked to Josué Maldonado (Josh).²⁹ His example is an interesting scenario to contemplate in the way the church fulfils its mission in the US, in what I call an intercultural leadership approach. He is the lead pastor of an English-speaking congregation that is mostly White. There are other examples of very prominent Latino ministers who have been able to successfully become pastors of multicultural churches in the US. One particular example is the case of the late John Gimenez. He established Rock Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and founded a network of over 500 churches worldwide. His was the case of a Latino pastor who was able to lead an English-speaking congregation into dramatic growth. Another current example is Bishop Johnathan Alvarado, who pastors in Atlanta.³⁰ His church has a membership of over 3,000. These are examples of Latinos who are not only reaching Latinos in the US, but also establishing intercultural ministries and doing the work of mission in the church.

The Reverend Josh Maldonado is the lead pastor at the Hurst Assembly of God, in Texas. He is a Latino first-generation immigrant from Monterrey, Mexico. He came to the US as a young child. He speaks fluent Spanish and English. He is leading a congregation that has been predominantly White. Josh sees himself as a part of American culture. He grew up in the Spanish-speaking Church of God. He went to a Bible Institute where he met his wife. Later he moved to Arkansas from Dallas where he settled down in an Assembly of God church that was predominantly White. After a season of leading worship and doing the work of ministry in his local church in Arkansas, he was recommended for the credentialing programme of the Assemblies of God. He completed it, pursuing his call for ministry. After finishing this programme, he moved to Hurst where he pastors the local Assembly of God.

Josh is very comfortable with his new position as the lead pastor there. He is fully involved in the work of ministry. He even had a night of *carne asada* to celebrate his wife's birthday with the church. Currently, he is reviewing his vision for the church. He wants the church to focus on reaching children and youth so that they may make a difference in his community.

Mission, Mitzi J. Buddle and Don Throsen (eds) (New York: Paulist Press, 2013), 185.

²⁹ Josh Maldonado, interview by author, Hurst, Texas, 10th May 2015.

³⁰ See Grace Church International: www.totalgrace.org/index.html

He gives examples of how things are different here from his Latino roots. One of the more prominent theological struggles is that of the North American emphasis on grace. He comes from a Hispanic background that is more Arminian and has more of a synergistic concept of salvation. He is thankful for God's grace. Only God's grace can save. However, there is much more in salvation. He states that he has been emphasizing God's transforming grace in his sermons. Josh is convinced that the emphasis on grace in mainstream culture takes vibrancy away from the church. It is an all-encompassing doctrine that is used as an excuse to be complacent. Instead, it should lead to deep gratitude and a desire to have this grace extended to all areas of life.

Josh explains why he has a different theological emphasis on grace. He grew up in a Latino church. His father was a pastor for the Church of God that did not allow him to go to the movies. When he met his wife, one of the first dates they went on was to watch a movie. He was apprehensive because he had never gone. Slowly, he became at ease with the idea. He thinks that we are saved by grace, but at the same time that faith without works is dead. He tries to hold in tension the two ideas of grace and works. He is grateful that he is ministering in a context that is not legalistic. At the same time, he knows that God's grace must lead to transformation.

I think Josh's life reflects the type of leader that Latinos are becoming. They are strong and emerging Latino second and third generations that do not speak Spanish but are fully identified with their culture. Josh is exercising leadership and reaching a culture that is not necessarily his own. He earned this trust in the Assemblies of God and was sent forth to do the work of ministry in full capacity. I also think it is important to set out his case and similar examples because Latino youth are in desperate need to look up to a leader. They are in a shortage of role models. A significant 62% of those ages 16-25 say that they do not know a national Latino leader.³¹

I also think that this is a case study that will require further observation. Josh is showing that Latinos can exercise leadership in the majority world. Latino youth have young pastors that they can also emulate. This type of leadership must be nurtured. In the US there are cultural currents that put Latinos in a negative light. For example, Latinos are seldom placed in the category of being a model minority. This terminology is extremely biased, if not racist.³² First, it pits cultures against each other, and secondly, it treats others as if they were reprobates. Josh's challenge is to work with heterogeneous leadership in a multi-ethnic or multicultural congregation.

³¹ Mark Hugo Lopez, 'Three Fourths of Latinos Say Their Community Needs a Leader': www.pewLatino.org/2013/10/22/three-fourths-of-Latinos-say-their-community-needs-a-leader (accessed 18th May 2015).

³² Park, 'Beyond Ornamental Multiculturalism', 185.

However, he must be intentional in navigating and understanding cross-cultural tensions. His leaders must take time to learn each other's cultures.³³

Mission in the Diaspora

Latino youth are a highly flexible yet resilient group. They are marked by a cross-cultural or intercultural experience in which they co-exist with mainstream society. They accommodate to life in the US and creatively incorporate new characteristics of this society into their own lives. In many ways, they identify and reflect on the lives of biblical characters that experienced similar situations, such as Joseph, Esther and Daniel. Much like these, Latinos navigate their identity in the light of the majority culture's standards. I shall focus on the story of Daniel to reflect on the Latino experience theologically.

The book of Daniel opens with the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. We are told that Jerusalem falls and the vessels of the house of God are sent to Shinar where they are placed in the house of the Babylonian gods. Another consequence of the fall of Jerusalem is that some of the ablest youth in the land were deported. These are educated in the language and literature of the Chaldeans. The young Hebrews had to learn to live in a foreign land and culture where everything was profane. The deportation of the Jewish youth was a brutal act and an invasion of a foreign power. This power taught the Hebrew youth the ways of Babylon.

Latino youth navigate life in the US in a culture that exercises uneven power. It is a culture that in many ways is very different from Latino expectations. Latinos adapt to these and in many ways resist ideas in the majority culture that is hostile to them. For example, they have a different opinion to the way the US has treated the unaccompanied minors coming to the US. There are many conditions that have created an economic and social environment where immigration is the only option these children have. These children are desperate, fleeing violence that dehumanizes and kills.³⁴ The debate that exists in the government is far from values that Latinos themselves demonstrate through their de facto hospitality. The US has said no to the stranger, the hungry, the thirsty, the naked and those in prison that Jesus exhorts his followers to embrace, feed and provide for in Matthew 25. The North American church is guilty of being silent, placing it among the goats that Jesus rejects. We brag about the US being the most powerful nation in the world, possibly having the capability to feed the entire world, but it declines to accept these refugees. It demonstrates deep-

³³ Mark Kempff, 'The Neighbor among Us: Latinos and the 2010 US Census', in *Missio Apostólica* 20, No. 2 (1st November 2012): 220-28. ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed 4th March 2015), 220.

³⁴ Sonia Nazario, 'Children of the Drug Wars': www.nytimes.com/2014/07/13/opinion/sunday/a-refugee-crisis-not-an-immigration-crisis.html?_r=0 (accessed 19th May 2015).

rooted ethnocentrism, prejudice and racism. In many ways, Latinos go against the grain of traditionally accepted thought in the US.

Another interesting account of the experience of the Hebrew youth was the way in which Babylon changed their names. It was a way of erasing their identity and imposing the Babylonian way of life on the Hebrew children. In many ways, it was a way of enforcing the religion of Babylon. Maduro states, 'It will always be easier for the religion of an emperor to successfully present itself as orthodox and uncontaminated, than for the religions of those manually laboring in his domains to avoid being derided as syncretistic, magic, or superstitious.'³⁵

Jacobus de Bruyn also translates the imposed names of the Hebrew youth into their approximate meaning.³⁶ For example, Daniel means 'God is my Judge'. His name was changed to emphasize a Babylonian god. The name Belshazzar can be translated to 'May Bel protect his life'. Hananiah in Hebrew means, 'Gracious is Yah'. His name was changed to Shadrach, which can mean 'The command of Aku'. Mishael's name means 'Who is what God is'. His name was changed to Meshach, which means 'Who is what Aku is'. Azariah means 'Yah has helped'; and his name was changed to Abednego, which means 'Servant of Nebo/Nergal'.

In Babylon, they are being recast according to the Babylonian way. However, it is important to note Daniel's resolve in 1:8. I prefer to translate this verse: He purposed in his heart not to defile himself. A lot of translations say: He made up his mind, or merely that he resolved, not to follow the rules. But the choice of words in the Hebrew *wayyasetem* (purpose) and *libbow* (heart) go beyond rational knowledge into an affective dimension, or orthopraxis, of ultimate commitment to his God. Daniel would remain true to his roots. In many ways, the Hebrew youth did belong in Babylon, but in many ways they did not belong. Later in the narrative, Daniel and his friends proved their value in Babylon and they influenced the empire.

Conclusion

Latino youth live in what Maduro calls 'a syncretism and hybridity recast in the study of religious resistance to empire'.³⁷ This means that they live in the US, but do not readily assimilate. Rather, they are at home in their Latino culture. Nonetheless, they take and incorporate elements of the majority culture. Many of these elements take on new and alternative meanings. They build bridges to the complex dynamics between the powers

³⁵ Maduro, 'Religion Under Imperial Duress', 229.

³⁶ Jacobus de Bruyn, 'A Clash of Gods – Conceptualising Space in Daniel 1', in *Hervorm de Teologiese Studies* 70:3 (2nd March 2015), 1-6.

³⁷ Maduro, 'Religion Under Imperial Duress', 229.

and minority peoples, ultimately seeing their Christianity as radically different from that of the empire.

This task that involves what Justo González termed as *redescubrimiento*.³⁸ Latino youth must come to terms with their own culture and theological understanding. They must come to terms with their own identity, their strengths and weaknesses. He prophetically states, ‘Tenemos que llevar una contribución a la cultura dominante. Comenzar a practicar justicia. Tenemos que practicar esta metodología en nuestra propia cultura.’ Latino Pentecostals have a sense of knowing they are American, but a different kind of American. They are particularly sensitive to the way in which North American Christianity has sold out to the American gods of money, wealth and power. As in the case of Josh Maldonado, they know that there may be theological ideas that are so emphasized that they may hurt the vitality of the church.

Larry Ortiz states that Latinos have important contributions to make to the church:

‘... The sacred and the secular, the physical and the spiritual, are not dichotomized, but are integrated throughout the lived experience rejecting the separation between spirituality and worldliness, the supposed apolitical character of the Church... [which was] supporting the *status quo* and hence the wealthy... [and, advanced the idea]... that the Kingdom of God could be established here on earth by trying to accomplish social justice and fighting poverty.’³⁹

I am convinced that the Latinos’ work of mission in the US requires time. They are all navigating their surroundings, and Latino youth are adapting and working their way into the mission of God in their diverse settings. As we have noted, there are different approaches to the way they carry their mission. As time passes and they continue to establish themselves in the US, they must provide leadership and must partner with their North American counterparts. As they participate with North American society, they are also capable of leadership. They will be given opportunities to prove themselves as leaders. They must be ready to partake in the mission of God in this culture.

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³⁸ Justo González, *En Nuestra Propia Lengua* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 171.

³⁹ Larry Ortiz, ‘Latino Migration to Protestantism’, 28.

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PART THREE

**MEXICO AND
CENTRAL AMERICA**

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EVANGELICAL MISSION IN MEXICO TODAY THE CHALLENGE TO REMEMBER AND CELEBRATE OUR HERITAGE

Dinorah B. Méndez

Introduction

This study discusses holistic Christian mission in Mexico today from an evangelical perspective. In order to understand the current development of Christian mission in the present, it is necessary to have a look at its background. This requires a review of the historical and cultural context in which evangelical faith arrived in this country. In this way, it will be possible to see the elements which gave shape to the evangelical identity, its theological trends and its main characteristics. The review of this background is important because all these factors have been influential in the concepts and practices of Christian mission in Mexico – at least, since the presence of evangelicals in the country.

Therefore, this study will analyze some factors considered distinctive of the Mexican Evangelical identity such as: the historical confrontation with the Roman Catholic Church which has produced a certain degree of minority complex; and on the other hand, some theological ideas brought by groups of foreign missionaries promoting a kind of escapist way of life with a lack of interest in social or ethical life and therefore avoiding any concern to influence or even to interact with the social and cultural context.

The focus of the study is to analyze the kind of mission developed by evangelicals since its inception in the middle of nineteenth century, through the twenty century, and then evaluate where it is today. In this way, it attempts to answer the following questions: in what ways has the development of Christian mission in Mexico changed or evolved, and how much it has been fulfilled faithfully?

The study explores specific areas of potential improvement as a new century has started, and as a new reality of plurality and diversified ideologies and contexts need to be addressed in Mexico. Among the new conditions to be considered is a different and irregular numerical growth depending on the geographical region of the country, and the diverse confessions or Christian denominations.

Similarly, the relationship between numerical growth and diverse theological background must be analyzed in order to observe its possible interaction with and contextualization to the cultural context today.

Finally, this analysis proposes an evaluation to see if Christian mission in Mexico today is actually holistic (integral) in nature or whether can it be

improved towards that goal. To achieve this, it will be necessary to review the challenges and opportunities that evangelical groups from different traditions have had to face in this 21st century in order to have a greater relevance in the Mexican context.

A Review of Evangelical Origins in Mexico

In nearly all the countries of Latin America the influence of the Catholic Church has been an undeniable reality since the Spanish Conquest in the sixteenth century until today. A region characterized by the presence of an ultra-conservative Catholicism and a deeply popular and indigenous religiosity was seen by liberal politicians during and after Independence as a society in need of new ideologies to counteract the oppression and weaknesses of the colonial worldview, and to promote the advance and modernization of their new nations. This view was a key aspect for the presence of Evangelicals in Mexico.

The pioneer of evangelical work in Mexico as well as in many Latin American countries was the Scottish Baptist Diego Thomson who arrived precisely during the time of the wars of independence (1810-1824). Thomson had a good friendship with the leaders of the independence movements in the continent, for example: José de San Martín from Argentina, Bernardo O'Higgins from Chile, and Simon Bolívar from Venezuela. At that time, liberal ideas tended to look at an educational model differently from what was predominant during colonial times, when it was controlled by the Catholic Church. Thomson worked for the British and Foreign Society of Schools, an educational organization that promoted the Lancasterian or monitorial method, an advanced pedagogical system, at the time.

Thomson was also linked with the British and Foreign Bible Society; in this way he promoted the distribution of the Bible simultaneously with his educational tasks. Thomson travelled throughout Latin America, from Chile and Argentina to Mexico, under the banner of education and with the purpose of forming a new society. Their friends, leaders from the independence movements and even some liberal Catholics, decided to join Thomson's project, which served as an opening of the Catholic context to a new reality because in some cases his work continued. It was a preparation for the time when evangelical missionaries started to arrive in the second half of the nineteenth century. The arrival of Evangelicals¹ in the nineteenth century, however, met with the crude reality of intolerance, verbal

¹ From this point on, Evangelicals as noun and evangelicals as adjective.

aggression and in many cases, as in Colombia, Mexico and other places, with physical persecution.²

Therefore, for such a context, a connection can be made between the history of the Reformation movement that emerged in Europe in the sixteenth century and the history of Evangelicals in Latin America and Mexico in the nineteenth century. We find in those histories of a different time and place, a common and identical experience of persecution and intolerance, but also the same courage to question the socio-religious order with the proclamation of new life, the practice of congregational democracy, and the emphasis on separation between church and state, that enables us to rescue for our collective memory both where we came from and how we came to be.³

One of the great similarities between the beginnings of the Protestant Reformation in Europe and the beginnings of Evangelicals in the USA, then in Latin America and particularly in Mexico, was its continued struggle for religious liberty. As has been stated, many of the pioneers arrived precisely at the same time that the liberal idealism of the nineteenth century encouraged by the elite of the independence movements, some of them very radical liberals looking for a limitation of, or an elimination of, the privileges of Catholicism in the new independent countries.

The reason for establishing this connection is to provide a view of our evangelical identity and heritage, and to appreciate it through exploring some characteristics of Evangelicals especially those developing in a difficult context. That comparison could enable us, Mexican Evangelicals of today, to distance ourselves from those Reformers who came from another standpoint, while at the same time to evaluate their heritage. This reflection also enables us to see how our faith has been moulded and what it means to be Evangelical – something often viewed in Mexico as a dissident religion.

In this environment, missionaries James Hickey and Thomas Westrup were pioneers of evangelical work as founders of organized churches in Mexico, beginning their ministry before 1860. They started the First Baptist Church in Monterrey, Mexico, in 1864 during a time when there was no religious freedom. Later, following the establishment of new laws, including religious freedom (although in reality, they have displayed tolerance rather than liberty), missionaries from a variety of confessions

² A wider discussion and bibliography about this issue is found in Dinorah B. Mendez, *Evangelicals in Mexico: Their Hymnody and Its Theology*, in *Gods, Humans and Religions Series*, No. 14 (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2008), 93-108.

³ Pablo Moreno, 'History and Baptist Tradition in Latin America: An Indigenous Reading in Recognition of 400 years of Worldwide Baptist History' (paper presented at the RIBET-UBLA assembly in Lima, Peru, April 2009), 2-3.

arrived from the USA, Canada and Europe establishing evangelical churches all over the country.⁴

Evangelical Trends in Mexico

This section serves to recognize and revalue our evangelical identity and heritage, and appreciate it through exploring some examples of the struggles and accomplishments of Mexican Evangelicals developing in a context of adversity. Evangelical testimony for nearly two centuries in this country has been varied, with its impact recognized by many, but valued in different ways. We are recognized as educated people, with good organization in our churches, an interest in missions, with religious freedom and the separation of church and state.⁵ However, we are also seen as exclusive groups with a lack of social commitment and an ambiguous political position, considering our principle of separation between church and state.⁶

Section One above showed how the struggle for religious freedom and its character as a dissident religion has shaped Mexican Evangelicals until today. Many times this background has been evidenced in a profound anti-Catholicism. It is pertinent to mention that in recent times some colleagues of mine have nurtured hopes of better relationships with the Catholic Church.

It also needs to be said that the Catholic Church is multifaceted and that Evangelicals from other latitudes have not known the same Catholicism that has been experienced in Latin America, and perhaps particularly in Mexico. Therefore, although I celebrate the interfaith approach, which encourages fraternal relationships as well as a common and genuine fight for freedom, peace, and justice, I must recognize that for many Mexican Evangelicals these relationships are still viewed with distrust.

Overall when the aggression of the Catholic Church is not only a thing of the past, but in many places today is renewing its force and retaking some of the economic, political and social ascendancy, invoking its popular and governmental control in order to regain its former privileges, reinforcing attitudes of intolerance, and even encouraging persecution

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⁴ Dinorah B. Méndez, 'History and Development of Baptist in Mexico', in *Baptist Faith & Witness, Book 4. Papers of the Study and Research Division of the Baptist World Alliance 2005-2010*, Fausto A. Vasconcelos (ed) (Falls Church, VA: Baptist World Alliance, 2011), 57-70.

⁵ Moreno, 'History and Baptist Tradition in Latin America', 14.

⁶ Carlos Mondragón González, 'Minorías Religiosas y Contexto Social en la América Latina, Siglo XX', in *Minorías Religiosas: El Protestantismo en América Latina*, Carlos Mondragón González and Carlos Olivier Toledo (eds) (Mexico: Centro de Investigaciones sobre América Latina y el Caribe, UNAM, 2013), 47-51.

against Evangelicals among other non-Catholics. This, sadly, is a reality in Mexico today.⁷

Sometimes the fight with the Catholic Church is seen as something purely historic, with those remembering this topic being obsessed by a traumatic past. In fact, some Evangelicals in Mexico try to ignore or avoid the topic and pretend that it never happened. Others think that it is necessary to overcome that past, to forgive and forget that such trauma ever happened, because they believe such actions are necessary to enable the dialogues and approaches already mentioned.

In the opinion of this author, history shows us that those who forget are condemned to repeat the same errors as their forebears. Moreover, it is absurd to deny something that is chronicled in our history and therefore as something that has affected our identity and formed our heritage, in addition linking us with our heritage over the years as free and dissident churches.

On the other hand, it is difficult to believe that maintaining memories of the context in which the first Evangelicals lived, and the context in which we continue to live on this continent, can be an impediment to dialogue with people of different faiths. On the contrary, I consider it essential to re-evaluate this context constantly in order to help us in maintaining the relevance of our evangelical message in Mexico, as well as to ask our brothers and sisters from other regions to understand the particularities of our context when global projects are launched – and especially because in many places in this continent the struggle for religious liberty was not only a fight of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but because it continues as a real and current need in relation to a Catholic Church accustomed to domination.

Another emblematic topic of our heritage has been the principle of separation between church and state. In most of the new independent countries of Latin America it was possible to proclaim this principle in their legislation, at least since the second half of the nineteenth century. However, most of the time this principle has been seen only in legislation, whereas in practice a diversity of alliances has been implemented between Catholicism and governments of different countries since the end of the nineteenth century and during the twentieth. For this reason, Evangelicals in Mexico need to be on the alert for signs of these new alliances between some governments and some churches. Nowadays this is happening not only with the Catholic Church, but also with some of the so-called mega-churches from the Neo-Pentecostal movement hoping to obtain power as ‘official’ religions.

In addition to these struggles, the legacy of our Biblical heritage, such as the practice of congregational government by some Evangelicals, should be mentioned. The establishment and structure of democratic churches in a

⁷ Mondragón, ‘*Minorías Religiosas y Contexto Social*’, 35-47.

context of authoritarianism has been a great contribution. Evangelicals adopting this practice, in addition to the appeal to the free will of the individual to accept Christ, and the baptism of adults, gave rise to the practice of democracy in the congregations. Congregational government provided the opportunity for its members to speak and express their opinion as well as the active participation of those who did not have this opportunity in other areas in society. This practice gave time for the discussion of ideas and projects, not only for the church but also for the community, providing an alternative model from which many of the democratic ideas in the continent were nurtured.⁸

It is necessary to clarify that this congregational model was taught and received in Mexico by the missionaries who founded churches. However, it has not been applied in a homogeneous way everywhere. The major problem that congregationalism has had in this country has been the conflict with reality in a context moulded by a colonial mentality, Catholic authoritarianism and the hierarchical model of Mexican society. Therefore, this Biblical distinctive also confronts a tendency towards authoritarian leadership and minimizes congregational participation – a doctrinal problem indeed, but also a contextual one, where democracy is being restricted or even abolished.

There are cases that I know of personally, and with deep sadness I have to say that at this very time a profound crisis is being experienced in our Mexican evangelical life. At this moment this is seen in our institutions, organizations and structures. It is difficult to analyze the factors behind this crisis. On the one hand, it is possible to see cultural problems but also critical situations in local churches – for example, a lack of spiritual leadership and doctrinal deviations as well as ethical inconsistency. All these factors could be contributing to the crisis at an organizational level. On the other hand, it is also possible that many churches or local communities continue to stand firm and be faithful but sometimes they have little involvement in denominational organizations and less impact at a social level in their communities. So it seems that, even though we have the right to continue existing in this cultural context and have to maintain our heritage and identity, Evangelicals in Mexico currently face real challenges in preparing themselves to give a faithful testimony of the Gospel in the 21st century.

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This review of selected elements of evangelical life in Mexico permits a re-evaluation of its heritage and the development of its work, seeing the difficulties and progress contextually and providing us with some themes for reflection and some challenging tasks and the opportunity to continue future growth. It is important to take into consideration that we have not always been aware of the perspectives that we are facing in this 21st

⁸ Moreno, 'History and Baptist Tradition in Latin America', 4-5.

century and we need to reflect on the current changes that are taking place in society and in the church.

Challenges and Opportunities for Mexican Evangelicals in the Twenty-First Century

Pentecostalism, Neo-Pentecostalism and post-denominationalism

One of the main religious movements in Latin America during the twentieth century was Pentecostalism and the most recent religious wave called Neo-Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism achieved its demographic explosion in the 1960s and 1970s. Nevertheless, during this time it maintained tense relationships with historic and evangelical Protestantism.⁹

With the coming of Neo-Pentecostalism, however, we have seen a new way of relating in our religious setting, since not only are there tensions, but sometimes these come from those interested in homogenizing the religious setting into a proposed 'unity of the body of Christ'. This is a similar proposal to the vision of unity proclaimed by Catholics in many meetings and conferences.

In this way, Neo-Pentecostalism did not come to be another denomination, but rather to be a transversal force crossing all denominations; its influence includes worship and theology with an emphasis on emotions rather than on reason; a simpler and lighter proclamation for the current consumer society, a focus on material prosperity for the believers, and an entrenched proposal for political conquest as a means of 'Christianizing' society.

This kind of religious movement has now come to influence Mexican churches too. Reactions to it could not be more diverse. On the one hand, there has been the complete denial of the change that has brought about a retreat into a kind of traditionalism as a form of protection from change, seen as destructive. These churches do not seem to be anxious for a 'boom' in spectacular church growth or changes in contemporary worship, but they are congregations with a calm sense of growth, praise, and fidelity to the Lord.

On the other hand, there are those who affirm they have received the Neo-Pentecostal wave as a great renewal and a contemporary baptism of the Holy Spirit, as part of a great new revival.¹⁰ As a result, everything has changed in those churches. They see traditional Evangelicals as something

⁹ Calos Martínez-García, 'Cifras del Cambio Religioso en América Latina, I', in *Protestante Digital*: http://protestantedigital.com/magacin/35164/cifras_del_cambio_religioso_en_america_latina (online journal, accessed 31st January 2015).

¹⁰ Carlos Martínez-García, 'Cifras del Cambio Religioso en América Latina, II', in *Protestante Digital*: http://protestantedigital.com/magacin/35230/cifras_del_cambio_religioso_en_america_latina (online journal, accessed 7th February 2015).

of the past, the hymnbook as an object of the past, congregationalism as an illness that finally has to be removed, the principle of separation of church and state as irrelevant because it is necessary to be involved in politics and to be 'in the power' of society, poverty as a curse and illnesses as demonic actions; therefore many are attracted to the church for this alternative because of its relevance for everyone.

One of the consequences of the Neo-Pentecostal movement with its ability to reach beyond denominational boundaries has been the promotion of a post-denominational era characterized by the use of the name 'Christian' without 'surnames' (Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc.). These new congregations proclaim themselves to be the body of Christ under the unity of a pastoral staff. They promote the presence of the church in society through political action and with the purpose of 'Christianizing' society in its entirety.

This movement is also characterized by the 'prosperity gospel', so has implications such as its infiltration into sectors of the middle and lower upper classes, but without destroying completely their commitment to the poor; although its theology is not compatible with the existence of the poor, they try to rationalise it spiritually. Moreover, they try to establish specific plans for strategic spiritual warfare and for territorial conquest in the cities.

The denominational organizations are abandoned because they are considered dysfunctional, slow, traditional and bureaucratic. Theologically, the Neo-Pentecostal movement emphasizes a simpler theology, without giving much attention to deep and complex doctrinal discussions or controversies. It focuses on experience rather than reason.¹¹

So Neo-Pentecostalism and its partner, post-denominationalism, represent a new situation and challenge calling for evangelical denominations to re-examine their own identity. What does it mean to have a denomination in a world where this identification is frequently minimized or completely suppressed? It is probable that many of our denominational organizations would not survive much longer without making changes, but what kind of changes?

It is important to remember that the epoch in which we live, called post-modernity, has been characterized by rapid change whose effects are relative and temporal. So, in these moments we need to consider the temporary character of our changing reality in order to provide answers to the challenges and opportunities that we face, but without denying the principles that constitute our evangelical heritage and identity.

The socio-economic and political situation in Mexico

The economic and political situation in Mexico is another reality that demands answers of Evangelicals as one of the great challenges facing

¹¹ Moreno, 'History and Baptist Tradition in Latin America', 7-8.

them. The worldwide socio-economic reality is a crisis that concerns this country, but not as something new, since for decades this has been a continent marked by the presence of scandalous poverty and inequality. We live in a continent that has been 'Catholic Christian' for centuries. As if that were not enough, there are various waves of Christianity that have come, one after another, to renew the situation and ministry that preceded it.

Maybe there are in Mexico more Christian church buildings per square metre and per inhabitant than in other countries, but equally and in the same proportion, there is poverty and misery. Here is a mission imperative for Evangelicals. There is a challenge to practise our theological identity in daily life.

This economic reality is accompanied by a political reality in turmoil. As a response to this problem, the governing elite try out one model of governance after another. Currently, the *caudillo* (strong man) type of leadership predominates, with some outbreaks of authoritarianism.

Most Evangelicals have a congregational heritage that, while it does not function and resolve all its problems, nevertheless has principles within it that break with this concept of *caudillo* leadership and the authoritarianism that is held so dear at this time, not only in society but also in our churches.

So, along with the practice of this model of church government, our heritage must also recover the principle of equality, and justice should be recognized as basic. In fact, these practices must be logical consequences of the spiritual principle of the priesthood of every believer.¹²

Challenges and opportunities for Christian mission in Mexico

A final challenge and simultaneously a current opportunity for Mexican Evangelicals is the mission field.

Today, spiritual need and religious confusion is a common reality all over the world, in Latin America and specifically in Mexico. People are looking for answers that are not only material but also spiritual, for refuge, for restoration, and even rehabilitation to continue living or to make sense of life.

So this is a perfect time to take the challenge and opportunity of sharing the Gospel in an integrated way in Mexico. This means the whole Gospel with all its implications for the whole person in this context, and avoiding the temptation of proclaiming a Gospel of fast consumption, without conversion, without solid discipleship, and without a social commitment. From our evangelical heritage we can learn how to avoid these errors, as from the beginning, our forebears tried to proclaim the whole Gospel

¹² Mondragón, 'Minorías Religiosas y Contexto Social', 51-52.

message to a needy spiritual people in the face of material and cultural barriers.¹³

In addition, another factor in this new century is the phenomenon called globalization that implies a planetary culture and also in the religious field has repercussions such as dialogue and the analysis of convictions held by believers from different faiths and continents. One challenge of this reality is the relativism of religious pluralism but, at the same time, in the mission field and taking into consideration our evangelical heritage, we recall our global awareness of missions and see in the celebration of these years of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference a challenge to us as Mexicans to understand the mission that is no longer mono-centric, coming from Europe or from the United States, 'to us: the ends of the earth', but rather multi-centric, coming from many centres to many 'ends of the earth'. It is also important to acknowledge that this movement not only has been changing from one centre to many centres, but also one method of 'doing mission' is giving way to doing it by many methods. Recently, Evangelicals in Mexico started their own history of sending missionaries with these characteristics and in doing so, it has been possible to participate in one of the emphases of our heritage.¹⁴

In this 21st century many churches active in missionary work are found not only in Latin America but also in Asia and Africa where poverty, inequality and injustice predominate. However, in spite of such circumstances, there have been appearing new forms of Christian mission. Furthermore, there is a new challenge in the 'old' centres from which missionaries were sent (Europe and the United States), in that they now find themselves in a post-Christian cultural situation where even the presence and influence the churches in society have been lost. Some people say that in such places there is a kind of new paganism with few signs of Christianity.¹⁵ In order to meet this situation, it is imperative for Gospel communication to be accompanied by a genuine surrender of the lives to Jesus Christ in such a way that each believer's lifestyle enables non-believers to be really attracted and affected by the Gospel. We need to recognize that the first Evangelicals on this soil had such a quality of Christian life and that their transformed lives led them to be willing even to suffer. Again, to remember and to celebrate this is a challenge, confronting us with the opportunity to renew our commitment to our heritage.

¹³ Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Mission. The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003), 39.

¹⁴ Moreno, 'History and Baptist Tradition in Latin America', 10.

¹⁵ Escobar, 40.

Conclusions

For Evangelicals, reflecting on mission in Mexico today is an opportunity to see ourselves in Christian history, to place ourselves within it, and to appreciate our heritage and identity as something that is valuable and effective. But what is the meaning of these reflections for Mexican Evangelicals? Does our evaluation of the Gospel proclamation have the same significance that it has for European, Asian, African, North American and Oceanic Evangelicals? In fact, this historical and theological reflection about mission in Mexico today can be much more enriched if we keep in mind both the similarities and the differences in the development of the history of Evangelicals from other latitudes. Then, the analysis of the Mexican Evangelical mission should be less unilateral and more multilateral.

We should therefore take advantage of this evaluation not only to review our history and to value our heritage but also to deal with the developments and challenges we face in our own current context. For this reason, this document ends with some suggestions, to see how Mexican Evangelicals can deal with the challenges and opportunities that the 21st Century has for us, which were mentioned in the third section above.

These ideas are, in the first place, to be aware that the extreme charismatic characteristic of the Neo-Pentecostal movement could endanger the basic biblical principle of the Lordship of Christ. This is because, in many cases, the authority for those groups is located in the charismatic leadership and charismatic experience of believers, and not in the Christocentric fundamental principle of evangelical churches, which is in this way automatically lost.

Secondly, it has been said too that the cultural context of this continent promotes an arbitrary, authoritarian and hierarchical style of leadership. So our challenge continues to be the practice of congregational life in the churches based in the priesthood of all believers.

In the third place, it has been also said that in Mexico, as in many other countries of Latin America, governments have written laws stipulating religious freedom and the separation of church and state. However, it is necessary that, as Evangelicals who participated in the struggle to obtain and maintain these laws, we do not neglect the current struggle to put the written law into practice, as those written laws are in practice regularly violated and denied. We should take care that these distinctives of our evangelical heritage be respected not only by governments but also within our churches.

Finally, Evangelicals in Mexico should grow in commitment to the missionary principle, which is another distinctive in our legacy. So, in the new context of globalization but demanded equally by the Good News, we can not only share the whole Gospel in our continent, but also continue the mandate of going to 'the ends of the earth'.

A GUATEMALAN PERSPECTIVE ON PENTECOSTAL AND NEO-PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Rigoberto M. Gálvez Alvarado

Introduction

When writing a document like this, it is important to guard against generalizations or simplification, especially when we refer to the vast pentecostal¹ diversity in the world. However, there are some unique considerations that raise questions in any analysis of Pentecostalism. Furthermore, the term ‘Pentecostal’ is not just an adjective of a specific religious denomination, but of a movement with doctrinal and spiritual structure, which embraces a large number of denominations and churches, mostly originating in the pentecostal experience in the early years of the twentieth century. Since the movement continued to grow worldwide, even to this day, it is appropriate to analyze it as a religious phenomenon that also made it to the 21st century with numerous forms and practices.

In this article I will write about Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism in Guatemala. Based upon my observations of the past and present of these two Christian streams, I will make some remarks about the future of Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism in Guatemala and in Latin America. Even though it is impossible to exhaust the subject in a presentation like this, I would at least like to touch on some of the most visible characteristics observed in contemporary Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism. In the particular case of Guatemala, I will focus on some characteristics, strengths and challenges of the two movements. Moreover, I will look into some definitions that seem to be typical of each movement. Then, as I said, I will elaborate on future perspectives that might be predicted, based on historical and current developments. All my observations are related to ecclesiological and theological practices by both movements.

Definitions

Pentecostal. According to Robert Menzies, a Pentecostal is a Christian who believes that the book of Acts provides a model for the contemporary

¹ For the purpose of this presentation I am using the words: ‘Pentecostalism’ as a noun, and ‘pentecostal’ as an adjective.

church and encourages all believers to experience the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This baptism is understood as a spiritual experience that follows the model of the book of Acts. According to Menzies, through the baptism of the Spirit, Christians are also empowered for mission and enabled to use the charismatic gifts as the Spirit makes them available to them.² For classic Pentecostalism, tongue-speaking is evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, which is different from the experience of regeneration. Menzies also states: ‘Signs and wonders including all the gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 should characterize the life of the church today.’³

Neo-Pentecostal. A Christian who agrees and acts in accordance with all the principles mentioned above, except that he or she does not believe that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of this baptism or that the same serves as a regulatory signal for the baptism in the Holy Spirit.⁴

Charismatic. A Christian who believes that all the gifts described in 1 Corinthians 12 are available for today, but rejects the claim that the baptism with the Holy Spirit endues the believer with power for mission other than regeneration.⁵

Non-Pentecostal. A Christian who rejects the claim that the baptism of the Holy Spirit endues Christians with power for mission, distinct from regeneration, and rejects at least one or all of the gifts of the Spirit described in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.

Pentecostalism

Characteristics

The Bible. Pentecostals have the highest regard for the Bible. They believe it is the inspired and infallible Word of God and the final authority in matters of faith and conduct. The Bible is the spiritual model of life, faith, worship and evangelistic witness for the church. They believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and that the Lord has empowered them to witness to the world. The Bible, first by faith and experience, shapes Pentecostal faith and practice, as may be observed in their theological and practical commitments.⁶

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² Robert Menzies, *Pentecostés, Esta Historia en Nuestra Historia* (Springfield, MO: GPH, 2013), 13.

³ Menzies, *Pentecostés, Esta Historia en Nuestra Historia*, 13.

⁴ See Paul Barnett and Peter Jensen, *The Quest for Power: Neo-Pentecostals and the New Testament* (Sydney: Anzea Publishers, 1973), 3-6.

⁵ For more information on this subject, see Norberto Saracco, ‘Charismatic Renewal and Social Change: An Historical Analysis from a Third World Perspective’, in *Transformation* 5:4 (1998), 14-18.

⁶ See Miguel Alvarez, *La Palabra, El Espíritu y la Comunidad de Fe: Entendiendo la Hermenéutica Pentecostal* (Cleveland, TN: Editorial Evangélica, 2007), 41-46.

Holiness. The doctrinal and practical commitments of Pentecostals teach them to live a ‘separate’ life from the ‘world’. As a system, the world is morally contaminated by sin. Christians are called to seek holiness in the Word and the Spirit. They are taught that through faith in the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ they can live in purity and testify of their faith to the world. Living in holiness is understood as ‘being different’, which includes external appearance, vocabulary, behaviour and attitude. Pentecostals are in accordance with the whole concept of holiness, which not only means separation, but distinction too.

Service. In Pentecostalism all believers are commissioned to serve and all seek to serve. Ecclesiologically, they call it the priesthood of all believers, although most of them do it without explicit awareness. In Pentecostalism everyone can and should speak in tongues, which is the initial evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit who empowers them to exercise the priesthood effectively. Everyone can and must evangelize, and the strength for evangelization lies in the fact that all Pentecostals ‘should be’ potential preachers and evangelists. Everyone can testify and everyone can have ministerial privileges. Spiritually, everyone has access to the power of the Holy Spirit, and biblically, all have access to the free examination and interpretation of Scripture.

Liturgy. After one hundred years there have been no significant changes in pentecostal liturgy. Lay people participate in worship services through testimonies, while Christian songs and Bible readings occur without much preparation or pre-planning. Historically, Pentecostalism did not have significant development. Most praise, songs and other specials are presented *impromptu*, in a spontaneous and repetitive forms without much preparation. They are not driven by excellence in praise and worship, because they are focused on ‘experiencing the freedom of the Spirit’ and convinced that ‘the Lord looks at the heart, not at the preparation’.

Leadership. Pentecostals focus on securing full recognition of local leadership, which grants them the authority to send and to be sent as workers to open new places for preaching. This practice is considered part of the ministerial training for new believers, and has no limitations for the completion of their evangelistic effort.

Evangelization. Pentecostal evangelism is aggressive, constant and is seen as part of a Christian lifestyle. Most evangelistic efforts remain focused on the poor, both urban and rural. Pentecostals are spontaneous in providing immediate aid to the needy. They lead people to repentance of sin, do the prayer for salvation, and pray for the healing of the sick. They submit to civil authority without prejudice. They do not depend at all on higher levels of church government for social assistance.

Social Needs. Pentecostals never consider the social aspects of their communities as most social activist typically do. They have a different approach to social concern. They care for the poor and are eager to assist them regardless of the cost, but they see it as part of God’s redemptive plan

for them. Pentecostals are focused on guiding the poor to salvation in preparation for the imminent return of Christ. That urgency of saving 'souls' is part of the millennial dispensationalist teachings that they incorporate in their faith and practice. For them it is very important to separate the sacred and the profane. That may be the reason Pentecostals do not have theological teaching that focuses on social action alone. They are taught to win souls for Christ and that is the source of their social impact. For them any social action is the result of evangelism and they are not involved in any political participation in civil life.

Preaching. Miguel Alvarez sees pentecostal preaching with a Christological emphasis: he associates pentecostal preaching with the fivefold ministries of Christ: he saves, heals, sanctifies, baptizes with the Holy Spirit, and is coming back as King.⁷ Although the bulk of the congregation may not appear to notice these teachings, they are very much part of what they believe and depend on when they preach.

A second pneumatological emphasis is also seen in the baptism of the Spirit. This baptism is the source of spiritual power that operates in the preacher, which enables him or her to serve effectively. Another emphasis of their preaching lies in the manifestations of the gift of tongues, interpretation of tongues, prophecy and physical healing.

Yet another distinctive aspect of preaching is that, in most cases, it is thematic. Their preaching does not feature expository sermons on passages, chapters, books or complete epistles. There are exceptions, as always, because there are pentecostal preachers with solid biblical and theological training who present well designed and well delivered sermons.

Pentecostal preaching is spontaneous, passionate and compelling, with an urgent call to conversion. It invites sinners to repent and to raise their hands as a signal of acceptance of the message and to move forward to the altar to be prayed for. They are taught to wait on the Lord for what they have asked for, to believe and expect signs and wonders, and to be ready for miracles in the same way as they took place when Jesus preached: the blind saw, the deaf heard, the lame walked, the sick were healed and demons were cast out. Along the same lines, Peter Wagner makes an interesting observation: 'I see that each of the five times the Great Commission is mentioned in the New Testament, it has a powerful promise':⁸ a) Believers received the Spirit (John 20:22), b) These signs followed those who believe (Mark 16:17); c) The disciples waited in Jerusalem until they were endowed with power (Luke 24:49), d) They received the Holy Spirit' (Luke 24:49), e) They received power (Acts 1.8).

Theological education. Historically, theological education has not been a priority among Pentecostals, but in recent years they are showing genuine interest in it. Daniel Chiquete admits that they have neglected theological

⁷ Alvarez, *La Palabra, el Espíritu y la Comunidad de Fe*, 28.

⁸ C. Peter Wagner, *Señales y Prodigios Hoy* (Miami, FL: Editorial Vida, 1985), 12.

education owing to the typical conditions of their beginnings. Early in the twentieth century, Pentecostals lacked government and structural policies, and they had to cope with the problem of illiteracy. Most Pentecostals did not have access to secular or theological education; however, that was not intentional; they just happened to be part of a limited society composed mostly of peasants who were among the poor. The situation started to change at the end of the century and continued to improve in recent years.

Soteriology. The Pentecostal doctrine of salvation has Wesleyan and Arminian roots and, as Pearlman noted, 'The experience confirms the possibility of a temporary fall from grace known as relapse or recurrence.'⁹ Classic Pentecostals emphasize the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. It is the work of the Holy Spirit that makes it practically impossible for a genuine believer to fall from grace. When a Christian lives in the Spirit, he or she is guided through holiness to experience the fullness of God's grace. For Pentecostals, the ministry of the Holy Spirit is indispensable in their lives and service. Such ministry of the Spirit is taken holistically. It is very much a part of the total being, thinking and doing of Christians committed to Christ.

Positive aspects of Pentecostalism

Significant Growth. The historical expansion and strength of the Pentecostal movement is unquestionable. From the smallest congregation to the largest, their liturgy is oriented towards the participation of all believers. Their praise and worship reflects the reality of the human context where the church is located. The ordinances of the church are made simple and available to all members of the community of faith.

Pentecostals have permeated most Christian churches with their passion for evangelism and their emphasis on the spiritual gifts. Christians from different denominations are now speaking in tongues and practising ministry which reflects the pentecostal distinctive. The Pentecostal movement has dozens of names, millions of followers, and the fastest growth among all Christian movements.¹⁰

Church Planting. Pentecostal workers have not stopped in the face of difficulties and limitations that stand in opposition against the church. They are enabled to withstand adversity even with a very basic education and training. Hence, through prayer and fasting, they hold on and plant new churches in the most remote areas of the nation. While some theologians and historic churches criticize their theology and methods, they continue to preach and plant churches everywhere.

⁹ Myer Pearlman, *Teología Bíblica y Sistemática* (Miami, FL: Editorial Vida, 1989), 299.

¹⁰ C. Peter Wagner, *Avance del Pentecostalismo en América Latina* (Miami, FL: Editorial Vida, 1987), 16.

Spontaneity. Pentecostals are spontaneous in the practice of their faith and the fulfilment of their ministry. This major and decisive characteristic has contributed to spontaneous evangelism. They approach praise and worship with the same spontaneity, which strengthens their witness and prayer, without having to fit into liturgical and rigid methods.

Passionate Testimony. Generally Pentecostals do not show any fear or shame in testifying about their conversion to Christ. They love to tell others about their personal experience with Christ. So they testify with passion and conviction, believing that the hearers will respond positively to their preaching. That has gained them much, for people generally overlook some inaccuracies when they hear them speak with vehemence. But generally people dislike boring speeches that fail to communicate the gospel effectively.

A Lifestyle of Evangelism. Pentecostals are taught from the moment of conversion that they have to be committed to Christ. They are instructed to show good testimony to the people with whom they interact. They are compelled to be baptized in water, to seek the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and to evangelize wherever they go. These practices are seen as virtues or fruits of their new life as believers in Christ.

Open Participation. The entire congregation is constantly encouraged to participate in all activities of the church. All Christians have opportunities to serve in the ministerial departments of the church. If they do not become involved, they will be considered as inactive members.

Commitment. Christian commitment is taught to believers at the moment of conversion. Committed believers will seek water baptism quickly. They will also be guided to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Once the two baptisms are received as new members of the church and they are considered to be loyal witnesses, they can partake of all the privileges reserved for them such as faithful stewardship and tithing. The latter are considered privileges that show healthy growth as active members of the church. In turn, the church considers them regular members for they fulfil all the spiritual and church commitments expected of faithful Christians.

Loyalty. For Pentecostals, loyalty to their leaders is crucial, especially to the pastor. They also show loyalty to deacons and leaders generally, as those to whom the church has entrusted authority in ministry.

Membership. For Pentecostals, being a church member is crucial. Membership makes them feel welcome, accepted and taken seriously into consideration. As part of the congregation, they develop a sense of belonging, which is seen in two ways: they are considered members of the church for their loyalty, commitment and service, and they, in turn, feel fully identified with the church by giving great importance to membership. To have a good testimony means a member is in full communion with other members. This practice is hardly seen in other churches or Christian traditions.

Affectionate Co-existence. There is an affectionate fellowship and mutual acceptance among members that make Pentecostals appealing to non-believers. People are attracted to them by their simplicity of life and testimony. The poor welcome them as part of their own culture. This is one reason that makes pentecostal congregations attractive. People get prayed for, their human needs are met, and they are welcomed into a fellowship of believers who care for them holistically.

Lukan Focus. Pentecostals believe in the Pauline approach of Spirit baptism as a source of regeneration and sanctification, but they also believe, practise and teach the Lukan approach to the power of the Holy Spirit for effective service. They are aware of the need for spiritual empowerment when they witness, preach or evangelize. They insist that the infilling of the Holy Spirit is necessary for ministerial success.

Challenges

Suspicious of Theology. According to Carlos Ramos, Pentecostals have shown an attitude of rejection or indifference to formal theological education, which seems to be universal.¹¹ Such a negative attitude may be rooted in the very origin of the movement. Pentecostalism was initiated among the poor, and at some point the movement represented the poor before the rest of evangelical bodies. Nonetheless, the new generation is moving towards theological training and general education, which may incorporate new sources of education for the advancement of the movement. One positive attitude is that they have been able incorporate theological education into their prayer, fasting and Bible study. Pentecostal theologians have departed from their historical roots.

Legalism. Historically, Pentecostals have associated the doctrine of holiness to external appearance rather than developing strong spiritual disciplines for the practice of the faith. They are inclined to construct a gospel of prohibitions. For them spirituality contains many of these and at times they associate it with poverty, which include stereotyped forms of external appearance, speech and conduct, thus causing ‘true isolation’ from the world.

Technologically Challenged. Pentecostals have not responded properly to the contemporary challenge of the mass media. They are not making proper use of TV, the Internet, social media or the press. There is scope for them to use local radio, but they lack adequate training for this so opportunities are missed.

Isolation. Pentecostals do not show interest in the biblical response to ‘mundane’ issues that interest the rest of society. They do not pay attention

¹¹ Carlos Ramos Ampudia, ‘Un Siglo del Movimiento Pentecostal’, in *P. Arieu Theologies Web*: <https://lasteologias.wordpress.com/2010/07/23/un-siglo-del-movimiento-pentecostal> (accessed 16th January 2015).

to culture, politics, social issues, globalization, religious pluralism or such other matters. This may result from their cultural and social condition.

Denominationalism. Pentecostals also show a lack of flexibility for new projects, developments and changes. This may be due to internal rules of denominationalism, bureaucracy, red tape or negative ‘denominational yokes’.¹² Sometimes they are compelled to observe denominational standards that stand over the Bible itself.

Refocus

In the context of Guatemala, the Pentecostal movement has not paid much attention to mission theology. As a matter of fact, this seems to be the case with most of Latin America. It was only recently that two Pentecostal scholars, Darío López of Peru and Miguel Alvarez of Honduras, published their works on mission theology from a Pentecostal and Latin American point of view.¹³ They have developed mission theology following the teachings of renowned evangelical missiologists such as Samuel Escobar¹⁴ and René Padilla.¹⁵ These scholars have approached the biblical model of mission as found in some of their books on mission theology.

The disciples in the early church had a clear understanding of the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel at Pentecost. On that day they were filled with the Spirit, who provided them with power, passion, commitment and definition. They did not do theology before taking action, but instead they went everywhere proclaiming that Jesus was the Messiah, who was raised from the dead and who would return for a second time. They made a call to repentance, conversion and baptism in water. Pentecostals have followed this pattern until now. They are focused on worship and seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They also look for the gifts of the Spirit and believe that

¹² Wagner, *Avance del Pentecostalismo en América Latina*, 16.

¹³ See the books of Darío López, *La Misión Liberadora de Jesús: Una Lectura Misionológica del Evangelio de Lucas* (Lima: Ediciones Puma, 1997); López, *Los Evangélicos y los Derechos Humanos* (Lima: Centro Evangélico de Misiología Andino-Amazónica, 1998); and López, *Pentecostalismo y Transformación Social* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Kairós 2000). See also the works of Miguel Alvarez: *Integral Mission in Contemporary Perspective: Exploring an Appropriate Model of Mission for the Pentecostal Churches with Special Reference to Honduras*. Doctoral Dissertation, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, 2012; and ‘Pentecostals, Society and Christian Mission in Latin America’, in *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, Wonsuk Ma, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (eds) (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 302-24.

¹⁴ Samuel Escobar, *De la Misión a la Teología* (Buenos Aires: Kairós, 1998), 13.

¹⁵ See for instance, C. René Padilla, ‘An ecclesiology for integral mission’, in *The Local Church, Agent of Transformation: An Ecclesiology for Integral Mission*, Tetsunao Yamamori and C. René Padilla (eds) (Buenos Aires: Kairos Ediciones, 2014).

signs and wonders follow the work of evangelization. Their challenge today is to move from theology to mission without losing its essence.

Another challenge is to move freely and quickly into the fields of education and, more importantly, into formal theological training. Although things have begun to change in the pentecostal world, that is not enough. There have been pentecostal scholars and academicians, mostly European and American, who laid the foundations for pentecostal hermeneutics, theology and apologetics. Hence there are some Latin American pentecostal scholars who are developing solid academic works, but it is small in proportion to the number of Pentecostals in the region. Along these lines, it is pertinent to mention that pentecostal preachers and theologians move forward to balance spirituality with scholarship.

Pentecostal theology should strive to become more skilled in the use of biblical tools, such as systematic theology and scientific methods that develop a broader understanding of Christian issues. They need to pour all their abilities into biblical interpretation, pentecostal spirituality and social concern. Pentecostal theology needs to move from words and experience to written theology. They need to deliver a rational and systematic discourse, without abandoning the spontaneity and spirituality that has characterized them historically.

Pentecostal believers, teachers, preachers and pastors have a basic knowledge of Christian doctrines and of various branches of theology. They have stayed close enough to evangelicals so as to receive basic formation for ministry. But that is not enough. Their teaching and academic training is limited. By the same token, their theology is also called systematic theology, but in reality it is more a biblical theology that expounds the doctrine of God, Christ, Holy Spirit Church, man, salvation and eschatology. And that is where academic theologians need to contribute to pentecostal theology.

Another challenge for Pentecostals is the need to develop and disseminate a well-structured Lukan theology. Robert Menzies has suggested that Pentecostals will have to work on building a strong biblical exegesis and a solid systematic theology. They need to establish foundations for a Pentecostal Theology. They cannot continue borrowing doctrine and theology from the evangelicals.¹⁶ Their theology has to demonstrate the work of the Holy Spirit in the church. They also need to prove that Luke did write as a theologian, for most evangelical theologians take the book of Acts as a narrative, not as a theological record.

Pentecostals also need to incorporate a new perspective of women in Pentecostal theology, mission and ministry. The number of women in ecclesiastical authority seems to be limited. This is contrary to the traditional understanding that women are the majority in the pentecostal churches. To accomplish this, Pentecostals will have to educate women and

¹⁶ Menzies, *Pentecostés, Esta Historia en Nuestra Historia*, 15.

make room for them in leadership positions and in every area of ministry in the church.

Pentecostal theology must be more self-critical and not only apologetic. Pentecostal theology has received enough reviews from other Christian theologians who always end with the same conclusions about Pentecostals.¹⁷ On the other hand, Pentecostals need to accept with humility that they have made mistakes. A humble attitude will revitalize their achievements and they will be able withstand the challenges of a globalized, multicultural and technological world. They will also succeed in social, economic and political contexts amid rampant religious pluralism.

New Perspectives for the Twenty-First Century

If current trends continue, the future may not look so bright for Pentecostalism. Even though they may continue to pursue formal theological education, their growth, in general, has entered a certain stagnation. Classic Pentecostal denominations are losing members to Neo-Pentecostals and their finances have entered a severe recession. Their institutionalized government is obsolete and they do not seem to find viable solutions to this problem.

Classic Pentecostalism will remain a) pre-millennial, b) mostly Arminian in their approach of salvation, c) dispensationalist in eschatology, d) their final authority will remain in their assembly, and e) the liturgy will remain the same. Pentecostals will seek to maintain and guard the teachings of the previous century. Those who are interested in new theological fields and education will be marginalized from mainstream leadership.

There will be some Pentecostals in Latin America that will be open to dialogue with other Christian streams and with emerging ministries in the area. In Latin America, Pentecostals will continue to grow among the poor and those living on the margins of society. Daniel Chiquete states that there are at least three initiatives that are relevant in Latin America: a) local denominational seminaries, b) solid educational projects arising under local church efforts, and c) strong interdenominational associations recognized by other Christian organizations.

Another initiative comes out of the Latin American Network of Pentecostal Studies (RELEP) that seeks to promote and co-ordinate the work of Pentecostal theological reflection in the region.¹⁸ These efforts are

¹⁷ On of those scholars is Bernice Martin, 'Interpretations of Latin American Pentecostalism: 1960s to the Present', in *Pentecostal Power: Expressions, Impact and Faith of Latin American Pentecostalism*, Calvin L. Smith (ed) (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 112.

¹⁸ Daniel Chiquete y Angelica Barrios, 'Mirada Común al Pentecostalismo: Entre Cronos y Kairós', in *Consejo Evangélico de Madrid. La Casa Común Protestante*. http://protestantedigital.com/magacin/12970/Mirada_comun_al_pentecostalismo_en_tre_cronos_y_kairos (accessed 10th Feb 2015).

connected with the Society for Pentecostal Studies (SPS), the European Pentecostal Theological Association (EPTA) and similar networks in Asia and Africa. Clearly, there is much to be done and many tasks to accomplish, but it is also true that these initiatives may help classic Pentecostals to renew their spirituality and ministry.¹⁹

In Latin America, the Pentecostal movement has leaders, pastors and theologians increasingly educated with access to seminars, universities and research centres with high academic levels, such as ISEDET in Buenos Aires, the *Comunidad Teológica Evangélica de Chile* (Evangelical Theological Community of Chile), the *Universidad Bíblica Latinoamericana* (Latin American Biblical University) in Costa Rica, the *Seminario Teológico Matanzas* (Matanzas Theological Seminary) in Cuba, the *Universidade Metodista de São Paulo* (Methodist University of Sao Paulo) in Brazil, and the *Seminario Bíblico Pentecostal de Centro América* (SEBIPCA) (Pentecostal Bible Seminary of Central America) in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, among others. In addition, a number of pentecostal scholars have enrolled in doctoral studies at prestigious theological schools and universities in the United States and in Europe, but they are still a minority.

However, the future of Pentecostalism is moving towards institutionalization. Historically, this pattern seems to be unavoidable. This phenomenon can be observed in historical Protestantism, which ensured institutional continuity, but the challenge is to ensure the institution while keeping the spiritual movement alive and healthy.²⁰ Unfortunately, history shows that once a movement becomes institutionalized, it is very difficult to be revived spiritually.

Neo-Pentecostalism

Some scholars like Buhene Wolfgang suggest that Neo-Pentecostalism was the result of a new wave of revival among the classic Pentecostal movements,²¹ but I argue that Neo-Pentecostalism is a new movement that has convergences with Pentecostalism, while both differ from each other. I also argue that Neo-Pentecostalism was an activity of the Spirit moving believers to revival in response to the coldness and indifference of traditional denominations that claimed ownership over charismatic

¹⁹ Luis Orellana, 'El Futuro del Pentecostalismo en América Latina', in *Voces del Pentecostalismo Latinoamericano*, Daniel Chiquete and Luis Orellana (eds) (Hualpén, Chile: RELEP, 2011), 141-56.

²⁰ Jean-Pierre Bastian, *Protestantismo y Sociedad en México* (Mexico: Casa Unida de Publicaciones, 1983), 58.

²¹ For a broader understanding of this subject as related to the Pentecostal, Charismatic and Neo-Pentecostal movements, see Buhene Wolfgang, *Explosión Carismática. Un Análisis Crítico de las Doctrinas y Prácticas de las Llamadas Tres Olas del Espíritu Santo* (Barcelona, Spain: Clie, 1996), 16-17.

manifestations of the Spirit. Besides the classic Pentecostal denominations, the Neo-Pentecostal movement also reached Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Baptists and Methodists altogether. The movement began in the 1980s, at a time of profound social change and transformation in Latin America. Since then it has influenced the liturgy and ministry of most classic Pentecostal denominations.²²

Characteristics

Not all Neo-Pentecostal churches and pastors are exactly alike. Each congregation has its personality and particularities in theology and ministry. Neo-Pentecostals show strong influence from the Reformed tradition in the doctrine of salvation. In its preaching, Neo-Pentecostalism emphasizes the supernatural power of God, experienced through signs and wonders here and now.

For Neo-Pentecostals, a high level of preparation and quality for praise and worship is called for. Its musicians, singers and their songs have transcended all Christian denominations.

Biblically, they believe and seek all the gifts of the Holy Spirit as found in 1 Corinthians 12.²³ Doctrinally, they believe in the baptism with the Holy Spirit, but do not consider speaking in tongues as evidence of this baptism. Neither do they consider this necessary in order to acquire power for evangelization.

Neo-Pentecostals highlight the importance of small groups for fellowship and teaching in homes. Their ministry permeates the upper strata of society and politics of the country. They make good use of television, radio, written press, Internet and social networks. They are very creative so they have developed innovative methods of church growth.

Neo-Pentecostal liturgy is practical, simple, pragmatic, spontaneous and live. They have used these tools to build more mega-churches. They also use their influence to collect significant amounts of money by implementing certain fund-raising techniques that at times could be questionable.

Neo-Pentecostals' governance and management revolves around a recognized charismatic leader known for his gifts of leadership, influence, power, communication, persuasion and preaching. Capable and professional personnel surround this leader whose role is to protect the leader's reputation and safety.

The management of the church is mostly run from a businesslike perspective, but the leader claims that his or her priority is to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

²² See Wolfgang. *Explosión Carismática*, 17.

²³ Gálvez, *Prácticas Dudosas en el Ejercicio de Nuestra Fe*, 153. Here I studied the characteristics of Neo-Pentecostalism in general.

In Guatemala, these were the first churches that were able to remove the financial obstacles imposed by the banking industry on Christian organizations. Their success took off when they consolidated churches as companies, creating good accounting systems, and set up structures of qualified managerial operations.

Neo-Pentecostals know and teach the great doctrines of the Christian faith, like the doctrines of God, Christ, Holy Spirit, the church, etc. but they do not have a fully articulated systematic theology. This is one their great challenges for the future.

Positive aspects of Neo-Pentecostalism

Some of the positive aspects of Neo-Pentecostals were noted by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church.²⁴ By way of example, Neo-Pentecostals show a warm and vital relationship with God. They have practical leadership; they experience brotherly love and do not repress their emotions. They acknowledge the role, presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit in every work. They are aggressive in evangelism, manifest freedom in worship, and maintain a positive attitude in their commitment to Christ.

Neo-Pentecostals put an emphasis on the individual's religious experience. They show great interest in the presence of the Holy Spirit combined with a devotion centred on Christ. They also take great enthusiasm in testifying of what happens in their lives.

Neo-Pentecostals seem to be inclined to certain Calvinist teachings and consequently some believe the doctrine of eternal security. They practise freedom in worship with songs, gestures and dance; yet sometimes these end in disorder. Other Neo-Pentecostal ministers wear their robes at worship, which reveals the influence of Presbyterian churches.

Challenges

As we have seen, Neo-Pentecostals show a lack of a structured systematic theology. Sometimes the Scriptures do not sustain their doctrinal teachings. As a result, they hold onto poor or fanciful hermeneutics and their preaching is more thematic than expository.

From a theological point of view, Neo-Pentecostals are prone to implement popular religious practices, which are not even sociologically backed up. In 1995 I started researching these doubtful practices, which I documented in my thesis before obtaining a bachelor's degree in theology.²⁵ In 2003 the first edition of my book, *Dubious Practices in the Exercise of our Faith*, I explained in detail these practices, and in recent

²⁴ Serafín Rose, *Renovación Carismática Como una Señal de los Tiempos* (Grand Rapids, MI: Subcomisión de Literatura Cristiana, 1977), 15.

²⁵ Gálvez, *Prácticas Dudosas en el Ejercicio de Nuestra Fe*, 154.

years we completed the second edition that described the following dubious practices by some Neo-Pentecostals:

- The anointing of objects
- Laying hands on objects
- Idolizing the Bible
- The anointing of today's saints
- Evangelical superstitions
- Formulas and learning of new methods for healing
- The deliverance ministry applied to Christians
- The ministry of inner healing
- The gospel of faith and prosperity
- Hyper-faith and positive confession
- Spiritual warfare
- The popular Messianic movement
- The revival of laughter and being slain in the Spirit
- Signs of 'Gold Dust' in worship and revivals
- The world apostolic movement²⁶
- The modern prophetic movement
- Humanism. Some churches study more humanistic books than the Word of God.²⁷ Undoubtedly, the Neo-Pentecostal movement needs a profound reorientation in many aspects, without losing the positive ones.

New Perspectives for the Twenty-First Century

The future of Neo-Pentecostalism in Latin America is still uncertain, but the movement will continue to grow, however, it is wise to observe its development over the coming years.²⁸

I believe that the construction of mega-churches has come to an end, for several reasons – such as the global economic crisis, the high costs of construction and maintenance, demographic mobilization and the saturation of parking lots. Churchgoers will migrate to satellite churches. These satellite congregations will become the venues for preaching by pastors, live via communication media. This is already happening in some countries and in some cities of North America.

More preachers are now using social networks for their preaching and worship online. In this regard, Harvey Cox argues that Neo-Pentecostalism

²⁶ For more information on the Apostolic movement in Latin America, see Emilio A. Núñez, *El Movimiento Apostólico Contemporáneo* (Guatemala: Marlor, 2001), 62-71.

²⁷ Some of these Neo-Pentecostals teachings can be found in Cash Luna, *En Honor al Espíritu Santo: ¡No es un Algo, es un Alguien!* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010).

²⁸ Orellana, 'El futuro del Pentecostalismo en América Latina', 152.

(and following only slightly behind, Pentecostalism) is the religion of the 21st century.²⁹

Eventually Neo-Pentecostalism will start its own process of institutionalization and the shaping of its theology will occur, although it will be at a slow pace.

There will be at least three well-identified Neo-Pentecostal trends: Conservatives, moderates and those who show excesses.

Neo-Pentecostals will continue to advance and grow while moving around entrepreneurial leaders with great vision. These leaders operate without excessive bureaucracy or denominational tie to make the transitions and succession of command at the right time.

They will continue to respond to the challenge of the media and making the best use of them.

Their interest in formal theological education remains low, although there will be some exceptions.

Self-Criticism of Neo-Pentecostalism

Neo-Pentecostal churches have tried to respond to multiple economic, cultural, social and spiritual challenges. They have sought solutions to these needs consciously or unconsciously, employing preaching or evangelical popular religious practices to connect with the power structures, and in some cases, under the support of US financial ties and theological coverage. The purpose has been to solve spiritual problems and social issues.

The Neo-Pentecostal churches have grown in number and have influenced other Christian denominations despite some intolerance shown by non-Pentecostal denominations, as we have already indicated. Some of the growth strategies are questionable, but not all, since many of these are well planned, structured, and require a lot of discipline and hard work. Other Pentecostal churches do not seem to be willing to assume these responsibilities.

The Neo-Pentecostal churches have challenged the theological thinking and traditional practices of non-Pentecostal theology and so have forced conservative theologies to review their pneumatological teaching. Neo-Pentecostals have recovered the pneumatological dimension of the action and power of the Holy Spirit, though disproportionately, and very often they abandon the historic churches completely.

The Neo-Pentecostal churches have recovered the hermeneutics of the Spirit, experience, and the theology of subjectivity that fit within the gospel. I contend that the gospel is objective and subjective. It is objective

²⁹ Harvey Cox, *Fire from heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the XXI Century* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2001), 153.

because of the work of Jesus, and subjective because by faith we appropriate his work to be saved. Those who believe know, somehow, that they are saved.

The gospel contains doctrine and experience, word and power. It is knowledge but also a guide or intuition of the Spirit. It is the Spirit but also the word that appeals to the intellect, but does not eliminate the feelings or emotions. Hermeneutics of the Spirit and experience is legitimate if it subordinates to the biblical text, correctly interpreted without dogmatic or denominational prejudice. The hermeneutic of experience not only checks the doctrine, but makes it crisp and clean. The historical churches reject this hermeneutics of the Spirit and experience because they do not lead to an intellectual faith.

However, we are aware that experience and subjectivity are dangerous extremes and have led to a gospel of private interpretation. At the same time, the established churches need the spontaneity of Neo-Pentecostalism. At the end of the day, we have to love one another as brothers and sisters, tolerate and respect one another, because one does not choose who will be one's brothers or sisters. This decision is made by God the Father.

Conclusion

In broad terms, according to the development of historical Protestantism, with its ups and downs, the Spirit guides actions and reactions and all churches or renewal movements that are led to plant new churches or denominations. They are responding to the need of the hour and serving a life cycle that ends with the next generation. Another cycle of stagnation follows the first cycle of revival, and the third cycle leads to a waning due to new social and economic conditions. This was the case of the 'father' of the evangelical movement: Methodism. The Methodist movement was the Father of modern movements such as Holiness, Pentecostalism, and evangelical families like Baptists, etc. The movements that survived are those who managed to pass the 'sect' phase, to use the sociological meaning of Max Weber, into the phase of 'church' with its new institutions, doctrinal body and 'hierarchy'.³⁰ Those are the ecclesiological devices that support and channel the enthusiasm and first emotions without getting lost in personalities and charismatic leaderships that vanish when the person

³⁰ For instance, Max Weber makes a distinction between 'sects' and 'churches' on the basis of numerical growth. Sects are small and dynamic communities whereby an individual, by choice, and only after a careful examination by the sect, is admitted as a member. By contrast, a church, according to Weber, is an entity that offers a religious and cultural acceptance to its parishioners. See Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 52; and Colin Loader and Jeffrey C. Alexander, 'Max Weber on Churches and Sects in North America: An Alternative Path toward Rationalization', in *Sociological Theory*, 3:1 (Spring, 1985), 1-6.

who holds leadership disappears. The challenge is to make the variants converge by seeking unity in the gospel and service to the community (love for God and neighbour). Unity strengthens those beliefs, which are the spine that supports the entire building and encourages spirituality that covers the nerves, tendons and muscles of the body.

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BEYOND NUMERICAL GROWTH: THE CHALLENGE OF TRANSFORMATION IN GUATEMALA

Israel Ortiz

Introduction

Guatemala has one of the highest percentages of evangelical growth in Latin America.¹ In 2003, according to SEPAL, evangelicals comprised 25.4% of the population.² In 2013 the percentage increased to 40% in comparison with 47% of Roman Catholics, giving the Catholics only a 7% advantage over the evangelicals. Some even boldly affirm that Guatemala is no longer a Catholic country due to the increase of adherents in the evangelical churches.³

According to the Evangelical Alliance of Guatemala, there are at least 40,000 churches in the country.⁴ Beyond the statistics it is clearly evident that evangelicals have extended all over Guatemala and are found in the distinct social strata. This evangelical presence has provoked the analysis of researchers such as Garrard-Burnett,⁵ Gooren,⁶ Chiapari,⁷ Sherman,⁸

¹ In this article we use the terms 'evangelical', 'Christian' and 'Protestant' interchangeably. In Guatemala the term 'evangelical' refers to the historical churches as well as to the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal congregations, which are currently initiating their Christian history.

² See Proyecto Josué, 'El Estado de la Iglesia Evangélica en Guatemala', in *Servicio Evangelizador para América Latina, SEPAL* (Guatemala: January 2003).

³ See the report of the Pew Research Center, 'Religion in Latin America. Widespread Change in Historically Catholic Region (3rd November 2014): www.pewforum.org/2014/11/13/religion-in-latin-america (accessed 30th April 2015).

⁴ Data provided by the president of the Evangelical Alliance of Guatemala in Sergio Morales, 'Los Evangélicos Ganan Terreno', in *Prensa Libre* (22nd April 2014).

⁵ Virginia Garrard-Burnett, *El protestantismo en Guatemala: Viviendo en la Nueva Jerusalén* (Guatemala: Editorial Piedra Santa, 2009).

⁶ See Henri Gooren, *Rich among the Poor Church, Firm, and Household among Small-Scale Entrepreneurs in Guatemala City* (Amsterdam: The Latin America Series, 1999).

⁷ Christopher Chiapari, 'El Protestantismo y la Multiculturalidad: Un Análisis de la Presencia de la Iglesia Evangélica en las Comunidades Indígenas del País', unpublished paper presented to the Consulta Rostros del Protestantismo en Guatemala, Centro Esdras, Guatemala, 2009.

⁸ See Ana Sherman, *The Soul of Development, Biblical Christianity and Economic Transformation in Guatemala* (Oxford: OUP, 1997).

Cantón,⁹ Grossman,¹⁰ Ortiz¹¹ and others. They have studied the evangelical presence since the beginning of the twentieth century, its contribution, critical situations, and possible tendencies up to the present day. The studies show that, along with the mission of evangelization, evangelicals promote both educational and health projects as well as social ministries to distinct groups. These advances need to pursue new phases of mission in order to have greater impact on the overall structure of Guatemalan society and the countries of the Central America region.

Search for Qualitative Growth

For many Christians the numerical growth of the Evangelical church would be an identified aim and seen as desirable. In Guatemala and the Central American region, however, there are worries about the growth of the evangelical churches. This might be surprising given the triumphalism of various leaders who declare that Guatemala is the New Jerusalem of America. For these leaders the evangelical growth is an example for other nations. Without doubt, the expansion of the gospel is a reason for which Guatemalans are thankful to the Lord as well as for having the experience of sharing the gospel. Yet we should highlight here that this growth has had no significant impact within the social structures. This is a debt that evangelicals have with the country. From this perspective, foreign observers and researchers of the religious phenomenon ask, 'What is the social impact of evangelical growth in the country?' The question is raised because Guatemala continues to be an underdeveloped nation and continues to be beset by many social problems.

Guatemala has a high poverty rate. The majority of the population is under the average of social indicators. The country still holds second place in social inequality in Latin America. Corruption contributes to a low collection of taxes and the country is one of the most violent in the region. Guatemala is subject to natural disasters due to deforestation and the deterioration of the environment. In addition, Guatemala has one of the lowest levels in Central America of infant nutrition, human development

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⁹ See Manuela Cantón Delgado, *Bautizados en Fuego: Protestantes, Discursos de Conversión y Política en Guatemala (1989-1993)* (Antigua Guatemala, Guatemala: Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica, 1998).

¹⁰ Roger Grossman, 'Interpreting the Development of the Evangelical Church in Guatemala, 2002'. PhD Dissertation, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina, September 2002).

¹¹ Ortiz, Israel, 'Neo-Pentecostal Churches with Special reference to their Presence and Social Role, 1976-2016'. PhD Dissertation, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, 2007.

and life expectancy.¹² This critical situation exposes the crude reality of Guatemala, which is seen as a lack of significant social impact. Guatemalan citizens face social and economic challenges that are not properly addressed in evangelical circles.

This lack of social impact raises other questions. What is it that grows in the country? Why has it not affected the social structures of society? In what areas does it need to improve? These questions have activated the analysis of various researchers regarding this Protestant phenomenon. The analysis found in *El Estado de la Iglesia Evangélica en Guatemala* [The State of the Evangelical Church in Guatemala]¹³ provides light concerning the quality of evangelical growth. It praises its numerical growth, but also exposes its social weaknesses. It affirms that only 25.1% of all evangelicals have sound doctrine, which mixes with certain teachings of Catholicism, such as moral and ethic actions and other attitudes related to superstitions. Its main handicap seems to be associated with the quality of discipleship in the churches. Christian discipleship seems to be a common concern among the churches around the world. For instance, the leaders of the Lausanne Movement have expressed their concern by making the following statement:

We rejoice in the phenomenal growth of the numbers of professing Christians in many countries where churches that have adopted prosperity teachings and practices are very popular. However, numerical growth or mega-statistics may not necessarily demonstrate the truth of the message that accompanies it, or the belief system behind it. Popularity is no proof of truth; and people can be deceived in great numbers.¹⁴

The numerical factor does not assure a qualitative presence but can easily be converted into a refuge for the masses, manifested as a religiosity free of social commitment, or a conglomeration that has no social impact in the community. In the 1980s, Gonzalo Báez-Camargo affirmed that the new generation of Mexican evangelicals had to be a creative minority, willing to live the Gospel within the context of society.

I do not find it appealing that the evangelicals... eventually become the majority. While they gain power and influence, they also begin to dilute their

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¹² See the report of the United Nations with regard to poverty in Guatemala in 'Guatemala: Marco de Asistencia de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo – UNDAF 2015-2019': <http://cms.fideck.com/userfiles/onu.org.gt/File/24014140175596495.pdf> (accessed 29th April 2015).

¹³ Proyecto Josué, 'El Estado de la Iglesia en Guatemala', 3-4.

¹⁴ See the document 'Lausanne documents a statement on the prosperity gospel Lausanne theology working group, Africa Chapter'. Lausanne Theology Working Group in Akropong, Ghana (8th-9th October 2008 and 1st-4th September 2009): www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/decemberweb-only/gc-prosperitystatement.html (accessed 30th April 2015).

beliefs and lose their identity, their faithfulness... We are already large enough numerically to affect the life of our people.¹⁵

At that time, evangelicals in Guatemala were no more than 3% of the population. The challenge of influencing the life of our nations does not depend on the numerical presence, but on the transforming power of the gospel coupled with the qualitative presence of churches within society. The critical social, economic, political and religious situations in Guatemala and the Central American region demand a notable and proactive presence of the church. For evangelicals, this points towards being in a continuous process of transformation. Ideally, a church in transformation would be the best influence on the world. In this article I suggest some thoughts that could contribute to such transformation, with the resulting hope that it will contribute to the holistic transformation of the country.

Foundations for Holistic Transformation

Before outlining these theological foundations, I need to clarify the notion of transformation that we use in this article. Transformation is a concept that permeates the Scriptures. It is part of the context of *shalom* in the Old Testament and is found in the teachings of the Kingdom of God in the New Testament.¹⁶ The Lausanne Movement¹⁷ affirms that transformation is a process of change for the church and its mission in the world. It also indicates that transformation changes the condition of any human existence that is contrary to the purposes of God to one in which people are able to fully enjoy life in harmony with God.

Lausanne emphasizes that transformation is best described in the biblical vision of the Kingdom of God, and that this new way of being human in submission to the Lord means endeavouring to bring peace to individuals, races and nations free of any prejudices, fears or harmful ideas. Bragg suggests that:

Transformation seeks to repel evil in social structures that clearly exist in the present cosmos, and that Christians need to institute through the mission of the church the values of the kingdom of God over against the values of the principalities and powers of this world. The church is at the center of God's purpose for society.¹⁸

¹⁵ Gonzalo Baez-Camargo, 'Tiempo de saltar de las Trincheras', in *Misión* (October-December 1982), 15.

¹⁶ Wayne G. Bragg, "From Development to Transformation," in *The Church in Response to Human Need*, Vinay Samuel and Christopher Sugden (eds), (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock: 2003), 38-39.

¹⁷ See La Declaración de Wheaton, 1983: 'La iglesia en respuesta a las necesidades humanas': www.prolades.com/urban_lam/Quito/wheaton.htm (accessed 2nd May 2015).

¹⁸ Bragg, *The Church in Response to Human Need*, 38-39.

If God is interested in the transformation of humanity and creation, then Christians are called to follow his example. This implies a process of continual transformation by which Christians are the agents of change. The following are the foundations of reflection that we deem necessary for the holistic formation of the church.

Rediscovering the theology of mission

Why sharpen up the mission of the church? One reason is that a holistic theology of mission has to be fully developed. Another reason is to counteract the many narrow and non-integral definitions of mission. Christian faith cannot be reduced exclusively to the private sphere of life. Stearns affirms that embracing the gospel is more than a private transaction between God and us: 'It entails a public and transforming relationship with the world.'¹⁹

The church has to overcome these dichotomies that reduce both the meaning and the outreach of mission. Jesus was not trapped by these dilemmas. Which comes first: evangelization or social responsibility? Which is the more important? Does mission stand against personal sin or social sin? Jesus did not battle with these alternatives. He preached the gospel of the kingdom that brought personal salvation, healed the sick, performed miracles, cast out demons, fed the masses, dignified the marginalized and denounced the corrupt religious system of that time. The salvation brought by Jesus provided fullness of life at both personal and community levels.

Rediscovering the mission of the church should be done on the basis of finding the purpose of God for the country, which then leads on to the following question for all Guatemalan evangelicals: 'Who are we and what are we here for?'²⁰ Chris Wright notes that, in his mission, 'God has a purpose and goal for his whole creation... and as part of that divine mission, God has called his people to participate with him in the accomplishment of that mission.'²¹ We have to evaluate whether or not our mission is truly in tune with the mission of God, because 'All our mission flows from the mission of God also known as *missio Dei*.'²¹

The church has to take into account the intention of God whose goal includes the transformation of the whole world – by all the church and with the whole gospel.²² Vinay Samuel understands transformation 'as *missio Dei*, which is God's intention and God's purpose for the world. It is God's plan and strategy for the world, and God's action taking place in the world'.

¹⁹ Richard Stearns, *The Hole in our Gospel: The answer that changed my life and might just change the world* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 2.

²⁰ Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 23.

²¹ Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, 26.

²² Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, 28, 32.

Salvation is not solely reduced to the individual level. *Missio Dei* is more than thinking, 'What is God's plan for my life?'²³ For David Bosch, transformation includes the 'yes' and 'no' of God to the world. The mission of the church engages social issues seriously, as well as the proclamation of personal salvation in Christ for those who do not believe in him.²⁴ We need take into account both spheres of *missio Dei*. If the goal of God is the transformation of his world, and he is currently working to that end, then the church should also participate with him in the project.

If God reconciled to himself all things in Christ, then Christians should be interested in the reconciliation of whole creation too (Col. 1:13, 20), and thereby be motivated to implement the 'what' and the 'how' of that transforming mission of the church.

I claim here that the 'how' of mission implies 'doing mission in the manner of Jesus'.²⁵ As people that have been sent off on our mission, we should follow his example as noted in John 20:21. In practice, it means taking into account the incarnation as the context of mission and the Kingdom of God as the theological foundation. An integrated gospel, the formation of disciples and life in the Christian community, are sources of empowerment that the Holy Spirit uses to make us effective agents of the kingdom. Our mission must be focused on the Trinitarian perspective out of which God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit participate in the salvation of humankind, the transformation of society and the restoration of creation.

The presence and action of God in history through Jesus announces the sudden arrival and life of the kingdom that calls to repentance and to live transformed lives according to its values. It also calls to demonstrate the power of the kingdom by challenging both temporary powers and evil spirits. These new conditions of life foretell the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God. Therefore it is not enough to just add new mission themes or workshops about holistic mission to the church's mission agenda; on the contrary, our teachings and lifestyle must reveal our new life in Jesus Christ. Our mission must be holistic and ought to be the common thread in all theological foundations of the mission of our church.

An immediate call for some revision of our missiology is to carefully consider the subject of justice, especially in the context of Central America, where social injustice, criminal impunity and human inequality prevail.

²³ Vinay Samuel, 'Mission as Transformation', in *Transformation* 19:4 (October 2002), 243.

²⁴ David J. Bosch, *Misión en Transformación: Cambios de Paradigma en la Teología de la Misión* (New York: Orbis Books, 2000), 26-27.

²⁵ This is the proposal that the Ezra Center in Guatemala to develop in its module '*Misión a la manera de Jesús* [Mission in the Way of Jesus]'. This module is generating changes in the form of both thinking and doing the holistic mission of the church. Pastors are now beginning mission projects in their churches and their communities.

Christians will have to incorporate the revelation of truth that is part of the very heart of God. The Scriptures describe a just God who both exercises and demands justice for all (Deut. 10:18; Ps. 26:23).

The Pentateuch calls all people to live in righteousness, to judge with righteousness and to not pervert justice (Deut. 6:25; 16:19, 20; Lev. 19:25); the book of Psalms affirms that it is God who exercises righteousness and who praises those who practise the same (Ps. 103:6; 106:3). Also the prophets demand that the leaders and the people surround their lives with righteousness (Is. 1:7; Jer. 7:5; Ezra 18:19, 20; Dan. 4:27; Hosea 10:12; Amos 5:15). In the New Testament, Jesus instructed his disciples to incorporate in their lives the righteousness of the kingdom and to procure it as a priority in life (Matt. 5:20; 6:33). Haugen notes that contemporary Christians have forgotten how to be witnesses of Christ's love, power and righteousness in this world.²⁶

In the light of these declarations of the Scriptures, righteousness should occupy an essential place in the task of *missio Dei*. Advocacy for social justice should not be the subject of interest solely to some Christian entities, but essential to mission for all Christians. Carrying out the mission in the very manner of Jesus demands that righteousness be a high priority in the mission and life of the church.

Developing missio Dei among the laity

The universal principle of the priesthood of all believers, which was set forth in the Reformation, introduced substantial changes to the relationship between clergy and laity. In contrast to the place occupied by laity in the Catholic Church, reformers assumed a greater protagonist role in mission by the Protestant churches. Nevertheless, Protestant history shows that actually the laity did not receive the attention and space that they should have had. They have not always received proper biblical formation on mission. The lack of participation in social issues by church people is directly linked with the lack of missiological formation of the laity. While most laity remains involved in all fields of social life, they are not always seen as a legitimate alternative in the solutions of social problems.

That way it is difficult to hope that the laity will impact society, for they do not have the proper mission training and the experience that it takes to confront social ills successfully. My work with university students has shown me that the majority of Christian students still do not see the need to integrate their faith with social, scientific or political activities. I see the need to train them with both formation and commitment to kingdom principles reflected in their ethic and actions in their practice of faith.

²⁶ Gary Haugen, *Buenas Noticias acerca de la injusticia* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Kairos, 2012), 13.

In most scenarios, the service of the laity has been confined to tasks that take place inside the church building or with the members of the community of faith. By doing so, Christian service and its potential expansion remains insignificant and is far from reaching out to the community. The dichotomy that separates the 'holy' environments from the secular further aggravates the situation by limiting the laity to serve only the religious environment. This mentality impedes the significant presence, the social participation, and the leading influence that our laity could provide to society. In *missio Dei* every believer is a missionary and all social situations are mission fields. Everyone pursue a vocational field with a sense of mission, whether the tasks are academic, businesslike, pastoral, collective bargaining or politically related.

The evangelical church contains enormous resources pertaining to social action. Nevertheless, evangelical churches do not seem to have capitalized on it.²⁷ The research of Robert Putnam²⁸ regarding the social capital of churches in the United States provides an important input to this study. Putnam notes that, in their beginnings, evangelical churches knew how to capitalize on their social capital by forming voluntary associations among their membership. Social capital refers to the characteristics of a social organization such as the approach to truth, the implementation of norms and regulations, and the use of social networks that might better society. These associations emerged and flourished in the heart of local churches and later extended to distinct sections of society.

The churches in Guatemala might be catalyzed by something similar being proposed. The laity has the potential to form voluntary associations, and from these platforms to support those networks focused on social action. We should not forget that mission rests on the laity – the *laos* of God (1 Pet. 2:9-10). Thus it is the pastors' responsibility to equip and train the laity according to Christ's practice of *missio Dei* (John 13:1-16).

As carriers of mission, church members are agents of change. History shows that substantial changes within society have emerged from the grassroots. Those changes did not occur within the dominant political structures. Juan Driver affirms that the social changes that emerged among the Anabaptists of the seventeenth century did not come from the political structures of their theocratic system. Those changes did not occur by waiting until the system was ready to change. On the contrary, they originated at the grassroot level within communities committed to the

²⁷ Virginia Garrard-Burnett affirmed this in her exposition in an unpublished paper under the title, 'El Protestantismo en Guatemala' (Guatemala: Consulta Rostros del Protestantismo en Guatemala, Centro Esdras, 2009).

²⁸ See Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of America Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

transformation of the gospel.²⁹ These cases may raise the question, should the ecclesiastical base of the evangelical churches also serve as catalysts of social change? Analysts like David Martin³⁰ believes that modern Pentecostalism had the potential to initiate a peaceful cultural transformation. Bernardo Campos also notes: 'Some Pentecostal churches are laying a foundation for revolutionary action simply by teaching that everyone is made in the image of God... Hence, there may be a revolutionary event potentially present in Pentecostalism, even though it is currently seldom expressed in over-political scenarios.'³¹ Thus the greatest challenge for the church is forming, organizing and implementing the potential that is contained in its social capital. Once the grassroots are organized and mobilized, in the principles of the gospel, true transformation will take place in society.

Promoting a transforming education

Another essential area of the church in need of evaluation is biblical formation. Biblical education is the backbone of Christian discipleship. For this reason we ask ourselves, 'What do we teach?' 'What methodology do we use?' 'Do we educate to provoke thought?' These questions lead us to the innermost educational context of the evangelical church, which forces the question: 'Do the doctrines taught generate changes in the life of Christians?' Driver notes that these doctrines do not guarantee change in believers. Hence, 'without exaggerating, it may be said that for the majority of Christians, the Christian life consists of sacraments and/or doctrines to the extent that they never consider modifying their scale of values or their moral life'.³² Do the churches form a reflective mind or do they form a passive mentality? If the church is to be a counterculture within society, then it must promote education that focuses on change. This is especially true in the evangelical sub-culture that has not been educated to think, and so it battles daily with the negative values of a society that imposes its values and lifestyle.

This concern led us at the Ezra Center to revise what we teach, how we teach and how we should improve our education. We reflect on the problems of the educational system of the country and how they are reflected in the evangelical context. González affirms, 'In spite of the fact

²⁹ Juan Driver, *Contracorriente Ensayos sobre la Eclesiología Radical* (Guatemala: Ediciones Semilla), 170-71.

³⁰ See David Martin, *Tongues of Fire; The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

³¹ Bernardo Campos, 'After Azusa Street: Identity and Function of Pentecostals in the Process of Social Change', in *The Azusa Street Revival and Its Legacy*, Harold D. Hunter (ed) (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 2006), 347.

³² Juan Driver, *Militantes para un mundo nuevo* (Barcelona, Spain: Ediciones Evangélicas Europeas, 1978), 13.

that Guatemala has a curriculum that favors integral formation... in most cases it continues the same. The development of education is databank-like, focused on information, orientated towards teaching and not learning. It is an education that informs yet does not form or transform.³³

These problems are also reflected in the church. In general, the educational ministries of the church '... are already categorized as obsolete, which includes the content as well as the teaching methodology'.³⁴ This situation requires a profound revision of the programmes, contents, methodologies and the ideal profile of the teachers. There is a need for education that 'informs', 'forms', and 'transforms', in the light of the Scriptures. Our responsibility is to form mature disciples fully prepared to be light and salt as responsible citizens.

During this process of revision it is mandatory to include the gospel principles in order to rediscover the pedagogical proposal of Jesus. He proposes an education that challenges and unsettles the *status quo* that generates life and follows the pedagogy of transformation.³⁵ His proposal includes formal education as much as informal. He did not limit his teachings to the spheres of the (classroom) synagogue or temple. Instead, he formed his disciples on the way, in the realities of life.

All situations and circumstances of life were opportunities to mould them for mission. So profound was the life that Jesus stamped on his disciples that even strangers testified to their transformation (Acts 4:13; 4:19-20; 8:17-21). In addition, it is important to include the contributions of educators who advocate an education for change.

The works of Paulo Freire, for example, formulate a reflective, conscious awakening and dialogue-inspiring education to favour change.³⁶ The taxonomy of Bloom is also significant in developing critical thinking in distinct levels.³⁷ This education is essential for the formation of

³³ Alba de González, 'educación en el contexto guatemalteco', unpublished paper presented to La Consulta 2014: Educando para Transformar, Centro Esdras, Guatemala, 27th-28th August 2014.

³⁴ David Suazo, 'La Educación en el Contexto Eclesial Evangélico', unpublished paper presented to La Consulta 2014: Educando para Transformar, Centro Esdras, Guatemala, 27th-28th August 2014.

³⁵ See those ideas in my paper, 'La propuesta pedagógica de Jesús', Israel Ortiz, unpublished paper presented at La Consulta 2014: 'Educando para Transformar', Guatemala Centro Esdras, 27th-28th August 2014.

³⁶ See Paulo Freire, *Pedagogía del oprimido* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Siglo XXI, 1975); and Freire, *La educación como práctica de la libertad* (Mexico: Ediciones Siglo XXI, 1978). Also Samuel Escobar, *Paulo Freire una pedagogía latinoamericana* (Mexico: CUPSA y Editorial Kirios, 1993); and Daniel S. Schipani, *Teología del ministerio educativo* (Buenos Aires: Nueva Creación, 1993).

³⁷ See Benjamin Bloom, *Developing Talent in Young People* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1985). Also 'La taxonomía de Bloom sus actualizaciones' of Juan Carlos López García: www.eduteka.org/TaxonomiaBloomCuadro.php3 (accessed 24th April 2015).

leadership which may become the catalyst of transformation, the promoters of righteousness, and servants with a call to public service, like Daniel in the Old Testament.

Another educational challenge facing the church is the formation of Christian thought. It is difficult for most to integrate their faith with other spheres of knowledge and human realities in a context where evangelical pragmatism leaves little space for analysis and reflection. Mark Noll, in his analysis of evangelicals in the United States indicates, 'The evangelical ethos is activist, populist, pragmatic and utilitarian. It allows little space for broader or deeper intellectual effort because it is dominated by the urgencies of the moment.'³⁸

This situation is also reflected in leaders and members of the churches in Guatemala. Having a Christian mind is a mandate for all believers. They are challenged to tackle not only religious matters, but also interdisciplinary topics. Harry Blamires argues that, by a Christian mind, we should not refer to a mind dedicated to subjects specifically religious, but to a mind that thinks 'Christianly'. For him the challenge is to be able to think, even about the most secular of topics, based on a biblical point of view.³⁹ Thus we need the kind of formation that both promotes and inspires reflection, together with proactive thought and critical analysis.

Transforming education should also be a tool that confronts the emerging paradigms of the culture. Guatemalans should value the depths and diversity of the positive things of the culture, especially those inherited from indigenous peoples. This statement is in open conflict with the account of Virginia Garrard-Burnett who reports, 'In the evangelical missionary context, the new converts were required not only to reject all forms of Catholicism, but also to renounce all forms of cultural identity.'⁴⁰ In the light of the above, it is clear that evangelicals in Guatemala will have to reset their position regarding the gospel and culture.⁴¹ Nonetheless, it is also necessary to confront the negative values that predominate in the culture which conflict with the principles and ethics of the gospel.

Given that humanity is in a fallen state, the culture is stained with sin – and part of that is evil. This balanced vision is useful in appraising the value of culture while, at the same time, it becomes a warning against the vices that afflict it, especially since Latin American cultures operate with certain levels of moral ambiguity.⁴² For instance, Octavio Paz⁴³ affirms that

³⁸ Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 12.

³⁹ See Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?* (Vancouver, Canada: Regent College Publishing, 2005).

⁴⁰ Garrard-Burnett, *El Protestantismo*, 13.

⁴¹ For this analysis, take into account the book by Richard Niebuhr, *Cristo y la Cultura* (Barcelona, Spain: Ediciones Península, 1968).

⁴² See the documents by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, *El Evangelio y la Cultura* (Documentos periódicos de Lausana. No 2: Informe de la

the political lie was introduced in Latin America 500 years ago by the Spaniards, and has then shaped our manner of thinking, thus causing serious damage. Lie is a cultural medium by which corruption handles relationships to weaken our laws and corrode the credibility of our institutions. Our educational agenda must reconstruct a place for truth, starting with home, church and society. The church has a key role in this task in the light of the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ (John 8:31-32).

Building kingdom communities

In the context of the church growth movement, it is fundamental to revise our understanding of the church, especially in the light of the emergence of mega-congregations. Many churches have served as a place for refuge, for family needs, while others help people to reconstruct their lives. Garrard-Burnett notes that in the context of civil unrest during the 1980s, in Guatemala alone the initiative to recreate order, identity and pertinence was one of the primary reasons that many were converted to Protestantism.⁴⁴

At the same time, the danger of a religious nominalism is disturbing. Alarming indicators have been noted from both inside and outside the church. In some congregations, parishioners come and go with little or no interaction. In addition, significant numbers of those attending services do not reside nearby. In these churches it is very difficult to cultivate meaningful relationships. On the contrary, there is a lot of anonymity, which often results in a revolving-door practice as members hop to other congregations in town. This problem also affects smaller churches as they lose members to larger congregations.

Although a greater interaction between members is apparent, everything revolves around religious activities. People outside the congregation perceive their religiosity, but they are not known for making a social impact on the community.

How might we approach the reality of the church? First, we must do it with a sense of realism. Bonhoeffer notes, 'The Holy Communion stirred by the Holy Spirit has to continually confront two obstacles: human imperfection and sin.'⁴⁵ Secondly, our concept of being a church must be considered in the light of the Kingdom community established by Jesus (Mark 3:13-19; Matt. 16:18). Barth affirms that, in order to understand the church, it is better to use the term 'community'. This community is united,

Consulta de Willobank, 1978): www.lausanne.org/en/documents/llops/73-lop-2.html (accessed 1st May 2015).

⁴³ See Octavio Paz, *El Laberinto de la Soledad* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1976).

⁴⁴ Garrard-Burnett, *El Protestantismo*, 18.

⁴⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sociología de la Iglesia Sanctorum Communion* (Salamanca, Spain: Ediciones Sígueme, 1980), 159.

founded and ordered by the Scriptures. With this in mind, the church is prepared to be a witness of the Word.⁴⁶

The church is a Kingdom community with a double nature: its theological origin (Matt. 16:18) and its sociological character (Eph. 2:11-19). Its theological nature will prevent its members from falling into the trap of 'sociologism', for its origin is not only human but at the same time also divine. Its sociological component should motivate the church to transform life in the community (1 Pet. 2:14-15; Rom. 14: 7-9).

This demand affects church leadership. Lausanne 2010 affirms: 'Church leaders can be marked by abuse of power, mismanagement of financial resources, impurity and infidelity. They sometimes distort Scripture to justify greed, immorality and arrogance.'⁴⁷ If the church listens to this prophetic voice, it will start from the inside out. The church has to incarnate the life and ethics of the Kingdom of God in its life and mission.

It is also essential to consider the church's sociological nature and its existence as a human community before emphasizing its theological side. We are citizens of heaven and at the same time citizens of the earth. The church is God's historical project to form a new humanity. The church is not only a religious community, but also the new humanity in Jesus Christ. In Ephesians, Paul sees an alienated humanity in the process of reconciliation, a new humanity in the process of creation.⁴⁸ Therefore the church should be an alternative community to the world (Gal. 3:28, Col. 3:8-11).

This is a much-needed revision given the gap between the rich and the poor of Guatemalan society, which is particularly visible in the urban churches. The existence of churches with rich and poor, with little or no relation between the two, is seriously alarming. One might ask, 'How can the church be an agent of transformation when these contradictions are present in the membership?' If the church is the new humanity, the values of the Kingdom must succeed inside the congregation. Today's consumers of worship services are greatly increasing, but Kingdom communities are decreasing. Liturgy is shared, but not life. Mackay affirms, 'The role of the Church consists in *being the Church*. That the Church may be the Church!'⁴⁹ There is no alternative.

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⁴⁶Karl Barth, *Introducción a la Teología Evangélica* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones la Aurora, 1986), 60.

⁴⁷ Cape Town Today, Daily News and Events from the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization (Cape Town, Saturday 23rd October 2010).

⁴⁸ John R.W. Stott, *La Nueva Humanidad: El Mensaje de Efesios* (Downers Grove, IL: Ediciones Certeza, 1987), 140.

⁴⁹ Jaun A. Mackay, *Prefacio a la Teología Cristiana* (Mexico: CUPSA, 1984), 174.

Constructing a vision of 'country'

Why is this vision important? Because most evangelicals do not have a vision of country. Symbolically, the vision of the heavenly Jerusalem minimizes the importance of their citizenship in this world here and now. The things of the spiritual order should captivate their attention, their resources and their agenda. In general, the social reality and the social problems of the country do not form part of their church's mission. All these should affect their vision of country. This negligence occurs in the heart of the Guatemalan society that is known for its profound ethnic polarization. Guatemalans do not seem to have a clear definition of their identity.

Adams and Bastos affirm that, 'The ethnic polarization of the Guatemalan society has been justified by an ideology in which the culture determines the place that the population occupies in the political scene.'⁵⁰ The *ladino* sector that manages the official cultural codes has access to the benefits of citizenship, while the other sector (the indigenous), for being part of a 'backwards' culture and for being different from the official culture, remains at the margins of the political arena.⁵¹

It is difficult for Guatemalans to assume an ethnic identity that might identify everybody as equal. The ideology of a superior culture (*the ladino*) denies the existence of different populations (the indigenous) and serves as the basis for segregation because it does not consider them to be fellow citizens.⁵² This cultural identity crisis represents an ideal opportunity for the evangelical churches to present a vision of country as well as a civic conscience.

This vision of country is the key for reconstructing the social fabric of a society afflicted by a long civil war and in search of a national identity. Garrard-Burnett, commenting on this situation in the country, affirms, 'The reconstruction of the civil society within a democratic framework still continues as a challenging objective.'⁵³ In a country with a high percentage of evangelical population, this objective should be part of the agenda as Kingdom communities and fellow citizens work in their respective fields.

It is important for evangelicals to participate in politics, especially because in the past they participated without any transformational influence on the institutions of the state. Instead, a corporate vision of the state, a North American lifestyle and an uncritical attitude towards the corrupt system dominated their ideology. Paul Freston affirms that the Neo-Pentecostal politicians of Guatemala are politically nourished by conservative Christians of the far right, which promote an idealized

⁵⁰ Richard Adams y Santiago Bastos, *Las Relaciones Etnicas en Guatemala, 1944-2000* (Guatemala: CIRMA, 2003), 45.

⁵¹ Adams y Bastos, *Las Relaciones*, 45.

⁵² Adams y Bastos, *Las Relaciones*, 46-47.

⁵³ Garrard-Burnett, *El Protestantismo*, 11.

political stream of the United States.⁵⁴ We need a vision of country nourished by a Christian identity that overcomes exclusive ideologies and replaces the love of power with the power to serve. Lack of concern for the nation should give way to a genuine concern for its spiritual and social transformation.

Constructing a vision of country requires working with others. The challenges and problems of *missio Dei* are complex. One denomination alone may not have the capacity to address them all. Working through networks is also a necessity, given the temptation of isolation and self-sufficiency of our people. The New Testament shows the success of working in networks (Acts 11: 25-31; 1 Thess. 1:6-8). The lack of communication between churches and other Christian entities regarding their various projects complicates co-operation and the interchange of ideas.

Our common faith should lead us to form strategic alliances for mutual support in the advancement of the Kingdom. This includes co-operation with civic organizations that share common goals. Well beyond any organizational interest are the Kingdom of God and its righteousness.

The campaigns against violence towards children in Guatemala and El Salvador⁵⁵ are an example of this advancement. In 2014 the Christian Movement against Violence towards Children was formed. Churches and organizations committed to social action joined forces to work on behalf of children. Moreover, humility and openness are important virtues to observe when one approaches others for the common good.

Prioritizing holistic evangelization

Evangelization has been central to the mission of the church in Guatemala. The spirit of evangelism has been vital for the conversion of peoples to Christ and, in turn, for evangelical numerical growth. Although there is no official report of the social impact caused by massive conversions, one can see the need for the implementation of *missio Dei* principles alongside these evangelistic efforts. Padilla emphasizes, ‘The gospel of Jesus Christ is a personal message... but at the same time, it is a cosmic message.’⁵⁶ Holistic evangelization requires a return to the gospels whereby believers

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⁵⁴ Paul Freston, *Protestant Political Parties* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004), 134.

⁵⁵ See the campaign against violence ‘No matarás’ de Iglesia El camino de Asamblea de Dios de El Salvador: www.noticiacristiana.com/iglesia/2011/07/asambleas-de-dios-impulsa-una-campana-titulada-%E2%80%9CNo-mataras%E2%80%9D.html (accessed 17th May 2015). Centro Esdras of Guatemala is also participating in MOCVIN by helping in the subjects of theology and prevention against violence.

⁵⁶ René Padilla, *Misión Integral: Ensayos sobre el Reino de Dios y la iglesia* (Buenos Aires: Nueva Creación, 1986), 1.

take into account the contributions of contemporary evangelism in the world today.

In my travels to several regions of Guatemala as I train pastors and lay people, I observe the need to teach people about present-day mission movements. They need to know about the contributions of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference⁵⁷ the Lausanne Movement, and the documents of the Congresses of Evangelism sponsored by the *Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana*, as well as the Latin American Council of Churches. These organizations are agreed that an incarnate gospel in the life of Kingdom communities has the power to transform people and the social structures of their country.

It is also vital to review the centrality of the cross in evangelization, given the increase of the prosperity gospel in many Neo-Pentecostal pulpits. They foment a tranquilizing gospel that invites one to enjoy life to its fullest while leaving aside the cost of discipleship. In the New Testament, the message of the cross occupies the very centre of the Christian faith. The cross was very present in the mission of Jesus: 'What dominated his mind was not the idea of continuing to live but that of living his life in favor of the salvation of humanity.'⁵⁸

A message void of the cross leaves humanity without responsibility. Jesus does not hide the cost of following him (Luke 9:23). Moreover, the evangelical *kerygma* was not separated from *marturia* (Acts 7:54-60). Even more so, transformation demands radical change towards God and our neighbour (Luke 3:7-14). 'Believing' carries a sense of commitment in terms of loyalty and obedience. 'Conversion' brings the idea of a radical reorientation of direction that places the person in the way of the messianic kingdom that Jesus inaugurated, and so his followers live in accord with these values.⁵⁹ Both requirements are necessary for holistic evangelization. Returning to God implies changes of loyalty, lifestyle and vocation (1Thess. 1: 9). Conversion is not a private relationship between God and the believer: 'It entails a public and transforming relationship with the world.'⁶⁰ It is a gospel with both individual and social demands.

Finally, evangelization in Guatemala has to take into account the powerful operations of God. The prophet reminds us that the kingdom

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⁵⁷ Eloy Bueno de la Fuente affirmed in his paper at Edinburgh 2010, that he searched for a more unified, co-ordinated strategy as well as for greater co-operation amongst the Christian forces committed to universal mission. See his paper, 'Edimburgo 1910: La Misión Llama a la Unidad' (presented in the 63 Semana Española de Misiología, La Misión tenemos que hacerla juntos, Burgos, July 2010), 1, 7.

⁵⁸ John R.W. Stott, *La Cruz de Cristo* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Certeza, 1996), 11, 37.

⁵⁹ Juan Driver, *Militantes para un Mundo Nuevo* (Barcelona, Spain: Ediciones Evangélicas Europeas, 1978), 7.

⁶⁰ Stearns, *The hole in our Gospel*, 2.

advances not because of human strength, but because of the Spirit of the Lord (Zech. 4:6). We are challenged to untie the power of God from our theologies, our organizations and our programmes. We are challenged to open ourselves to God's surprising participation. It is a call to return to the heritage of Pentecost in order to live and execute our mission in the power of the Holy Spirit. If Jesus assumed his mission empowered by the Holy Spirit, then we cannot do less (Luke 4:16-20; Acts 10:38).

In his mission, Jesus worked miracles, confronted the religious system and challenged the powers of evil (Matt. 4:1-11; 12:22-30). This environment should remind us of the spiritual struggles involved in mission and its impact on society. We need to advance with the certainty that Jesus conquered the spiritual forces of evil at the cross and removed their dominion over humanity (Col. 2:13-14). Therefore, without ignoring our limitations and weaknesses, we should fix our eyes on the Lord of history and meet the challenge of a holistic gospel, having the glory of God as our final goal: 'For from him and through him and to him are all things' (Rom. 11:36).

Conclusion

The qualitative growth of the evangelical church needs to be undertaken as a priority in its life and mission. This demands the challenging of streams of thought and of ways of doing mission that do not accord with *missio Dei*. It entails the reshaping of structures – whether theological or organizational – or strategies of mission that reduce its meaning and implications. The serious social problems facing Guatemalan society and other countries of the region demand a church that lives out its mission as a community of the kingdom in the power of the Holy Spirit, for the glory of God the Father.

¡HOLA, THE KOREANS ARE HERE! ASIAN MISSIONS IN LATIN AMERICA TODAY

Ryun Chang

Introduction

Born in Korea, I immigrated to the US at the age of fourteen and became a believer at twenty. After attending seminary, I pastored in California for seventeen years before going to Mexico in the year 2000, where my wife and I served as missionaries for eleven years. The data for this paper is drawn from observations made during this period as well as several other visits to the field¹ and interviews with people experienced in Latin American mission work, the focus of this study.

Asian Missionaries in Latin America

Latin America, an area covering Central America, South America, and several islands, consists of 41 countries (Asia has fifty). If the objective is to find spiritual needs facing these Latin American countries and discern the mission work needed to address such issues, then one should peruse through the helpful book *Operation World*.² However, the objective of my paper is to find out the kind of work and strategies that missionaries from diverse Asian countries are currently implementing in their goal of ministering to Latin America. Such an aim may seem a daunting task but it is easier than it appears since Asia as a whole is not a missionary-sending continent.

Domination by One Group

By any criterion, South Korea exceeds all other Asian countries in sending out international missionaries. With 20,000 (twice as many compared with India which occupies the second place), South Korea ranks sixth in the world in the number of missionaries sent to foreign countries.³ While

¹ These are some of the cities and countries visited: Cobán in Guatemala, Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic, and Veracruz in Mexico (2014).

² See Jason Mandryk (ed), *Operation World*, 7th ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: Biblical Publishing, 2010).

³ Todd M. Johnson, director, 'Christianity in its Global Context, 1970-2020: Society, Religion, and Mission', in *Center for the Study of Global Christianity*, Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary (June 2013), 76.

almost half the Korean missionaries at work in Asia and roughly one quarter in Muslim countries,⁴ less than 10% serve in Latin America.

'Have you ever seen non-Korean Asian missionaries where you serve?' This question was presented to several Korean missionaries in Latin America as well as Latin American pastors involved in mission work. John Lee, who grew up in Argentina and served as a missionary in Mexico for many years, has travelled to almost all Latin American countries; he does not recall seeing any Asian missionaries apart from Koreans. Hyun Chul Kim of the Dominican Republic and David Chung of Guatemala, missionaries who have served there for more than ten years, could not remember seeing any missionaries besides Koreans. Other informants representing Mexico,⁵ Brazil,⁶ Chile,⁷ Venezuela⁸ and Ecuador⁹ all said the same thing. In my eleven years in Chihuahua, Mexico, only three Asian missionaries came, and in a short time, left: two Koreans and a long-term Korean missionary by the name of Hmong who, along with her Latino husband, came to learn a tribal language with the New Tribes Mission.

In view of this, it appears that Asian mission work in Latin America is scarcely apparent apart from what Korean missionaries (KM hereafter) are doing.

Not a Monolithic Group

Even among KM in Latin America, they can be further divided into three subgroups. The first KM to go to Los Angeles in the 1980s were native Koreans travelling directly from Korea. The next group were Korean-Americans who, after entering the US as adults, became Latin American missionaries. Korean was their first language and, for many, their theological training was completed in Bible schools run by Korean churches in America. The third group consists of Americans of Korean descent (AOKD) who were either born in the States or immigrated there as children. Their first language is English and they receive their theological

⁴ Rob Moll, 'Missions Incredible', in *Christianity Today* (March 2006), 31.

⁵ In Mexico, Raul Dominguez, United Methodist pastor in Chihuahua; Hugo Villarreal, Baptist pastor in Monclova.

⁶ From Brazil, Priscilla Nakano, born and raised in Brazil before moving to the United States; she added that several pastors from Japan minister to a people of Japanese descent who live there. That is the world's largest Japanese population outside Japan.

⁷ In Chile, I interviewed a Korean-Chilean woman whom I met in the Dominican Republic.

⁸ From Venezuela, Neil Paez, born and raised in Venezuela and a missionary in Mexico for several years.

⁹ In Ecuador, Richard Aguirre, born and raised in Ecuador. He is now an Assemblies of God pastor in New York City.

training in American seminaries. These are important distinctions quite relevant to the type of missionaries currently needed in Latin America.

What Korean Missionaries Do in Latin America

In a *Christianity Today* cover story (2006 issue), entitled 'Mission Incredible', the remarkable rise of KM, depicted as entrepreneurial church planters, was well-documented. The article also noted the tendency of KM to 'focus on their church rather than working together with other missionaries to build seminaries and schools that can help the church at large', thereby making it 'harder to raise up national church leaders'.¹⁰ Korean missions in Latin America seem to have been no exception. René Padilla, speaking at a conference held in Brazil organized by Latin American Korean missionaries, when asked to evaluate Korean missions in Latin America, responded, 'Not much effort has been made by Korean missionaries to work with local leadership'.¹¹

Much has changed since then, at least in the Latin American context, as many Korean missionaries are dedicated to developing native leaders through theological training, of which there are numerous examples of varying impact. For example, in Juarez, Mexico, there is the *Seminario Todas las Naciones*, one of the larger seminaries (equivalent to an American undergraduate Bible college) in that country; it was founded by a Korean church in Latin America in 1997. The *Seminario Visión Mundial*, begun as a co-operative effort by several Korean churches in Guatemala in 2007, has now expanded to seven Latin American countries,¹² setting up satellite schools where KM serve and use online or other types of media to teach courses. In 2010, the school 'held the first graduation exercise in Guatemala, Nicaragua and Dominican Republic, [producing] 210 graduates'.¹³

Then there are many more mission efforts on a smaller scale that strive towards the same goal of developing native leaders. In Santo Domingo, a Korean-American immigrant couple (YWAM missionaries) from New York, discipled a group of 18 people, mostly Haitians. In Carchá, Guatemala, a Korean immigrant-turned-missionary from California operates a seminary of twenty students while serving as the 'pastor general' of several churches among the Kekchi people. In Oaxaca, Mexico, the work among the Mixtecos (a native Indian group), begun by a native of Korea in

¹⁰ Moll, 'Missions Incredible', 23.

¹¹ The aforementioned missionary John Lee, who attended this meeting held in *Foz do Iguaçu*, 3rd-6th March 2009, shared this information during a telephone interview.

¹² Those countries are Mexico, Honduras, Peru, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Paraguay and Nicaragua (World Vision Seminary, *¿Quiénes Somos?* www.wvs-edu.org/index.php/wvs/quienes-somos: (accessed 15th January 2015).)

¹³ Email sent by Young H. Park to Ryun Chang, 3rd March 2010.

1983, eventually came to consist of several churches and a seminary producing leaders to pastor the natives; this ministry continues to thrive under the leadership of an AOKD.

Objective of the Study

The mission to develop native leaders is truly important and provides a structure for responding to the next challenge: the formation of the right kind of leaders. In my last pastoral conference in Chihuahua, Mexico (2011), I stated the following: ‘Latin America has enough worship leaders; therefore, encourage and support young Christians with an aptitude for learning to become spiritual as well intellectual leaders who can prepare Christians to effectively articulate their faith in facing constant theological threats that seek to undermine it.’¹⁴

In the light of this challenge, the first objective should be to demonstrate the types of theological problems and heresies that, unless handled carefully, will undo the work that has been done to establish a strong church in Latin America. The second objective is to discover who among Asian missionaries, both present and future, are best equipped to help the Latin American churches and seminaries to produce leaders capable of responding to these evolving theological threats.

The Condition of the Latin American Church

Jesus, with Israel in mind (Matt. 12:39-42), tells a parable in which an evil spirit, after coming out of a man, is unable to find a place to rest: ‘Then it says, “I will return to the house I left.” When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order.’ But instead of returning to it alone, he ‘takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there’. Then Jesus makes this alarming conclusion: ‘The final condition is worse than the first.’

The Rise of the *Evangélico*

The Protestant faith, ‘a seemingly insignificant movement before World War II’,¹⁵ is now claimed by almost 20% of Latinos¹⁶ who call themselves *Evangélicos*; they are part of the historic Christian faith, rooted in the Trinitarian faith of Nicaea (325) and in ‘salvation by faith alone’ of the

¹⁴ Moll, ‘Missions Incredible’, 25.

¹⁵ David Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), xiv.

¹⁶ Pew Research Center, ‘Religion & Public Life Project’, in *Religion in Latin America* (2014): www.pewforum.org/2014/11/13/religion-in-latin-america (accessed 16th January 2015).

Reformation (1517). Its main growth factor has been the rise of Pentecostalism, 'with over 66 million affiliates and 12.1% of the population. Latin America represents 50% of the world's Pentecostals, despite having less than 14% of the world's population'.¹⁷

The Movement's Biggest Weakness

But a glaring weakness of the *Evangélico* movement has always been the lack of trained clergy. This problem is quite pronounced among Pentecostals who 'grew first among the urban poor, then in small towns and rural areas'.¹⁸ Ironically, it was the untrained pastors' emphasis on 'emotion, freedom, and spontaneity' over 'doctrine, rationality, and order'¹⁹ that attracted this largely uneducated crowd to Pentecostalism. Much has changed since then but an insufficient number of trained clergy continue to plague the movement of the *Evangélicos*, precisely because its growth has been 'rapid enough to outstrip the supply of trained leaders'.²⁰

While the established denominations may encounter less of this problem, there are still 'thousands of independent churches and minor denominations'²¹ whose very existence is due to church splits in reaction to untrained pastors who, in order to lead, rely more on authoritarianism and questionable teaching than firm biblical instruction. What this situation suggests is that the Latin American *Evangélicos*, whose mind is 'unoccupied' and 'swept clean' of sound biblical teaching, are increasingly becoming defenceless against doctrinal threats from outside, and thus their churches are becoming fertile ground for the germination of heretical teaching.

Developments Detrimental to the Latin American Church

While primarily serving in Mexico and in other Latin American countries on occasion, I saw that an urgent need is to help the Latin American church to think clearly about problems appearing on three levels. The first is the grassroots level, referring to in-house theological problems that affect the health and unity of the church. Some examples are abusing spiritual gifts and the rise of conflict between the Cessationists²² and Pentecostals. The

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¹⁷ Mandryk, *Operation World*, 48.

¹⁸ Ondina E. González and Justo L. González, *Christianity in Latin America* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), 295.

¹⁹ Gonzalez and Gonzalez, *Christianity in Latin America*, 276.

²⁰ Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?* 126.

²¹ González and González, *Christianity in Latin America*, 296.

²² Referring to those who believe that the 'sign gifts', such as tongues and prophecy, had ceased once the New Testament canon was completed. John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Charismatics: Doctrinal Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1978).

second level is intra-theological conflicts, involving those groups who present themselves as part of the historic faith but which are not. The third level is the meta-theological conflicts germinating from radical shifts in understanding the Scriptures. For instance, deconstruction of post-modernism (e.g. the death of the author) may no longer care what the Apostle Paul might have intended to communicate.

I will now briefly discuss three conflicts, representing each of these levels, as types of problems that demand the Latin American church elevate its theological capacity to respond clearly: first, the ubiquitous presence of the Prosperity Theology that appeals to the poor; second, the cults that feast on theologically uneducated masses; third, the increasing exposure of theological liberalism in seminaries where future pastors are trained. Ultimately, if these and other developments like them are left unchecked, the gains made in favour of the historic faith will disintegrate, even faster in a wireless and jet-flying world, to the detriment of Latin American society. Consequently, the final condition of the Latin American people will be worse than the first.

Prosperity Theology

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Liberation Theology of the Catholics tried to reinterpret the Scriptures from the perspective of the poor and the oppressed to address their spiritual and material needs. Its advocates proposed a 'structural change brought about by social revolution',²³ which some interpreted to mean violence. Meanwhile, as the number of *Evangélicos* among the poor increased, particularly among Pentecostals, their leaders could not just tell them to wait for a special heavenly reward. Thus, their version of Liberation Theology was to declare, 'When [a man] turns from his sins... [and obeys] what God requires of him, and worships regularly, he becomes a more effective human being... The wealth of Christians rises.'²⁴ But when the debt crisis hit Latin America in the 1980s and difficult times turned worse, the *Evangélicos* who had managed to improve their lot in earlier years found themselves getting poorer along with everyone else.²⁵ After some thirty years, the poor now prefer the more radicalized redemption and place Prosperity Theology over Liberation Theology to lift them out of poverty.

Undoubtedly, no Latin American church represents this theology better than the Universal Church of God's Kingdom of Brazil that has grown from a small group in 1977 to ten million members and affiliates, in close to 6,000 churches by 2010;²⁶ it is found in major cities in 'ninety different

²³ Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?* 256.

²⁴ Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 296-97.

²⁵ Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?* 21.

²⁶ Mandryk, *Operation World*, 163.

countries'.²⁷ Their theology, known also as *Pare de Sufrir* [Stop the Suffering], teaches that 'prosperity is a promise of God and must be part of the life of all who are faithful and act in agreement with Holy Scriptures'.²⁸ The first step towards receiving this blessing requires one to give all to the church. This message of health and wealth, often televised through their well-established media outlet, has reached the point where 'some look on the poor as a curse... In a land where poverty is rampant, high unemployment and bankruptcy are everywhere, and the health system is inadequate, it is no surprise that people flock to churches and crusades that promise all kinds of cures and blessings from God'.²⁹

A sad reality is that 'those on top of the pyramid enjoy celebrity status and lifestyle... while millions of poor hold out for a miracle of healing and financial blessings'³⁰ that will not materialize for most. In the end, many give up on their faith in bitterness while mired in even deeper poverty, which then tears families apart even further. Unless adequate biblical instruction and firm leadership effectively counter this gospel-turned-materialism, the final condition will be worse than the first.

The Ubiquitous Presence of Cults

In Latin America, 'social and demographic changes [are] related to the shift [in] market economies and the growth of cities' (e.g. Mexico, Peru, Columbia), thereby prompting 'unsettling social transitions', which made people 'open to a new religious orientation and joining a new community'.³¹ The *Evangélicos* weren't the only ones benefitting from these changes; the cults that thrive in situations where biblical teaching is weak while emotional spirituality is elevated, have as well. The cults in Latin America are mostly home-grown and small but some are large, such as *Iglesia La Luz del Mundo* [The Light of the World Church] of Mexico, and *Creciendo en Gracia* [Growing in Grace] of Puerto Rico. While the sphere of their influence is mostly regional, the presence of foreign imports from the US, such as the Mormon Church and the Jehovah's Witnesses, is ubiquitous in all of Latin America.

Whether home-grown or imported, they deviate substantially from the historic Christian faith. While the home-grown cults are built around their

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²⁷ González and González, *Christianity in Latin America*, 292.

²⁸ Edir Macedo, *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus*, cited in González and González, *Christianity in Latin America*, 291.

²⁹ Antonio Carlos Barro, 'Wrestling with Success', in *Christianity Today* (16th November 1998), 71.

³⁰ Mandryk, *Operation World*, 165.

³¹ See Gustav Niebuhr, 'Mormons Organize Church's 2000th Stake in Mexico', in *New York Times* (2nd March 2010).

charismatic founders whom their followers treat as gods,³² the foreign imports are more subtle in their theology and offer attractive social programmes for families. As a result, unsuspecting people, many of whom are biblically illiterate, assume that the Mormon Church and Jehovah's Witnesses are the same as other Protestant churches but just better; that, of course, is not true. For instance, while the Jehovah's Witnesses deny virtually all major biblical doctrines, such as the Trinity, the eternal Christ³³ and punishment, the Mormon Church has developed doctrines unfamiliar³⁴ to the New Testament, such as an embodied God, baptism for the dead and celestial marriage.³⁵

One undeniable fact is that the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormon Church, much more organized and resourceful than the home-grown cults, have already made considerable inroads to Latin America and gained millions of converts. Particularly for the Mormon Church, projected to reach a worldwide membership of 267 million by 2080,³⁶ Latin America holds the key to this growth. In 1980, only 15% of all Mormons in the world (4.6 million) lived in Latin America.³⁷ But the Mormon Church kept growing: from 1990 to 2004, its population in Mexico, Argentina and Brazil increased by 64, 99, and 144%³⁸, respectively. By 2014, 38% of all the Mormons in the world (12 million) are in Latin America.³⁹ Regardless, the JWs have a stronger presence in many of the LA countries. For instance, there are more JWs (1.7 million) in Mexico than Mormons even

³² The founder of *The Light of the World Church*, Eusebio Joaquín González (called Aaron), and his son Samuel, who succeeded him, were adored by their followers as equal to Christ. Jose Luis de Jesus Miranda, of 'Growing in Grace', claiming 'Christ integrated with him', 'called himself God'. Arian Campo-Flores, 'He Calls Himself God', *Newsweek* (5th February 2007), 55.

³³ Seeing Jesus as created by Jehovah God, they render *theos ēin ho logos* of John 1:1b (Nestle Greek text) as 'The Word was a god'. *New World Translation of the Holy Scripture* (Brooklyn, NY: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, 1981), 1151.

³⁴ The key difference is soteriological: Mormons hold that while the death of Jesus atones for the sin of Adam, it is obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Mormon Church that atones for the sins we commit.

³⁵ A rite performed inside the temple that guarantees earthly marriages to last into eternity (Mark 12:25).

³⁶ Estimate by Rodney Stark, then University of Washington sociologist. John W. Kennedy, 'Southern Baptists Take Up the Mormon Challenge', in *Christianity Today* (15th June 1998), 28.

³⁷ Mandryk, *Operation World*, 165.

³⁸ Niebuhr, 'Mormons Organize Church's 2000th Stake in Mexico'.

³⁹ Elise Soukup, 'The Mormon Odyssey', in *Newsweek* (17th October 2005), 56.

³⁹ Leonor Ayala, *Mormon conversion surges in Latin America* (2014): www.nbcnews.com/id/5378318/ns/world_news/t/mormon-conversions-surge-latin-america/#.VLla3ZV0zIU (accessed 16th January 2015).

though it is the second largest Mormon nation in the world (1.1 million). The same holds true for Brazil.⁴⁰

To some observers, a concern over rising cults in Latin America is yet another example of intolerant conservative Christians arguing over minor differences. However, what these cults are to the Latin American church in the 21st century is what the Gnostics were to the early church in the second century. Their books, produced mostly AD 140-200 with titles like *The Gospel of Thomas*⁴¹ and *The Gospel of Judas*,⁴² propagated ideas not found in the New Testament, such as a disembodied Christ who came as a spirit, salvation apart from Christ, and a heroic Judas. Historian Thomas H. Greer commented, 'The Gnostics were a religious-philosophical sect with origins distinct from those of Christianity. Many of them, however, found their way into the church. Had their influence proceeded unchecked, they might have revolutionized Christian doctrine.'⁴³ The same could be said about the effects of the ubiquitous presence of cults throughout Latin America: if left unrestrained, the final spiritual condition of Latin America will be worse than the first.

Theological Liberalism

Some 25 years ago, Luis Palau, the famous Latin American evangelist, after learning about biblical illiteracy and minuscule church attendance in England, lamented over how a nation that was once so spiritually powerful and missions-minded had become a place in need of missions within the span of 1½ generations.⁴⁴ While no single cause was responsible for this steep and rapid decline, one factor was theological liberalism, which 'originated in Germany, where a number of theological and philosophical currents converged in the nineteenth century. [Thereafter] German thought had a profound impact on British and American theology'.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Mandryk, *Operation World*, 163

⁴¹ Chapter 70 says, 'If you bring forth what is within you, what you have will save you.' Gnostic expert Elaine Pagels interprets this to mean 'not so much to believe in Jesus, as to seek to know God through one's own divinely given capacity'. Elaine Pagels, *Beyond Belief: the Secret Gospel of Thomas* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), 34.

⁴² Accordingly, 'Judas didn't betray Jesus. Instead, Jesus asked Judas, his most trusted and beloved disciple, to hand him over to be killed. Judas's reward? Ascent to heaven and exaltation above the other disciples' – April D. Deconick, 'Gospel Truth', in *New York Times* (1st December 2007).

⁴³ Thomas H. Greer, *A Brief History of the Western World, 4th ed.* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1982), 137.

⁴⁴ Palau made this comment while appearing as a guest on the *Focus on the Family* radio program broadcast in the United States on 4th November 1993.

⁴⁵ R.V. Pierard, 'Theological Liberalism: Modernism', in *Believe: Religious Information Source* (1997): <http://mb-soft.com/believe/txn/liberali.htm> (accessed 7th January 2015).

Such current theological liberalism is based on three tenets: first, naturalism, or rejecting the supernatural, views the miracles in the Bible as pious legends from a pre-modern era; second, rationalistic biblical criticism that casts doubt on the inspiration, transmission and canonization of the Bible; third, universalism that no longer upholds the uniqueness of the Christian faith in matters of salvation. Subsequently, theological liberalism diminishes the authority of the Scriptures and an interest in supernatural, spiritual matters. Once it takes root, people tend to stop attending church, which is what Dean Kelley, then executive with the National Council of Churches, reported in his 1972 seminal work, *Why Conservative Churches are Growing* (but the liberal churches ‘not only experienced no growth but also sustained significant losses in membership’).⁴⁶ This is partly why England has become a mission field and the mainline denominations in the US, such as the United Methodist Church and Presbyterian Church USA, have experienced substantial decreases in membership.

At this juncture, it appears that theological liberalism isn’t a major threat to the Latin American church. In fact, since most Latin American Christians are Pentecostals – known more for their spiritual exuberance and simplicity than a studious mindset – theological liberalism may not be a threat for some time. Generally, since some knowledge in the liberal arts, which tends to produce a critical mindset, is needed to grasp the full implications of liberal theology, most Latin American believers may simply dismiss it as a lie of the enemy. Even at the seminary level, it appears that liberal theology has yet to make little impact. Of nine seminary graduates (from the 1990s and 2000s) interviewed, only three could recall specific instances of receiving liberal teaching.

A Methodist pastor recalled being taught, ‘*The Gospel of Thomas* should be included in the New Testament’. A Guatemalan seminarian asked my opinion on what a United Methodist professor from the US shared in the class: ‘All religions lead to the same God.’ Another, a Baptist pastor, recalled being told in class, ‘Faith is nothing; there is no difference between the Christian and the non-Christian.’

Nevertheless, as Latin American pastors increasingly feel the need for advanced theological training (for ministry and personal reasons), they will encounter frequent exposure to theological liberalism taught by outside lecturers and Latin American scholars who have studied abroad. A poignant moment occurred to me in Oaxaca, Mexico, where I was teaching at an independent seminary as a guest lecturer. During a break in my lecture, two Baptist seminarians whom I had met two years earlier while teaching at their school came to see me. They asked me to return to their school to offer a course to counter what a theologian from the US taught: ‘Genesis 1-11 is a myth; Moses didn’t write it; characters like Abraham and Solomon

⁴⁶ James Davison Hunter, *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 204

never existed.’ When I asked who among the students believed that, the two answered: ‘Those who came to the seminary with a firm belief don’t but they don’t know how to refute it; those who came without it believe him.’

The Kind of Missionary Work Needed in Latin America Today

What Latin American pastors need is an ability to effectively respond to the aforementioned and other theological threats that increasingly challenge the long-term stability of their churches (2 Cor. 10:5). Many Latin American pastors want to study in the US but only a few get the opportunity; those who do, rarely return home. An alternative is for missionaries to come to Latin America, not to plant churches or to launch seminaries that cover the basics, but to sharpen the minds of Latin American pastors with advanced theological knowledge and spiritual understanding relevant to their problems. This is more than just starting a Bible school; rather, it is equipping Latin American pastors to think more carefully and deeply to respond effectively to newer spiritual and theological changes that arise in a constantly shifting world. These missionaries need to prepare individuals who are also open to the ministry of the Spirit. Obviously, those who aren’t receptive to Pentecostalism aren’t likely to have fellowship with its advocates, much less work with them;⁴⁷ missionaries without the capacity to impart appropriate knowledge will not be of much help either.

Unique Attributes of Americans of Korean Descent (AOKD)

In view of this, AOKD may be one group that is uniquely prepared for this task. How? Traditionally, higher learning and Pentecostalism have not gone together. While those formally trained in seminaries tend to regard Pentecostal practices as theologically dubious, Pentecostals have been known to slight their counterparts for lack of spiritual vitality, even the Holy Spirit; but AOKD are unique in that their faith journey includes both.

First, the number of AOKD who attend evangelical (non-Pentecostal) seminaries, in proportion to their population in America, is much higher than any other racial or ethnic group, including Caucasians. This trend was noticed as early as the mid-1990s. In 1996, *Christianity Today* reported a 60% increase from 1991-95 of Asian seminarians (either Asian citizens or Americans of Asian descent) attending the Association of Theological Schools’ members institutions in America, ‘a large portion of whom [were]

⁴⁷ For instance, a school in Chihuahua for missionary’s children, operated by an American missions agency, did not grant admissions to the children of an Assemblies of God missionary couple because they spoke in tongues.

Koreans, the fastest-growing major ethnic group'.⁴⁸ Ten years later, the presence of Asians in these seminaries was more pronounced: for instance, 40% of students at Western Seminary (San Jose campus) and 22% at Fuller Theological Seminary in California (the largest seminary in America), respectively, were Asians.⁴⁹

The trend that most of them are Koreans is attested by the changing demography of Talbot School of Theology, a large seminary in California with 1,200 students. In 2005-06, Asians accounted for 25% of the students at Talbot; by 2013, according to its fall 2013 Graduate Enrollment Report, 32% were Asians. Dr Mick Boersma, having observed a steady rise of Koreans at Talbot since teaching there from 1986, estimated that 'at least 75% of our Asian students are Koreans'.⁵⁰ Most of them pursue a three-year Masters of Divinity degree, after which many continue their education at doctoral levels.

Second, ironically, a considerable number of AOKD not only have had Pentecostal experiences, they actively practise 'sign gifts', such as tongues and prophecy, contrary to what they were taught by their seminary professors, many of whom were Cessationists. This openness is a result of a great revival that swept across Korean churches throughout America from the mid-1970s to the 1980s when Korean immigration was at its height.⁵¹ Conducted typically by famous evangelists from Korea known more for their emotional appeals than exegetical sermons, they emphasized praying out loud (including speaking in tongues) and receiving prophetic prayers of spiritual and material prosperity; it was very effective. To the earlier generation of AOKD who, as youth, grew up in this environment, Pentecostal practices were not only normal but were practised as well; subsequently, they influenced the later generation of AOKD. This suggests that for many AOKD, a combination of theological erudition and openness to Pentecostalism tends to be the rule rather than the exception. Just what the Latin American Church needs.

After becoming a Christian and being disciplined at a radical Pentecostal Korean church, I studied at a Cessationist seminary for my Master of Divinity degree; thereafter, I pursued a PhD degree at Fuller Theological Seminary, a school more open to the Spirit. By the time I went to

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⁴⁸ Sidebar, 'Asian-American Pastors: Great Expectations', in *Christianity Today* (12th August 1996), 51.

⁴⁹ Tim Stafford, 'The Tiger in the Academia', in *Christianity Today* (April 2006), 72.

⁵⁰ Email sent by Mick Boersma, 31st October 2014.

⁵¹ Ten years after the passing of the 1965 Immigrant Act, Koreans 'had become the third largest group entering the United States, trailing only Mexicans and Filipinos. The number of Korean immigrants admitted to this country had exceeded 30,000 every year since 1976'. Hagen Koo and Eui-Young Yu, 'Korean immigration to the United States: its demographic pattern and social implications for both societies', in *Papers of the East-West Population Institute* 74 (August 1981), 2.

Chihuahua, Mexico, to serve, I felt equally at home serving among Spirit-led Pentecostals as among the more studious Baptists.

My ministry was threefold: first, to provide an extended theological education aimed mainly at Assemblies of God and Baptist pastors;⁵² second, to produce thousands of pages of theological courses in several subjects,⁵³ focusing on pressing matters, such as the aforementioned issues affecting the church; and third, training leaders to impart these courses to their congregants and students.

Over time, based on the foundation of deep, personal relationships, hundreds of pastors throughout Mexico were instructed, encouraged and challenged to think critically while upholding sound doctrines and moving in the Spirit. This is what the Latin American church needs right now. I end this study with what a Mexican United Methodist pastor wrote regarding the effect of my ministry as an AOKD:

For me, Ryun Chang's ministry has been something that God was endeavoring before I knew that I was going to take a wrong leap in my theological perspective on how to view the Bible. When I finished my theological studies in my denomination, even though it was a conservative one, I always wanted to know more about the present issues. This led me to read a lot of liberal and neo-orthodox books, which I began to believe to be true. I was looking for the real interpretation of the Bible, but because of this I got confused, until I met this one guy from Korea who invited me to take a special study on something he has written. God led me back to the right path through his ministry. I thank God he came to Mexico. Now that I have verified that the Bible is the Word of God, I can die for it at any time.⁵⁴

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⁵² Through three weekly classes made up of different groups of pastors, lasting 3-4 hours, from 2003 to 2010.

⁵³ Courses such as apologetics, missiology, hermeneutics, Greek, church history, cultural anthropology and comparative systematic theology.

⁵⁴ Barro, 'Wrestling with Success', 71.

PART FOUR

SOUTH AMERICA

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NEO-PENTECOSTAL PARADIGMS IN LATIN AMERICAN MISSION: MEGATRENDS IN THE THEOLOGIES OF MISSION AND MISSIONARY PRACTICES AMONG NEO-PENTECOSTALS IN PERU

Bernardo Campos

This article describes four micro trends in the theologies of mission and missionary practices of Neo-Pentecostalism in Latin America: (1) Restoration and specialization of ministry, especially of apostles and prophets for the establishment of the Kingdom as a global mission; (2) Recovery of the earthly city as the goal of humanizing mission; (3) Inner healing, spiritual warfare and deliverance as a means to recruit disciples who populate the earthly city in the perspective of the Kingdom; and (4) Economic prosperity, a sign and foretaste of the Kingdom of God here and now. Together they could be considered in future as paradigms of mission in Neo-Pentecostalism.

Introduction: Paradigms and Trends

The original meaning of ‘paradigm’¹ is ‘pattern’ or ‘model’. For Plato, paradigms are the ‘divine models’ from which earthly things are made.² In modern developmental psychology, a paradigm refers to the acceptance of ideas, thoughts and beliefs generally built during early life and accepted as true or false without testing them in a new analysis.³ In the broader sense, *παράδειγμα* [*paradeigma* or paradigm] refers to the set of practices or theories that define a scientific discipline that have been or are still being tested and analyzed extensively over time, and therefore are still standing.

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¹ The term ‘paradigm’, as we know, that originates from the Greek word *παράδειγμα* [paradigm], is a compound word: *παρά* (para) [together with] and *δείγμα* (deigma) [example or pattern]. See Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Revised and augmented throughout by Henry Stuart Jones with the assistance Roderick McKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940).

² María Angeles Durán and Francisco Lisi, *Plato's Dialogues* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 132-36.

³ A paradigm is a set of beliefs and preconceptions, both philosophical and otherwise, that at a certain time shares a scientific community. In a broad sense, it is a new view or new approach. See ‘paradigm’ at: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/paradigm> (accessed 29th March 2015).

According to Karl Popper⁴ and T.S. Kuhn,⁵ who introduced this concept in the theoretical discussion of science in his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, the paradigm includes ‘an entire cluster of beliefs, values, modes of behavior, shared by the members of a given community’.⁶

Applying it to theology, Hans Küng defines paradigm as model of interpretation, model of knowledge or as a fundamental model (macro model).⁷ In my opinion, a set of realities and practices can be considered as ‘megatrends’ and at the same time be material elements for the configuration and reconfiguration of paradigms. Megatrends are significant social, political, economic and technological changes affecting longer periods of time (ten years or more). One example of megatrend occurred when the industrial society moved on to the information age, which changed the global economy, revived the arts, ignited religious revival and developed a high quality of technology. In our case, a number of theories and practices of the Neo-Pentecostal church that are maintained throughout time could set a mission model or paradigm beyond religious boundaries, whether or not they were shared with other groups.

Kuhn illustrated his thesis with classic examples of the history of science of nature, and analyzed the mechanisms in detail by which the Ptolemaic, Copernican, Newtonian and Einsteinian paradigms were formed and developed. Along the same lines, Hans Küng,⁸ in the light of a long history of the church and society, also discussed macro epochal constellations from basic models, i.e. large paradigms that have structured the Christian vision of reality and have been transformed over the history of theology and the church. From this overview of Christianity, Küng distinguishes six major paradigms: (1) the proto-Judæo-Christian apocalyptic paradigm of theology of the church, (2) the ancient ecumenical Hellenistic and Byzantine, (3) the Roman Catholic medieval, (4) the Reformation (evangelical protestant), (5) the modern enlightenment, and finally (6) the post-modern post-Enlightenment or ecumenical paradigm of trans-modernity.⁹

According to this interpretation, a paradigm is a cluster of ideas and practices that cover a number of years and that mark or point to a specific time in one or more aspects of a culture. Now, with this approach in mind, we ask if we can talk about Neo-Pentecostal paradigms in the mission of the church in Latin America. I think not; it’s too early for that. Perhaps it is

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⁴ Karl Popper, *La lógica de la investigación científica* (Mexico: Rei, 1991), 78-101.

⁵ Thomas S. Kuhn, *La estructura de las revoluciones científicas* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1962), 18-27.

⁶ Thomas S. Kuhn, *¿Qué son la Revoluciones Científicas? y otros Ensayos* (Barcelona, Spain: Paidós, 1989), 21-32.

⁷ Hans Küng, *Theology for the Third Millennium: An Ecumenical View* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 12-18.

⁸ Küng, *Theology for the Third Millennium*, 36.

⁹ Hans Küng, ‘Cambios de Modelo de Iglesia en la Marcha del Pueblo de Dios’, in *Éxodo*, Juan Carlos Núñez Bustillos (ed) (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 1997), 77-93.

better to speak of ‘micro trends’ in Neo-Pentecostal theologies of mission and missionary practices in Latin America, which in the future could be the basis for discarding new paradigms in mission. I consider them at a ‘micro’ and not at a ‘macro’ level because we are referring to a section of Protestant Christianity (Neo-Pentecostalism), and Neo-Pentecostals are only part of the global range of mission theories. Before continuing, let me first recall four major trends in classic Pentecostal understanding of mission that, in my opinion, precede Neo-Pentecostalism and from which many reinterpretations have been made that indicate a clear contrast.

Traditional Paradigms in Classic Pentecostal Missiology

The church (universal priesthood) as the principal agent in the mission of God

From very early in the history of Christianity, the church understood that she was a depository of revelation and therefore the custodian of salvation. Outside the church salvation was not possible (*Extra ecclesia, nullam salus*). According to this tradition, the church is the main agent of God’s mission in the world, which is expressed primarily as evangelizing mission. Fortunately, this reductionist perspective of ‘mission as evangelism’¹⁰ has been overcome and is now understood as an ‘integral’¹¹ or ‘holistic’ mission. Integral mission includes worship (liturgy), proclamation of the gospel (*kerygma*), education in the faith (*didache*), Christian communion or fellowship (*koinonia*) and social action (*diakonia*), along with other Christian services. It is also ‘full or total’¹² mission that encompasses the entire planet and is not limited to religion, but incorporates the entire culture, society, economics and politics. In the classic Pentecostal view, the

¹⁰ Cf The Lausanne Covenant Document, available online at: www.lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant – the emphasis is on mission as evangelization.

¹¹ The term ‘integral mission’ was widespread in Latin America by René Padilla and *La Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana* [Latin American Theological Fraternity]. Cf René Padilla, *¿Qué es misión integral?* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Kairos, 2006), 11-48. A review of the impact of the theology of integral mission in Latin America, posted by the Kairos Foundation, can also be found at: www.kairos.org.ar/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48&Itemid=146 (accessed 29th March 2015).

¹² For example, in the summer of 2009, the *Iglesia Unida de Cristo* [United Church of Christ] at its General Synod, and *La Iglesia Cristiana Discípulos de Cristo* [The Christian Church Disciples of Christ] at their Assembly, adopted resolutions affirming the pact between the two denominations to be a global or total Mission Church. Incidentally, Amos Yong has stressed the possibility of a ‘Global Theology’ in his book, *The Spirit Poured Out on all Flesh. Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 17-30.

universal priesthood of all believers is emphasized and that is why ‘every believer’ was called not only to be a ‘disciple’ but also to be a ‘missionary’.

Heaven, glory and Christians’ final destiny

Historically, Christians have pointed to the sky as the final destination for the followers of Christ. Opposed to hell as a place of eternal punishment for sin, heaven is the prize that believers would receive after suffering in the world. It is the crowning for their efforts and loyalty to the gospel and Jesus Christ. The search for the glory of God in the church was already a foretaste of the coming glories with the second coming of Christ. Heaven is the final destination of the faithful.

Empowered for global mission

For traditional Pentecostals, the power of the Holy Spirit of God is the engine that moves the missionary task. Without that power, evangelizing, teaching or social work remains sterile or fruitless. Without the Spirit’s action, missionary work is reduced to mere social or philanthropic activity. Only the power of God can produce a true transformation of lives and societies. That power is contrasted with the powers of this world. Christians can use earthly powers as part of their work but they are not confined to them. They are considered as a means to a greater or sublime end. They must distinguish the difference, for political power belongs to the natural order, but the power of the Spirit is supernatural. Christians are citizens of two worlds.¹³ Although they move in the earthly city, they seek to reach the city of God as Augustine¹⁴ proposed against the pagans.

Martyrdom as prize for winning the world for Christ

Among classic Pentecostals, it is natural to assume that the prize for following Christ and doing his will is martyrdom, death. Suffering for the cause of faith and the preaching of the Word in hostile environments is almost an expected consequence. Following Jesus implies suffering. Suffering completes the believer and fashions his or her character. The Kingdom of God will be established with the second coming of Christ, but in the meantime believers should live according to the standards worthy of

¹³ See Hilario Wynczyk, *Ciudadanos de dos mundos. El Movimiento Evangélico en la Vida Pública Argentina 1980-2001* (San Martín, Argentina: UMSAM EDITA, 2009), 391. The author shows that double perspective observed in Neo-Pentecostal believers.

¹⁴ Cf Peter Robert Lamont Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (New York: New York City Press, 1990).

that salvation wrought by Christ. Poverty and destitution are conditions often used by God to perfect his children.

Missional Paradigms and Megatrends among Neo-Pentecostals

For the purposes of this work, we define Neo-Pentecostals as groups of believers marked by the spiritual experience of Pentecost. These differ from classic Pentecostals by their economic and social status, their theologies of faith and prosperity, pragmatic religiosity which includes belief systems, rituals, forms of organization and ethics. Neo-Pentecostals are spiritually open to the influence of post-modernism and globalization.¹⁵ From a socio-religious perspective, Neo-Pentecostals would fall under Hans Küng's sixth paradigm of enlightened post-modernity.¹⁶

According to José Mardones,¹⁷ post-modernity shows the following characteristics: (1) A de-modernization and de-historization that puts people at a post-history that harbours a memory loss attitude. (2) Loss of the unique perspective of mass media by the manipulation of information technology. Neo-Pentecostals enter into a world of images that pushes them to step out of the reality of the world and society. They are taught to access a virtual world that forces a de-realization and relocation of reality. (3) Due to over-dependency on imagery, Neo-Pentecostals are forced to use limited knowledge to overcome weaknesses and limited academic training. This condition generates de-realization of knowledge that moves them to over-emphasize charismatic experiences and spiritual exposure. (4) Socio-politically Neo-Pentecostals replace the political and ideological polarization by widespread spiritual instability cause by evil forces. Politically, they tend to favour nationalistic and conservative movements and, to avoid extremes, they prefer to be known as 'centrists'. (5) To avoid conflict, Neo-Pentecostals prefer to de-politicize and de-bureaucratize the masses that long for close relationships. They prefer to manage people by gathering them in small groups. That way people help each other and lessen the pressure on the leaders. (6) Neo-Pentecostals commercialize the art and spiritualize social evils along with other behavioural conditions of people.

In summary, with its nuances, we see that Neo-Pentecostals manage situations where the heart prevails over reason and feelings over thought. They are led by post-modernism which is characterized by an implicit rejection of the tenets of scientific reason. There is a new logical

¹⁵ An interesting religious socio-Neo-Pentecostal approach is that of sociologist William Mauricio Beltrán, *Del Monopolio Católico a la Explosión Pentecostal: Pluralización Religiosa, Secularización y Cambio Social en Colombia* (Bogotá: Centro de Estudios Sociales de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2013), 223-92.

¹⁶ Küng, 'Cambios de modelo de Iglesia en la Marcha del Pueblo de Dios', 80.

¹⁷ José Mardones, *¿A dónde va la Religión?* (Santander, Spain: Sal Terrae, 1996), 184-85.

disclaiming of modernity that is seen as ‘autonomy of reason’ (Kant) or ‘autonomy of the whole man’ (Marx) against the tutelage of the church or theology.¹⁸

Today, we are witnessing a new order in the ideological, cultural, economic and social fields in which globalization, the market economy, modernity and technology are its main components. Around them, a series of socio-ideological and economic phenomena are produced such as affluence, marginalization, technological dehumanization, addiction to energy sects, and deterioration and dysfunction of the family. Somehow the ‘micro’ missiological trends of Neo-Pentecostalism are a religious response anchored to post-modern life and the challenges of globalization.

The globalization of knowledge and western culture in developed countries is the most revolutionary and disturbing fact of our times, and the most challenging for the mission of the church in this century. Globalization, according to Guillermo Cook,¹⁹ is technological, economic and religious, and its main instruments are the mass media and the rapid expansion of the neo-liberal economic model. However, globalization of technology brings a hopeful contradiction. While spreading the ‘gospel of the free market’ and the values of post-modernism – which some confuse it with the theology of prosperity – it also serves as a means of the search and diffusion of technological, economic, cultural and religious alternative models (or paradigms).

With the neo-liberal economic model, Latin American states have been forced to abandon their responsibilities for the welfare of all its citizens, particularly those living outside the formal economy. Millions of Latin Americans live in extreme poverty. Today, the people are led to accommodate their lives to the demands of the market and are dominated by the philosophy of consumerism that creates artificial needs and deep frustration for those who cannot keep up with it. The vast majority of the world’s population tends to be sacrificed to the god of the market. Free market globalization is based on a tragic contradiction: natural and economic resources are not globalized but are under the monopoly of mainstream economics that extracts them from our countries and then sells them at high prices.

The phenomenon of globalization with its universal approach impacts cultures of all peoples in two ways. While the West goes post-modern,

¹⁸ According to Hegel, the movement of the Enlightenment as autonomy of reason of any imposition from outside begins with Kant and ends with the crisis of Christianity’s logical positivism. The Enlightenment and autonomy of the whole man, for alienating structures, began with Marx and led to the theory of the Frankfurt School in Germany. See Amady Aly Dieng, *G.F. Hegel, Leçons sur Philosophie de la historie* (Paris: Série de Monographies, 1967), 336-37.

¹⁹ Guillermo Cook, ‘La misión de la iglesia en el siglo 21’, in *BuenasTareas* (February 2011): www.buenastareas.com/ensayos/La-Mision-De-La-Iglesia-En/1498191.html (accessed 2nd March 2011).

secular culture goes global and also causes worldwide changes. The more the dominant cultures grow, the more traditional and alternative cultures extend worldwide. In addition, new religious movements grow, using electronic media to network and propagate beliefs. This complex reality presents a unique challenge for the church in Latin America. New technology facilitates communication, which is strategically used by Neo-Pentecostals. In this context, the mission practices of Neo-Pentecostals are perhaps the clearest reflection of this global reaction as a religious response to the new global and post-modern culture.²⁰ In that context, I consider the following four ‘micro trends’ to be fundamental in the Neo-Pentecostal mission, which also shows the new paradigms observed at Neo-Pentecostal congregations in the region.

*Restoration of the fivefold ministries,
especially of apostles and prophets*

It is a fact that not all Neo-Pentecostals embrace the apostolic and prophetic movement. Recently, some Neo-Pentecostal circles have embraced this doctrine and new order of ministry. It has been assumed that these ministries are highly specialized in the fields of spirituality and contemporary ministry. The leaders who excel as apostles and prophets are typically seen or revered as ‘God’s generals’.²¹ These generals have become powerful agents specialized in spiritual warfare in a newly engaged holy war. They teach that the world and the church are in permanent spiritual warfare against the forces of evil. They also see this war as an opportunity to further God’s mission in the world. The spiritual victory won by the churches is understood as a precondition for mission to be accomplished. In other words, without spiritual warfare there is no battle to win or to lose.

Neo-Pentecostals understand the mission of the church strictly in ‘apostolic’ terms. The apostolicity of the church is the very essence of the Kingdom of God. Being an apostle is to be a messenger, an apostle to the nations to extend the Kingdom of God. This naturally implies missionary work, planting cell churches and, with it, the establishment of governments over cities or nations.

Neo-Pentecostals associate the establishment or implementation of the Kingdom of God with global mission. Considering itself as the last

²⁰ Cook, ‘La misión de la iglesia en el siglo 21’, 2. See also José Luis Rocha, ‘Sincretismo en la Centroamérica Neoliberal: Los Neo-Pentecostales absorben y difunden la cultura gerencial y el pensamiento positivo’, in *De las Misiones de Fe al Neopentecostalismo. Génesis y evolución del Protestantismo salvadoreño desde el siglo XIX hasta el presente*, Luis R. Huevo Mixco (ed) (San Salvador, El Salvador: Universidad Evangélica de El Salvador, 2013), 271-338.

²¹ Cf Liardon Roberts, *Los Generales de Dios. Vols I-II* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Peniel, 2005).

Christian reform, the Neo-Pentecostal movement assumes its function basically as the extension of the Kingdom of God on earth. The church is only an agent of the kingdom and, if necessary, it must build enterprises to support its transformational mission. The Kingdom of God is manifested 'here and now'; it has arrived and has been established by Jesus Christ who has commissioned his apostles to govern it.

For Apostle Denis Arana Cárdenas, former Baptist pastor, now a renovated Baptist, apostolic restoration is 'the final act of God'.²² This means that Neo-Pentecostals relate eschatologically with the fulfilment of mission. According to Arana Cárdenas, God has restored the ministries of apostles and prophets. He has restored the theme of the Kingdom; God has restored the 'Tabernacle of David', which is a metaphorical way of referring to the restoration of the worship of God as a way of life. He has also restored the number of government – the vision of 'The Twelve' as the ideal number for church government and for the implementation of the fivefold ministry. Restoration has also affected the role and interpretation of the written Word, for example, the Holy Spirit could deliver a revelation that is completely new, for it is not found in the Bible. That 'new word' affects theological language and the attitude towards finances, liturgy, evangelism and doctrine itself.²³

The centrality of the Kingdom of God is clearly the determining factor in the theology of Neo-Pentecostalism.²⁴ I believe the theological stance will determine the creed and define the architecture of theology. In Neo-Pentecostal sermons, God is referred to as a sovereign or king. The Kingdom of God is regarded as the exercise of divine power and providence over men and as the historical realization of his plan of salvation. This idea of the Kingdom of God as salvation-liberation must always be taken into account because it belongs to the essential lines of the mission concept. Some Neo-Pentecostal pastors run their congregations as kings. They take their members as subjects of their kingdom.

If the Christological ecclesiology of the 'body of Christ' (*corpus Christi*) was pivotal to the articulation of recent contemporary pentecostal theology, as well as in Roman Catholicism, judging by the thematic relevance of Neo-Pentecostals, who define the apostolic theology of the future as 'regia ecclesiology' (ecclesiology in the light of the Kingdom of God), the centre is no longer the body of Christ but the apostles who rule over it.

Neo-pentecostal ecclesiology understands the church as 'God's people' that is also an agent of the Kingdom. That does not place conversion as the

²² See Heidel Denis Arana Cárdenas, *Restauración Apostólica. La Jugada Final* (Lima: Ministerios Comunidad Apostólica Templo Sion-CATSION, 2005), 137-46.

²³ Arana, *Restauración Apostólica*, 137-196

²⁴ I have described this concept extensively in my book, Bernardo Campos, *Visión de Reino: El Movimiento Apostólico-Profético en el Perú – Apreciación Fenomenológica de un Movimiento de Restauración y Reforma* (Lima: Editorial Basilea, 2009), 64-83.

final requirement to become a member of God's people, because foreigners are also accepted into the extended family of believers converted to Christ and all those that love his Name, even if they are not believers. In other words, the church is no longer the centre in the Body of Christ. The church is an instrument of the Kingdom as a means for spiritual and social transformation. Neo-Pentecostalism includes all humanity in God's Kingdom; that is because the movement wants to include itself as God's agent that seeks to influence society. In fact, many Neo-Pentecostal leaders have taken the initiative to 'conquer cities for Christ', some in a classic fundamentalist sense, and others as true managers competing for social reforms, 'face to face' with other social movements in the political, social, cultural, economic and religious fields.

Theocracy is referred to as a system or alternative government to democracy.²⁵ Not because the ideal of democracy is bad in itself, but because it actually has never worked due to man's sinfulness. In Neo-Pentecostalism, there is a reinvention of the pre-monarchic Israelite theocracy. A theocracy lived in a democracy – or in spite of democracy. It is understood that the apostolic office should lead this theocracy. This is clearly a 'reconstructionist' vision, through which theocracy must be restored through priesthood. This reconstructionist theocratic model promotes the hegemony of religion over political power but at a conservative and neo-liberal ideological level. Thus it is not surprising that apostles such as Harold Caballeros made the radical decision to leave his pastorate to devote the rest of his life to the cause of politics. Through his VIDA (Life) movement, Caballeros seeks to bring a social impact to Guatemala that will transform the country. Caballeros narrowed his 'mission' to bringing improvement to the economic, social, political and cultural situation of Guatemala. He thinks this is the proper way to lead the country to true development.²⁶

Recovering the earthly city as the goal of humanizing mission

Neo-pentecostal ministers understand that they have been called to govern, 'to be the head and not the tail'. For Neo-Pentecostal politics is not a 'mission field' among others but the very centre or core of the mission. Modern apostles and Neo-Pentecostal leaders believe they have the ministry of government. They have been called to rule the planet and soon the world powers will be transferred to them.

²⁵ Jaime Yupanqui, 'Reforma Apostólica', in *Manual Apostólico II. El Ministerio del Apóstol, Iglesia Ríos de Agua Viva* (Lima: VII Conferencia Internacional del Ministerio Quintuple en Acción, 2005), 34

²⁶ Harold Caballeros, *El Poder Transformador del Evangelio de Jesucristo* (Guatemala: Ministerios El Shaddai, 2002), 59; also, Yupanqui, 'Reforma Apostólica', 54-63.

They understand that the earth, not heaven, is the final destiny of man, so what they should do is to conquer the earthly city, starting with the spiritual conquest of the town. This requires financial prosperity and gradual and strategic integration into public office at state level.

In this vision, mission is ‘humanization’, the completion of men and women as men and women here on earth – that is, personal and social development as the way to a complete state of salvation.

According to an apostolic vision of the body of Christ, the church becomes an ‘apostolic home’. Cell growth and apostolic presbyteries are simultaneously the mechanism’s organization and government. One of the forms of organization that has been effective is that of ‘house churches’ or homogeneous units, which over time become ‘apostolic houses’ under the direction of the main apostle. The models implemented by Neo-Pentecostals vary widely. They vary from the model known as G12 (group of twelve) to Christian Family Groups or cells of Christian growth. The use of all these models as ‘communities of discipleship’. This model has succeeded in various cases. These apostles have been able to build ‘mega-churches’ with such numerical growth that they have acquired political influence. Some have been used to negotiate with political leaders, thus making a significant public impact in their cities.²⁷

Inner healing, spiritual warfare and deliverance as a means to recruit disciples who will populate the earthly city in kingdom perspective

In the Neo-Pentecostal vision, inner healing is a prerequisite for discipleship. Believers can be possessed by demons, and in fact when they come to faith in Christ, they need to be healed first. For Neo-Pentecostals, the souls of believers should be healed. So spiritual warfare is necessary for all wickedness and any source of influence from spiritual powers, rulers and principalities be expelled from the life of believers.

Mission can be a ‘conquest’ of cities and nations. Spiritual warfare is the means by which the minister is able to penetrate areas of reality; otherwise, the natural way would be impossible. The mission of the church is understood as the ‘conquest’ of cities for God or the ‘establishment’ of the Kingdom of God here on earth. Spiritual warfare has two distinct levels: a war at ‘ground level’ that believers wage daily in their fight against spiritual bondage. At this level, people possessed by demons are delivered and inner healing is imparted.

The ‘high-level’ of warfare is known in Neo-Pentecostal jargon as ‘war of altars’ (i.e. the image of war between Elijah and the prophets of Baal). At this level, ministers are waged by their level of experience in the spiritual realm. ‘Strategic spiritual warfare’ is the application of a number

²⁷ Bernardo Campos, *¿Mega-Iglesia o Iglesia Minoritaria? Disyuntiva entre Modelos y Principios* (Lima: IPER, 2001), 2.

of techniques designed to 'bind' satanic powers according to their hierarchy. Here four principalities are clearly distinguished: principalities (*archai*), powers (*exousiai*), governors (*dunamis*) and spiritual hosts of wickedness (*kosmokratoras*), so the success of evangelization is connected with the spiritual realm. People today hunger for the supernatural and these apostles know it, so they adorn their methods of deliverance by adding creative forms that captivate their audience.²⁸ A minister who does not wage war leaves much to be desired and the veracity of his spiritual 'anointing' comes under suspicion.

It is not surprising that a doctrine of the centrality and presence of the Kingdom of God produces a different understanding of the return of the Messiah. In the said doctrine, God's great plan is that we build his kingdom here and now. Humanity's final destination is not heaven but earth. Therefore, if the promised paradise is here on earth, what sense does it make to expect a fulfilment beyond this world? Christ came to establish his Kingdom and he commissioned his apostles to make it manifest. Manifesting the Kingdom involves the experience of citizenship, ethics in the vision of the Kingdom, and political behaviour aimed at recovering this earth for the people of God. If that includes making strategic political alliances, then it's right on cue. But where possible, believers are the ones who must take the initiative and must occupy key positions in society. In the perspective of God's Kingdom, entrepreneurs and other professionals should be called and sent to lead social change.²⁹ It is all about a civilizing mission whose ultimate object is to restore creation to itself but with human effort.

Economic Prosperity, a sign and foretaste of the kingdom of God

In Neo-Pentecostalism, financial management occupies an important place. On the one hand, large sums of money are used almost beyond measure to send apostles to the nations and even support them during the time of transition. The practice of tithing, offering and firstfruits is a sacred act with much spiritual significance.³⁰ There is even the custom of tithing personally and hand-delivering offerings to the main apostle, who is responsible for administering and using it for the unique, exclusive and zealous use of sustaining his ministry and his leaders. Covenantal offerings (covenants) for special reasons are also practised according to an intelligent teaching of 'sowing and reaping'.

²⁸ Bernardo Campos, 'La Guerra Espiritual: Un Desafío a la Misiología', *Signos de Vida*, 13 (1999), 2-5.

²⁹ C. Peter Wagner, *Apóstoles en la Iglesia de Hoy* (Miami, FL: Editorial Peniel, 2004), 95-112.

³⁰ See Samuel Arboleda, *La iglesia: Gobierno y Finanzas* (Lima: IMPACT-PERU, 2006), 26.

Poverty, disease and death are generational curses that must be uprooted from the lives of believers.³¹ The children of God are sons of a King who 'owns gold and silver'. Giving a generous offering is actually 'investing' in the Kingdom. God's will is that their children prosper economically. Only then can they work on the extension of his Kingdom without spiritual bondage and claim the nations of the earth for themselves, according to Psalms 2:8.

Economic prosperity is a sign and foretaste of the Kingdom of God and becomes an important element in the mission of God. Mission and finance go hand-in-hand with Neo-Pentecostalism and they are the priority. Unlike classic Pentecostals, Neo-Pentecostals require from their faithful members large or extravagant sums of money as an act of faith and obedience. The contributors are encouraged to give with the promise of reaping thirty, sixty and one hundredfold.³² This is the best economic investment in the kingdom, which brings financial prosperity in return – a financial partnership with God himself.³³

Conclusion

1. From the perspective of Neo-Pentecostal mission, the mission mandate is linked with the establishment of the Kingdom of God here on earth. This kingdom includes all earthly powers and spheres of government, human and spiritual. To soar in power and establish a theocracy (priestly government), the church must dethrone evil 'principalities' that rule over cities and nations. Christians must pray for the transference of riches from the wicked to the people of God.
2. Mission work is made possible through spiritual warfare and strong discipleship programmes usually organized in cell churches. Mission is also carried by entrepreneurs who willing to finance or invest in building the Kingdom of God.
3. Healthy Christian life is expressed through financial prosperity. The conquest of cities and nations is a sign and foretaste of the Kingdom of God, and at the same time is a public testimony to the power of God. Ultimately, the purpose of mission is to guide people into wholeness as human beings who were created to inherit the land and administer it.

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³¹ See Kenneth E. Hagin, *Redimido de la Pobreza, Enfermedad, y Muerte Espiritual* (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1989), Paulo Arieu (ed): <http://es.slideshare.net/pauloarieu1/manual-explicativo-que-es-la-teologia-de-la-prosperidad> (accessed 31st March 2015).

³² See John Avanzini, *30, 60 Ciento por Uno* (Fort Worth, TX: His Publishing Company, 1989).

³³ Martín Ocaña, *Los Banqueros de Dios. Una aproximación evangélica a la Teología de la prosperidad* (Lima: Ediciones Puma, 2002), 43-98.

4. The subject of the mission is the new people of God, raised by God as a special lineage amidst a wicked world that is inexorably lost but can be restored by the work of God's children who have been selected to govern the nations.

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WE FOUND IDENTITY THROUGH OUR DIVERSITY: A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE ANGLICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF BRAZIL

Pedro Julio Triana Fernández

Introduction

‘The Lord has helped us to this very point’ (1 Sam. 7:12) This is a brief approximation to the history, mission, ecclesiology and future projections of the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil. The events of the past are not finished or isolated facts. They are consequences of the action of human groups that have lived or live in different contexts and situations. To discover the past helps to discern the way towards the future. And by knowing the past we can know who we are, where we came from, and where we are going. Without knowing the facts and experiences of the past to guide us, we would enter the future unprepared. New information, changes of perspective and the accumulation of facts mean that history is always in constant transition. It is a living form of history able to feed us in the present day.¹

Then, after these comments, let us embark on the exciting journey of more than one hundred years of history, mission and witness of the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil, having these guiding questions: What were the main events that influenced the long awakening of the Brazilian church? Who are the people who have walked the path before us? How important was this journey for them? How have these historical facts influenced or might they influence the history we live today?

Brazil: The Country and Its People

The Federative Republic of Brazil (República Federativa do Brasil) is the largest country in both South America and the Latin America region. It is the world’s fifth largest country, both by geographical area and by population, the largest Portuguese-speaking country in the world and the only one in the Americas. It is currently the seventh largest economy in the world.

¹ See Wendy Fletcher Marsh and Norman Knowles, *Living Tradition: Researching, Writing and Celebrating Parish History* (Toronto, Canada: Church Historical Society, 1998), in Portuguese, published with permission as *Escrevendo a História de nossas Paróquias* (Porto Alegre, Brazil: Secretaria General da Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil, Projeto Memória, 2001), 9-10.

Brazil was inhabited by numerous tribal nations before the landing of explorer Pedro Álvares Cabral in 1500. It remained a Portuguese colony until 1808, but in 1815 was elevated to the rank of kingdom upon the formation of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves. Its independence was achieved in 1822 with the creation of the Empire of Brazil, a unitary state governed by a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary system. The country became a republic in 1889, when a military *coup d'état* proclaimed the Republic. An authoritarian military junta governed the nation 1964-1985. Brazil's current constitution, formulated in 1988, defines it as a Federal Republic, which is composed of the union of the Federal District (Brasilia), 26 states and 5,564 municipalities.²

The Brazilian people come from a wide variety of racial and national backgrounds. The native Indians are found mostly in the Amazon and the Mato Grosso regions. During the colonial period, in the first half of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese settlers imported slaves from Africa, mostly to the north-eastern part of the country. Currently, the greater percentage of the Negro population continues to live in that area. During the nineteenth century, there was a great deal of immigration from Europe, primarily from Italy and Germany. These European immigrants settled in the temperate southern zones of the country. Finally, the Japanese immigration that took place after the First World War, has created one of the largest Japanese colonies outside Japan.³

There are representatives of many different religious groups in Brazil. The Portuguese brought Roman Catholicism with them. This church now claims about 90% of the population as its members, but as elsewhere in Latin America, a much smaller percentage are actually active members. During the nineteenth century many Roman Catholics also turned to Spiritism. Currently, most of the major Protestant or non-Roman Catholic churches have missions in the country.⁴

In 1891, when the first Brazilian Republican Constitution was established, Brazil ceased to have an official religion and has remained secular ever since, though the Roman Catholic Church remained politically influential. The Constitution guarantees freedom of religion and strongly prohibits the establishment of any religion supported by the government.

Nowadays, Brazilian religions are very diversified and inclined to syncretism. In recent decades, there has been a great increase of Neo-Pentecostal churches and a thriving of Afro-Brazilian religions, which have decreased the number of members of the Roman Catholic Church. Because of this, it is also important to notice how the number of Umbandists and

² See 'Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil, 19^a edição, ampliada e atualizada até 09.01.2014' (São Paulo, Brazil: Editora RT, 2014).

³ A Memorandum prepared in the Office of the Director of the Overseas Department of the National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church, June, 1964.

⁴ Memorandum, June, 1964.

Candomblers (religions with African roots) could be significantly higher than the official census figure, since many of them continue to this day to disguise their religion under 'Roman Catholic' syncretism. About 90% of Brazilians declared some sort of religious affiliation in the most recent census.⁵

The Early Period (1805-1890)

The year 1805 marks the first contact of Anglicanism with the Brazilian people. That year, Henry Martyn landed in the city of Salvador, capital of the State of Bahia. Martyn was a missionary on his way to India. When he identified himself as an Anglican missionary, he was heavily attacked by the local Roman Catholic bishop of the city. Martyn boarded the ship and continued his journey to India.

Between 1810 and 1859 several chaplaincies subordinate to the Church of England were created. However, these were not designed for the Brazilian people, but for British, North Americans and some European residents. But, nevertheless, those were the first Anglican rites celebrated on Brazilian territory.

It was in 1853 when the first official attempt was made to establish Anglicanism in Brazil. The initiative came from the United States. The Rev. William Cooper was sent by the Board of Mission of the Episcopal Church, but this attempt failed because the ship was wrecked. He gave up and went back to the US.

The second attempt was made in 1859, when the Board of Mission of the Episcopal Church sent the Rev. Richard Holden. He worked in the northern part of Brazil and was responsible for the first translation of the Book of Common Prayer into Portuguese to be used in Brazil. But he was forced to abandon the work due to strong attacks in the local press by the Roman Catholic Church that even threatened him with physical attack. So this second attempt to establish Anglicanism in Brazil was ended.

It was the year 1890 that marked the definitive establishment of Anglicanism in Brazil with a strong evangelistic thrust. This resulted, first, from the relationship with the dioceses of West Virginia in the United States, and secondly, from the missionary and evangelistic zeal that swept the US in the late nineteenth century. But it also resulted particularly from the strong evangelistic and missionary spirit of the Virginia Theological Seminary which had been founded in 1823.

In 1890, the Virginia Theological Seminary received an invitation to participate in the Missionary Alliance of Seminaries, made up of various Protestant schools of theology. There were several meetings of this

⁵ See Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística/Censo 2010: www.censo2010.ibge.gov.br/resultados. 2015 IBGE Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística

Alliance in Virginia. Because of these meetings, R.A. Rodrick and F.P. Clark began to study Brazil and became interested in the country.

And from Newport News, Virginia, there sailed on 1st September 1889, after a long series of meetings and dialogue with the American Church Missionary Society, Lucien Lee Kinsolving and James Watson Morris, the latter being President of the Missionary Society of the Virginia Seminary, newly ordained to the priesthood, to organize the mission in Brazil. However, the American Church Missionary Society imposed the condition that they had to raise themselves the funds to sustain them.⁶

Kinsolving and Morris, after stopping at Rio de Janeiro on 26th September 1889, landed at the Port of Santos, and from there continue to São Paulo, where they studied Portuguese for six months. A month and a half after their arrival in Brazil, a *coup d'état* overthrew the Brazilian Empire and the Republic was proclaimed. Due to this political change, the separation of church and state took place, and from that moment the Roman Catholic Church would no longer be the official religion, which facilitated the work of all Christian denominations, including the Episcopal Church.

After six months in São Paulo, Kinsolving and Morris went to Porto Alegre, capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, the southernmost state in the country. And finally, on the Sunday of the Holy Trinity, 1st June 1890, the first public service was celebrated, Kinsolving being the celebrant and Morris the preacher. This was the day when the Episcopal Church in the South of the United States of Brazil was born – the first name that the Episcopal Church had.

Afterwards came the missionaries William Cabell Brown, John Gaw Meen and Professor Mary Packard. These five missionaries are considered to be the real founders of the Episcopal Church of Brazil. But the interesting thing about this story is that the initiative for the establishment of Anglicanism in Brazil did not come from the hierarchy of the US church, but from the seminarians of Virginia Theological Seminary. So we learn that missionary initiatives often take place without official support.⁷

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⁶ Anson Phelps Stokes, 'Kinsolving of Brazil', in *A Pamphlet of the National Council*, Powel Mill Dawney (ed) (New York), 5-9. See also *Ivo Kinsolving: Biografia de um dos primeiros missionários da Igreja Episcopal do Brasil* (Porto Alegre, Brazil: Publicadora Ecclesia, 1961), 9-18.

⁷ Vera Lúcia Simões de Oliveira, 'O Anglicanismo nos Estados Unidos e no Brasil', in *Nossa Identidade: História e Teologia Anglicanas*, Carlos Eduardo B. Calvani and Vera Lucia Simões de Oliveira (eds) (São Paulo, Brazil: Fonte Editorial/Livraria Anglicana, 2012), 54.

The Missionary Period (1890-1950)

The first bishop

The Convocations, which were the first name given to church meetings (today they are called Councils), took place regularly from 1894, but without the presence of a bishop. Instead, the convocations were under the provisional ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the bishop of West Virginia, George W. Peterkin.

Nonetheless, the issue of episcopacy became urgent. Consequently, in an Extraordinary Convocation held in June 1898, the Rev. Lucien Lee Kinsolving was elected as the first bishop of the Brazilian Church, a decision which was accepted and approved by the House of Bishops of the American Church. He was consecrated as bishop for a foreign country on 6th January 1899, in St Bartholomew's Church, in New York. So Kinsolving became the first bishop of the Episcopal Church in the South of the United States of Brazil.⁸

The missionary district

In 1905 missionary work in Brazil was transferred from the American Church Missionary Society to the Board of Mission of the Episcopal Church. And in 1907 the Convocation of the Brazilian Episcopal Church made the official request to be accepted and recognized as a Missionary District of the American Episcopal Church. This request was accepted by the General Convention in 1907, and from that moment the Brazilian Episcopal Church, previously a mission of the Diocese of West Virginia, under the supervision of Bishop George W. Peterkin, became a Missionary District under the complete and unconditional jurisdiction of the General Convention of the American Episcopal Church.⁹

The growth of the church

During the early years (1890-1908), and due to the lack of clergy, Anglicanism in Brazil grew and was consolidated by the dedicated work of catechists and lay readers. Missionary work was concentrated mostly in the south of the country, particularly in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, mainly in rural areas in the eastern part of the state, and in Rio de Janeiro. Nevertheless, until 1910 new missions were opened in the western region

⁸ Oswaldo Kichhöfel, *Notas para uma história da Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil* (Secretaria General da Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil/Editora Gráfica Metropole SA: Porto Alegre, Brazil, 1995), 83-93.

⁹ Kichhöfel, *Notas para uma história da Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil*, 97-99.

of the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Later on, other missionaries organized churches and chaplaincies elsewhere in the country, following a northward church planting movement.

Due to the immense wave of Japanese immigration into Central Brazil, particularly in the State of São Paulo, after the First World War, Mr Yasoji Ito, a graduate of the Theological School in Tokyo, asked to be licensed as a catechist and was allowed to work among his fellow Japanese. A church service for these people was held by Mr Ito in St Paul's Church in São Paulo, this being the first service of its kind in the history of the Japanese mission in Brazil. Mr Ito was ordained to the diaconate in 1926 and to the priesthood in 1928.¹⁰

It would not be until 1925 that the Episcopal Church of Brazil would have its second bishop in the person of the Rev. William Matthew Merrick Thomas. However, the third and first Brazilian bishop would not be consecrated until 1940 in the person of the Rev. Dr Athalício Theodoro Pithan, immediately after the Church had completed fifty years in Brazil. In his consecration, there participated the Right Reverends Efrain Salinas y Velasco, Bishop of Mexico, and Alexander Hugo Blankingship, Bishop of Cuba.

Theological education

In this first half of the twentieth century, even with the existence of the Theological Seminary in Porto Alegre, which was opened in 1903, but closed and reopened several times, theological education in Brazil was very precarious. The curriculum of the seminary merely prepared students to be good preachers and pastors, following the traditional evangelical style. Without any doubt, one of the weaknesses of the Brazilian Episcopal Church has been limited theological education for the formation of clergy and lay people.

Theological, liturgical and ecclesiological highlights

Summing up this period, we could say, first, that the Anglican Church had a strong evangelical emphasis with an ecclesiology marked by individual conversion as modelled by Pietist and Puritan patterns; secondly, the Anglican Church had good relations with the other Protestant churches; thirdly, its missionary message was based on personal regeneration. Its missiology was guided by Protestant teachings, that converts, once transformed, may transform society; fourthly, preaching was the centre of

¹⁰ To know more about missionary work among Japanese immigrants, see Kickhöfel, *Notas para uma história da Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil*, 143-44; also George Upton Krischke, *História da Igreja Episcopal Brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro: Gráfica Tupy, 1949), 113-17.

liturgical life. Debates between worship and ceremony were set aside, and the first schism of the Church came about precisely because of these discussions; however, it was during this period that the first revision of the Book of Common Prayer took place. Finally, the Church had a great concern for Christian education, and Sunday schools were where many pastoral vocations formed.¹¹

Towards a New Identity (1950-1965)

The division of the missionary district of Brazil

The fifteen-year period between 1950 and 1965 was extremely important for establishing a new identity for the Church. Sixty years after the arrival of the first missionaries, the Church grew, founded schools, organized social institutions, had a National Seminary based in Porto Alegre, and expanded to other regions in the north of the country (São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro), and already had a Brazilian bishop, the Right Rev. Athalício Theodoro Pithan.

The growth of the Church since 1940 and the missionary expansion to the centre and north of the country made division of the Missionary District of Brazil urgent. Thus, the Council held in 1949 adopted a plan to divide the Missionary District into three dioceses: the Missionary District of Southern Brazil, covering the eastern region of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, the region where the work of the Church had started, with its headquarters in Porto Alegre; the Missionary District of Southwestern Brazil, covering the western region of the state of Rio Grande do Sul; and the eastern part of the state of Santa Catarina, with its headquarters in Santa Maria.

The rest of the country, with headquarters in Rio de Janeiro, was named the Missionary District of Central Brazil, covering the states of Paraná, São Paulo and the Federal District – that time Rio de Janeiro – and some other regions in the north of the state of São Paulo as far as Belém at the mouth of the Amazon River. Now, with three dioceses, the first Synod of the Brazilian Church was held in Porto Alegre in 1952. And from that time, the Church's leaders prepared the way for ecclesiastical autonomy.

Four facts could be mentioned as being the most significant of this period: the creation of the National Department of Religious Education, the First National Congress of the Brazilian Episcopal Church, the awareness that the Church could not be limited to the south of the country, but that it should reach the rest the vast territory of Brazil, and finally, the increase of the international exchanges that showed the Brazilian Church new aspects

¹¹ See Carlos Eduardo Calvani and Vera Lucia Simões de Oliveira, 'A Igreja Episcopal nos Estados Unidos e os Primórdios no Brasil', in *Nossa Identidade: Historia e Teologia Anglicanas*, 179-99.

that the Church had never previously experienced in the Anglican Communion. All these factors helped to define a new identity for the Brazilian Episcopal Church.

The First National Congress of the Brazilian Episcopal Church

Because of its importance for the establishment of a new ecclesiological identity, we need to comment on the First National Congress of the Brazilian Episcopal Church, which commemorated the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of Anglicanism in Brazil.

The division of the Missionary District into three dioceses forced each of them to develop their own pastoral and missionary programmes. However, though they were now autonomous, the dioceses needed to organise themselves as a body to avoid a form of ‘diocesan congregationalism’, and not only at the time of holding Synods. It was this concern that motivated the convocation of the First National Congress of the Brazilian Episcopal Church in the city of Porto Alegre, 17th-24th July 1960. The Congress was attended by more than one thousand people – clergy and laity – receiving extensive attention from the media.

The themes developed for the Congress give some idea of the new theological and ecclesiological nature of the Church. These were: The Historical and Doctrinal Position of the Anglican Communion, The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion, Man and His Salvation, The Church and the Family, The Church and the Citizen, The Task of the Laity, The Meaning of the Eucharist in Daily Life, and The Church in Action, were just some of these themes.

This historic event was, without any doubt, an act of self-affirmation of the Church’s identity in the national scene, the recognition of unity in its diversity, and also a defence of its twofold historical heritage: both Catholic and Reformed. The Congress likewise inaugurated a new emphasis on the history of Brazilian Anglicanism – that of the ministry of the laity. The Church was undoubtedly living through both a rethinking of its identity and mission, as well as a growth in theological and ecclesiological maturity.¹²

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¹² Carlos Eduardo Calvani, ‘A Igreja Episcopal nos Estados Unidos e os Primórdios no Brasil’, in: *Nossa Identidade: História e Teologia Anglicanas*, 198-200. See also Kickhöfel, *Notas para uma história da Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil*, 342-45. See also the ten theses of the bishops’ pastoral letter and the conclusions of the study groups, published by Câmara dos Bispos da IEAB, *A Igreja Episcopal no País do Futuro* (Porto Alegre, Brazil: Ecclesia, 1960).

The 19th Province of the Anglican Communion

Its autonomy

The success and relevance of the First National Congress held in 1960 gave new impetus to the Church's aspirations for autonomy. A proposal for this began to be implemented in 1961 with an official plan presented to the General Convention of the Episcopal Church of the United States.

In 1964 an Extraordinary Synod adopted a Statement and Declaration of Faith and Order. This statement is significant for it helped Brazilians to understand the new ecclesiological direction of the Church. The Statement affirmed the Church as One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. It guaranteed a commitment to preserve the historic episcopate and claimed the Church to be part of the Anglican Communion, and assumed the commitment of maintaining fraternal relations and full communion with the other Provinces of the Anglican Communion.

Finally, in 1965, the Brazilian Church received its administrative autonomy and became the 19th Province of the Anglican Communion, with Bishop Primate the Most Rev. Egmont Machado Krischke elected as its First Bishop. The process was completed with the financial independence that took place in 1982. Brazilian autonomy meant that the Church would seek its own support with the gradual reduction of financial resources from the United States. But although a Ten-Year Plan was deployed, the national financial contribution turned out to be insufficient, and some projects and programmes were affected, among them, theological education.

It is worth remarking that the Church received its autonomy when the country, following the military *coup d'état* of 1964, lived through two decades of political, economic and cultural terrorism. The military coup influenced and damaged the Church's relations with the outside world, and ended relations with churches of other countries, especially the United States. Some clerics had to flee the country while others were arrested for their political and ideological views, which were contrary to those of the military regime.¹³

Following the Church's administrative and ecclesiastical autonomy, new dioceses were added: the Diocese of São Paulo (1969), the Diocese of Recife (1976), the Diocese of Brasília (1985), the Diocese of Pelotas (1988), the Diocese of Curitiba (2003), and the Diocese of Amazônia (2006). Also created was the Missionary Districts of the West.

Today, the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil has nine dioceses and the Missionary Districts of the West. It has churches and missions in more than 150 localities in the country, mostly in the south, and more than 100,000 baptized members and 45,000 confirmed.

¹³ See Kickhöfel, *Notas para uma história da Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil*, 216-38.

The 'other Anglicans'

We must recognize that both Brazilian society and the ecclesiastic sphere have changed much in recent decades, and today we cannot boast of being the only Anglicans in Brazil. Since the end of the 1990s, the Brazilian Anglican Church began to experience internal conflicts, as happened in the Episcopal Church of the United States of America and in some other churches of the Anglican Communion. Issues linked with liberalism versus orthodoxy and tradition versus modernism led to the formation of 'independent Anglicans' in Brazil. As a result, splits in Anglicanism have taken place in Brazil as in other Anglican churches and other Christian denominations.

Ecclesiological and theological highlights

At this time we can note several ecclesiological and theological highlights: first, the Church's ecumenical and social conscience was affirmed. It joined the World Council of Churches in 1966 and participated as a founding member of the National Council of Christian Churches (CONIC), the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI), and the Ecumenical and Service Co-ordination (CESE), as well as other ecumenical bodies. Relations with the Roman Catholic Church have improved through participation in the Anglican-Catholic National Committee (CONAC).

Secondly, a growing contextualized theological consciousness favoured the cause of Liberation Theology. We must remember that, after gaining its autonomy, the Church lived for two decades under a repressive military regime and could not be closed off from the world and society as if nothing was happening.

Thirdly, following a decision of its Synod in 1984, women started to be ordained as deacons and priests. At the time of writing, there are still no female bishops, although there is no canonical impediment. Currently, women form 30% of the clergy.

Fourthly, in the field of liturgy, the 1984 Synod approved the publication of an abbreviated edition of the Book of Common Prayer, influenced by the Book of Common Prayer of the American Church (1979). In addition, there was a renewal of music in the liturgy with the participation of Anglican and Brazilian composers.

Fifthly, theological education remained a weak point of the Church. For a long time, the Church had a National Seminary in Porto Alegre. In 1965 the Seminary was transferred to São Paulo. But in 1972, through lack of financial resources, the National Seminary of Sao Paulo had to close its doors until the Synod of 1984, when it was opened again, back in Porto Alegre. The seminary was closed once again with the claim that its location hindered access to it by students from the far south of the country. Consequently, two Provincial Seminaries were created, but with regional scope: SETEK (the Egmont Machado Krischke Theological Seminary, in

Porto Alegre) and SAET (the Anglican Theological Studies Seminary, in Recife).

The National Board of Theological Education (JUNET), which defines and supports theological education in the Province, tried several times and in several ways to solve this situation. However, even now the issue has not been completely resolved. In an attempt to deal with this, the National Board of Theological Education (JUNET) and the 2013 General Synod determined to leave the two regional seminaries (SETEK and SAET) as training and theological resources for Areas I (Porto Alegre) and III (Recife), and transferred all Provincial theological formation training to the Centre of Anglican Studies (CEA), founded in 1997, which at present is the agency responsible for planning and implementing all the Church's theological formation.

Therefore, the CEA, since 2015, has assumed this responsibility for the Church, focusing mainly on the modality of Distance Learning (ODL), marking a new strategy in delivering academic programmes and other learning resources developed by open universities and conventional educational institutions, but also combined with semi-present and present-based courses.

Finally, one should note the changing of the Church's official name. Historically, the Church has had different names: 'Brazilian Episcopal Church' (1900-1965) and 'Episcopal Church of Brazil' (since 1965). However, the General Synod of 1990 approved the inclusion of the term 'Anglican' in the Church's official name. Since then its official name has been 'Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil'. And with this change the Church has affirmed its loyalty and continuity with the historic episcopate, with links and relations with the Anglican Communion, and a commitment and engagement with the contextualization of the Church's mission in Brazil.

Mission and Future Projections

'... and you will be my witnesses...'

In 1999 the Mission Department and the General Secretariat of the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil produced a document called 'Fourteen Theological References to the Mission of the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil'.¹⁴ This document lists 5 marks for the Church's mission and future projection:¹⁵ to be a prophetic church, so that each person

¹⁴ See, *Revista Inclusividade* 7 (Ano III – Março 2004) pp. 111-114

¹⁵ The Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) formulated the *Five Marks of Mission* over a series of years (1984 *Bonds of Affection*; 1990 *Mission in a Broken World*). They have been affirmed by the bishops of the Anglican Communion at the 1988 and 1998 Lambeth Conferences, by the General Synod of the Church of

becomes a new creature, social structures to be at the service of justice, and the integrity of creation to be safeguarded. And a result of these, to develop a comprehensive, holistic and ecological mission, for which the Church bears witness to the forgiving, saving and reconciling love of Christ for all creatures.¹⁶

In line with these five marks, in the Pastoral Letter of the Bishops to the XXXII General Synod of the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil, celebrated in the city of Rio de Janeiro 14th-16th November 2013, the bishops added some improvements and challenges for the Church's mission and future projection.

Some of the improvements were, first, that the work in the Missionary District has been a clear sign of the Church's missionary commitment; secondly, that the Anglican Service of *Diakonia* and Development (SADD) has been a clear sign of the engagement of the Church in service to the world. Thirdly, that the transfer of the provincial headquarters to Sao Paulo represented the longing for greater effectiveness in the service and mission of the Church; fourthly, that the National Board of Theological Education (JUNET) has worked intensively on new structures of theological education in the Province, seeking to strengthen our ecclesial identity; and finally, that the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil continues stating its inter-Anglican and ecumenical engagement, marking a real and effective presence in civil society.

Among the future challenges these improvements pointed to were, first, that the social, political, cultural and religious reality features in an accelerated pace of change. Because of this, the Church needs to hear the call to testify to the presence of Christ in the world; secondly, the need to adapt the Constitution and Canons to the reality of the Church's situation. So, the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil must engage in an in-depth discussion on this subject, by a process that involves the whole Church, culminating with an Extraordinary Constituent Synod; and, finally, that among its many other theological, canonical, pastoral and organizational challenges, the Church must give attention to the issue of same-sex relationships. Consequently, it must develop at all levels serious pastoral

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England in 1996 and also in 2009 by the 76th General Convention of the American Episcopal Church (TEC): to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom; to teach, baptize and nurture new believers; to respond to human need by loving service; to seek to transform unjust structures of society; to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. See Documents of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC): Bonds of Affection-1984 ACC-6 p49, Mission in a Broken World-1990 ACC-8 p101). <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library.aspx?author=Anglican+Consultative+Council>.

¹⁶ See Carlos Eduardo Calvani, *Nossa Missão: Caderno de Estudos para Comunidades e Formação do Ministério Leigo* (Porto Alegre, Brazil: Centro de Estudos Anglicanos/CEA, 2008), 90-92.

reflection, providing some opportunity for the issue to be decided according to the doctrine of the Church.¹⁷

Just to complete this walk through more than a hundred years of history of the mission and witness of Anglicanism in Brazil, we could say that we cannot predict the future of Anglicanism or that of the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil, because the future of the Church, and its commitment to work together in the continuation of its mission in these lands, is in God's hands. However, what we can still say is that, indeed, 'The Lord has helped us to this very point.'

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¹⁷ See Câmara dos Bispos da IEAB, 'Carta Pastoral da Câmara dos Bispos da Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil', in *Todo ser humano é precioso aos olhos de Deus: Diálogos (indabas) sobre famílias e diversidade sexual*, Pedro Julio Triana Fernández (ed) (São Paulo, Brazil: Centro de Estudos Anglicanos/CEA, 2014), 55-57.

PART FIVE
THE CARIBBEAN

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‘WE MAKE THE ROAD BY WALKING’: AN INTERCULTURAL AND CONTEXTUAL APPROACH TO TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR MISSION

Jo Ella Holman

‘Are not the Indians, Men?’ Excerpt of a sermon by António de Montesinos as told by Friar Bartolomé de las Casas, Advent 1511, Santo Domingo¹

When Sunday and the hour to preach arrived... Father Fray António de Montesinos ascended the pulpit and took as the text and foundation of his sermon, which he carried written out and signed by the other friars: ‘I am the voice of one crying in the desert.’ ‘Tell me, by what right or justice do you hold these Indians in such a cruel and horrible slavery? By what right do you wage such detestable wars on these people who lived mildly and peacefully in their own lands, where you have consumed infinite numbers of them with unheard-of murders and desolations? Why do you so greatly oppress and fatigue them, not giving them enough to eat or caring for them when they fall ill from excessive labors, so that they die, or rather, are slain by you, so that you may extract and acquire gold every day? Are they not men? Do they not have rational souls? Are you not bound to love them as you love yourselves?’

In brief, the voice explained what it had emphasized before in such a way that it left them astonished – many numb as if without feeling, others more hardened than before, some somewhat penitent, but none, as I afterwards understood, converted.

Introduction

So begins the history of Christian mission in the western hemisphere, on the island of Hispaniola where I now live and serve. It is epic in its historical scope and tragic in its outcome. As I approached the teaching of my first missiology course a few years ago in the seminary of a Dominican partner church, I had to ask myself, ‘How do we talk about “mission” in a region where this is shaped by North American short-term mission teams?’ And, ‘How do we possibly engage in “mission” in this hemisphere, where the first “mission trip” ended in genocide?’

¹ Ondina E. Gonzalez and Justo L. Gonzalez, *Christianity in Latin America* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), 30 (Kindle).

Theological education for mission continues to be an area for growth and innovation as we prepare pastors and lay leaders to engage in local and international mission in the changing and overlapping contexts for mission. As theological educators, we have often failed to bridge the gap between missiological reflection in the Academy and mission praxis in particular contexts. Latin America and the Caribbean, more than other parts of the world, has had deep and broad experience in engaging North American church members in mission. Sometimes, long friendships and mission partnerships have resulted in mutuality and collaborative mission. All too often, the power dynamics and the different contexts for mission continue to result in paternalistic, even neo-colonial, attitudes and practices that run contrary to the gospel. ‘Best intentions’ are insufficient for the complexity of the globalized world in which we live and for the increasing local-global connections for mission engagement.

The unique context of Caribbean-North America history, the current economic, political and social inter-connectedness and the long experience of partnership between Caribbean and US Christians, provide an opportunity for experimenting with alternative approaches to theological education for mission. Faculty from the Seminario Evangélico Teológico (SET) in Matanzas, Cuba, and Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (LPTS) in the United States jointly sponsored an intensive five-day mission course for students in both institutions that they implemented in January 2015 in Matanzas. The course design sought to:

- explore ‘mission’ theologically, biblically and historically within the contexts of the two regions;
- connect local and global mission concerns;
- use narrative/storytelling and dialogue as critical pedagogies for encouraging critical consciousness and an analysis of past and contemporary issues in mission within these contexts; and
- create space for collaborative development of a framework for mission praxis within and between the two regions.

The Caribbean-US Short-term Mission Phenomenon

In the Caribbean context in which I serve as a mission co-worker, partner churches receive numerous mission teams each year, primarily from churches in the United States. Some of these US teams fit within a ‘short-term mission’ category – groups coming to do specific ministry projects, sometimes to the same location year after year and sometimes to a different location or even country. Other groups are part of longer-term partnerships between US congregations or other church bodies and their counterparts in a given country, but rely heavily on short-term trips to sustain the partnership. Both types generally include some projects that are funded from the US churches. An estimate of the scope of the ‘mission trip’ enterprise, globally, is that more than \$2 billion annually is spent in travel

and projects, and that as many as 1½ million US citizens participate each year.² A large percentage of them come every year to the Caribbean, Mexico and Central America, given their close proximity to the United States.

While thousands of congregations and other church bodies in the US participate regularly in direct international mission of these types (and often with considerable funds and influence on church counterparts and communities in other countries), theological education for pastors and lay leaders in mission theology, mission history and practice has lagged behind this tidal wave of the short-term mission movement. Many young people entering US seminaries today have grown up participating in short-term mission (in the US or internationally), and the experience largely governs their frame of reference for 'mission' in general. Some of these programmes were undoubtedly well-conceived and executed, but research in recent years questions the long-term benefits of these short-term trips for the churches or communities visited or for those travelling. And, in fact, many theologians and mission practitioners comment on the negative effects of the unequal power dynamics – as disempowering local churches and communities, as increasing dependency on outside funds, ideas and initiatives,³ and as fomenting competition and conflict within the 'receiving' churches and communities. Some liken the situation either to a 're-amateurization of mission'⁴ or to neo-colonialism.⁵ But many of those who level this critique also promote the potentially positive effects of short-term mission for both parties, given an appropriate marriage of theological/biblical reflection, lessons from mission history for sound missiological practices,⁶ and a more equal relationship that builds solidarity around global issues.⁷

² Robert J. Priest and Joseph Paul Priest, 'They see everything and understand nothing: Short-Term Mission and Service Learning', in *Missiology* XXXVI, No. 1 (January 2008), 53.

³ Reece, Robert, 'Short-term Mission and Dependency', World Mission Associates (Lancaster, PA: World Mission Associates): www.wmausa.org/page.aspx?id=242674 (accessed 29th December 2013).

⁴ Ralph D. Winter, 'The Re-Amateurization of Mission', in *Evangelical Missiological Society* (Spring 1996): www.dake.com/EMS/bulletins/winter.htm (accessed 5th May 2015).

⁵ Brian M. Howell, David Livermore, and Robert J. Priest, 'Should Churches Abandon Travel-Intensive Short-Term Missions in Favor of Local Projects? Three mission experts weigh in', in *Christianity Today* (June 2012): www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/june/short-term-missions.html (accessed 29th December 2013).

⁶ Christopher J. Ducker, *Labouring Together, Listening Together? Improving the Effectiveness of Short-Term Mission in Moldova by Understanding Church Leaders' Experiences of Working with Foreign Short-Term Missionaries*. Master's thesis, Redcliffe College, UK (July 2012), 16.

⁷ Julie Adkins, 'Beyond Development and "Projects": The Globalization of Solidarity', Tara Hefferan, Julie Adkins and Laurie A. Occhipinti (eds), *Bridging the*

A typical US seminary will offer a few mission courses that may be taken as electives. Many have a mission professor who is personally experienced as a practitioner in mission (often having served for some years in another country) as well as academically trained in the area. But few US denominations require any mission courses of their candidates for ministry, and even fewer opportunities for training lay leaders exist within seminary offerings. Therefore, much of the education of pastors and laity about mission has either been through their personal experience and reading or has been left to independent mission organizations, each with its particular understanding of the content and the practices of mission. Most 'mainline' denominations in the US offer some educational resources and limited conferences or workshop opportunities about mission for pastors and church members, but they are insufficient to the need and are rarely connected with the seminary curriculum.

Even so, many US mission teams, church mission leaders and committees as practitioners of mission are reading recent books that call into question the prevalent trends in short-term mission practice that have focused on the compassionate impulses for 'doing for' or 'to', and that propose various remedies to the problems they provoke, for example, *When Helping Hurts*⁸ and *Toxic Charity*.⁹ They are beginning to ask different questions, and often their counterparts in another country have not had the benefit of reading the same books – or even having them available and in the relevant language. The effect is to distance further the two parties when deeper conversations and greater collaboration is required.

In the countries that have been and continue to be on the receiving end of these trips, pastors and lay leaders are sometimes ill prepared theologically or practically concerning mission. As in the US, few seminaries offer more than a few courses about mission and often these are electives. Rarely are the seminaries or churches financially able to offer workshops or educational materials for their pastors and lay leaders to consider together their understanding of mission and to contextualize it for their place, history and culture. And with a long history of being 'receivers' of mission benefits (visitors, funds, buildings, etc.), there is often a resistance from this side of the mission relationship to becoming full partners in mission. There are, of course, some notable exceptions, but this is the general trend.

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Therefore, there exists a need for transformation on both sides of the Caribbean-United States mission partner equation: transforming

Gaps: Faith-Based Organizations, Neo-Liberalism, and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, Lexington Books, 2009), 103-18.

⁸ Steve Corbett and Bruce Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor and Yourself* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2009).

⁹ Robert D. Lupton, *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help and How to Reverse It* (New York: Harper One, 2011).

understandings, power dynamics, motives and mission practices. This transformation is needed for both local and global mission engagement, because in both situations, the church is reaching out to the 'other'. Locally (in both regions), a church may 'go' in mission across town to another community that is culturally, linguistically, racially and/or economically 'different' from the initiating church. And, if the 'going' is across international borders, these differences in location and in perspective exist and are often amplified. In many cases, the 'local' context has become 'global', both through the presence of immigrant groups and through the connection of global issues with the local context.

Caribbean Historical Memory and a Theological Response

While European and, later, US churches were sending missionaries, the Caribbean peoples were the receivers of this mission. We might call the original encounter between Europeans and the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean 'Ground Zero' for mission in this hemisphere. The Caribbean island of Hispaniola, Columbus' first stop on his first voyage, and the site of the first encounter between Europeans and the indigenous peoples in this hemisphere, ended in the total decimation of the indigenous peoples of Hispaniola and many other islands. This encounter by European Christians, sailing under the protection of the Crown and the Roman Catholic Church, and the indigenous, is well-known in the Caribbean and throughout Latin America as 'The Conquest under the cross and the sword'.¹⁰ The importation of African slaves added to and deepened the tragedy. The very soil and water of Hispaniola, of Cuba, of Jamaica and countless other islands bear witness to this human tragedy and to the environmental tragedy that followed. Every Caribbean schoolchild knows the story. Few North Americans or Europeans understand this same story in the way it is contextualized and 'felt' in Latin America and the Caribbean.

But this violent current was not the only one that ran through the church at that time. For in these same lands, the Dominican friar Ant3nio de Montesinos, in 1511 – nineteen years after Columbus' first landfall – preached a famous sermon on the island of Hispaniola, denouncing the enslavement and cruelty practised on the peoples of the Caribbean. In December 2011, in Santo Domingo, the Dominican order and the country at large commemorated the 500th anniversary of Montesino's famous sermon, with sermons about the current conditions of inhumanity, injustice and violence.

¹⁰ H. McKennie Goodpasture (ed), *Cross and Sword: An Eyewitness History of Christianity in Latin America* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989). This phrase (cross and sword) is in the title and not in any specific place in the book that I can find. The articles are drawn from various historians of the period.

It was Montesinos' sermon that convicted and galvanized Friar Bartolomé de las Casas into becoming the voice of indigenous peoples, writing and even travelling back to Spain to defend them in the courts. Likewise, de las Casas records the story of the Taino chief Hatuey who fled Hispanola for Cuba and was burned at the stake for leading a rebellion of indigenous and runaway African slaves against the Spaniards.¹¹

This first 'mission' encounter in the Caribbean is, therefore, Ground Zero for mission and is replete with material for theological and biblical reflection about the nature of mission and how we are to go about it. In 'From Genocide to Global Ethics by Way of Storytelling',¹² ethicist Darrell J. Fasching advocates that theology can only be done with Auschwitz and Hiroshima in mind. While I agree with Fasching, I would also propose that this earlier genocide in the western hemisphere provides a pivotal touchstone for theological reflection on the missionary enterprise, particularly within this hemisphere, and it may well be instructive to mission endeavours in other parts of the world.

The churches in the Caribbean have been doing their own theological and missiological reflection, particularly in the years since the independence movements of the 1960s and 1970s through to the present day. Some Christians in the countries where Spanish is spoken have been influenced by the Liberation Theology that emerged from South and Central America, in the work of such Roman Catholic theologians as Gustavo Gutiérrez¹³ in Peru and Jon Sobrino¹⁴ in El Salvador, and Protestants writing on 'integrated' or 'holistic' mission, such as Ecuadoran Carlos René Padilla and José Miguez Bonino from Argentina. Some English-speaking theologians in the former British colonies have reflected deeply on their shared history of African diaspora and slavery, and discuss a theology of 'emancipation'¹⁵ and a biblical hermeneutic of resistance.¹⁶

A common, though not the only, theme in these writings is that of freedom and bondage – of bodies, but also of minds and spirits. A common practice is the grounding of theology in real, historical times and places, rather than treating theology as an abstract set of principles that can

¹¹ Ondina E. Gonzalez and Justo L. Gonzalez, *Christianity in Latin America* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), 28-29 (Kindle).

¹² Darrell J. Fasching, 'From Genocide to Global Ethics by Way of Storytelling', in *Explorations in Global Ethics: Comparative Religious Ethics and Interreligious Dialogue*, Sumner B. Twiss and Bruce Grelle (ed) (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), 291-321.

¹³ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988).

¹⁴ Jon Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator: A Historical-Theological View* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993).

¹⁵ Kortright Davis, *Emancipation Still Comin': Explorations in Caribbean Emancipatory Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990).

¹⁶ Oral Thomas, *Biblical Resistance Hermeneutics within a Caribbean Context* (Oakville, CT: Equinox Publishing, 2010).

sometimes bear little relation to current life and societal struggles. In these commonalities, many recent theologians and missiologists in the Caribbean region stand in the tradition of Montesinos and las Casas as they seek to articulate present-day contexts and struggles, and a faithful Christian response.

Throughout Latin America and the Caribbean – as around the world – many have been influenced by the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, who was the first to introduce what has come to be known as 'critical pedagogy'. Freire's seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*,¹⁷ gave a language and a methodology to those marginalized and impoverished around the world for understanding the forces that have shaped their lived reality and for finding ways together to change society.

In Freire, as in much of Caribbean theological reflection, a 'decolonizing' of the mind is still necessary in today's globalized context and on both sides of the equation. While most North Americans and, perhaps, Europeans, would bristle at being described today as 'colonizers', I would contend that the forces of globalization that are currently at work in the world still divide us as in 'colonial days' by our access to education, healthcare, employment, wealth and security of person and family. Those of us from North America and Europe still benefit in many ways from the larger systems at work in the world. So Caribbean history and theology and Freire's work with critical pedagogies have much to offer all of us together.

The Course Design

The five-day, intensive course that was planned with faculty of both Cuban and US seminaries sought to speak to and from the contexts just described. In a collaborative project such as this one, each side contributed ideas for readings and exploration during the course. Perhaps one of the most difficult tasks was to select and limit the content to be covered. As one professor said afterwards, 'We professors always want to add just one more reading, one more topic. In this case, less was more.' The methodology and the intercultural participant composition of the course constituted the major departures from the 'usual' missiology courses.

Twenty-three students made up the course, thirteen from the US and ten from Cuba. Students from the US seminary were Master's degree students in their second or final year of study. Students from the Cuban seminary were a combination of fifth-year, Licenciatura students and recently graduated students serving congregations.

¹⁷ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1970).

Narrative as Content and Methodology

Narrative or story-telling as primary content and as methodology was used at several points during the course. First, each participant wrote, and then told to a small group, his or her personal narrative of an experience in mission and what was important about that experience for their understanding of ‘mission’. These stories brought concreteness to the tasks of the course and grounding in a local or global context of the student’s choosing.

Secondly, biblical stories were important foundational narratives. Through two sessions, using a total of five New Testament texts, the contexts of each community and historical period were analyzed, and questions of inclusion and exclusion for gender, ethnic groups and economic status were discussed with their implications for mission.

Thirdly, the story of the first encounter between European Christians and the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean provided the substance of two competing narratives within the context of two regions: the European, colonial empire narrative and the Caribbean regional counter-narrative represented in the stories of Fray Ant3nio de Montesinos, Bartolom3 de las Casas, and the Jesuits in Uruguay (from the movie, ‘The Mission’). A visit to the Museum of Slavery, a UNESCO world heritage museum in Matanzas, encouraged a deepening and broadening of the narrative to include the importation of slaves and its ongoing significance for this context. This historical narrative provided a window into the past – events, theological and anthropological positions – and a lens through which to view their survival and effects in present-day society and in mission endeavours.

Narratives were introduced through drama and story-telling: story-telling of a personal experience in mission; a re-enactment of las Casas’ narration and Montesinos’ sermon; excerpts of the movie ‘The Mission’;¹⁸ a first-person narrative of a woman’s story to introduce ‘integral’ mission.

The three types of narratives – personal, biblical and historical – served as foundations for exploring together two recent theological documents on mission and evangelization, one from the World Council of Churches and one from Pope Francis I, and to begin to develop, together, criteria for assessing and creating mission activities or initiatives. At this point the group was ready to experience different mission activities in the surrounding area and to apply the previous lessons to these new settings.

¹⁸ *The Mission*, directed by Roland Joff3, screenplay by Robert Bolt, featuring Robert de Niro and Jeremy Irons (Warner Bros., 1986), DVD (Warner Home Video, 2003).

Contextual Theology as Method

In each of the narratives and subsequent local visits to mission activities of local churches and organizations, keen attention was given to the context of each and the theology that emerged from them. What was the theological basis? Was there a particular scripture that informed it? Whose interests were being served and whose were left out? What was the community's involvement in decision-making? In each of these narrative or experiential encounters, we were attempting to do contextual theology – theology that comes out of a particular local or regional situation, culture or group. Contextual theology is prominent as method in all forms of post-colonial, feminist and liberation theologies, and is also largely used – for good or ill – in constructing missiology. As a theological method, it focuses on the relationship among three primary factors: gospel, church tradition and culture.¹⁹

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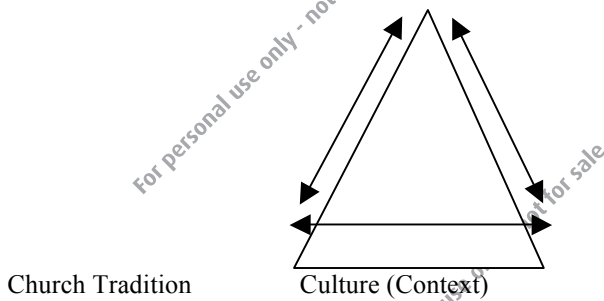


Figure 1

Our current world context is globalized: interdependent economies with an interchange of cultures, ideas and peoples by communication and transportation systems that allow for rapid transmission and rapid change. Therefore, we must pay attention to both the local and the global context, and how one interacts with the other. The local was approached through recounting personal experiences, the biblical stories, and experiencing together particular mission activities. The global was approached through the interaction of the two regional narratives and two recent global mission and evangelization documents (WCC and Vatican) and the biblical

¹⁹ Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology, Revised and Expanded Edition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 3-27.

foundations within each. The final day was spent in attempting to construct a missiology that would respond to the contexts of both regions.²⁰

Critical Pedagogy as Content and Method

Critical pedagogy was extremely useful for this course through the various points of intersection between the goal of critical pedagogy and the content and method of contextual theology, particularly as it emerges from the Caribbean region. The goal of critical pedagogy is emancipatory or liberative knowledge and praxis. Emancipatory knowledge helps us to understand how social relationships are distorted and manipulated by relationships of power and privilege within a culture or society. It analyzes the interchange between the individual and the historical, political, social and economic foundations of a society. It creates a foundation for social justice, equality and empowerment.²¹

In order to understand and then to construct a contextual theology for mission and evangelization in our two regions, we used a dialectical exploration through dialogue, in small groups and then within the larger group. Dialectical thinking enables us to consider both sides of contradictions that can lead to constructive thinking and action. It is an open, questioning form of thinking: the relationship of parts to a whole; subject-object; knowledge-action (McLaren, 70). For example, we examined local experiences within the larger frameworks of our regional history in the colonial period; 'empire' values and priorities (as exemplified by the colonial powers), and Kingdom of God values and priorities (as exemplified by Montesinos, las Casas and the Jesuits of Uruguay).

The overall conceptual framework just described was used to develop the course, together with components the team identified to encourage and support a multicultural, dual language learning community:

- Superb simultaneous translation and small group translation.
- Readings in both Spanish and English.
- Faculty planning and participation from both seminaries.
- Shared worship, meals, living space and fellowship activities.
- Use of small groups, each representing the diversity of nationality, language, gender, race and denomination within the bi-national group.
- Open use of space to promote participation by all, and equality among learners (including the faculty). Is there any document where

²⁰ Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), 22-38.

²¹ Peter McLaren, 'Critical Pedagogy: A look at the Major Concepts', in *The Critical Pedagogy Reader*, Antonia Darder, Marta Baltodano and Rodolfo D. Torres (eds) (New York: Routledge Falmer, 2003), 73.

this information could be found? You create a footnote here. No, this wasn't from a book.

The Outcomes

In both written evaluations and group discussion of the course, participants and faculty alike were very positive about the intercultural, bilingual environment created, the methodologies used, and the learning and results produced. In critical pedagogy, there is an assumption that each participant (teacher and student) brings experiences and knowledge to bear on the collective enterprise – and that certainly was the case on this course. The personal narratives that the students prepared in advance and then shared in their small groups evidenced a wide range and depth of mission experiences, mostly in local communities.

The space provided in the course schedule for sharing those experiences was very effective (from the students' evaluation comments) for enriching the idea of 'mission'; for helping them to construct new paradigms; for developing a more integrated vision of God's mission; and for naming similarities and differences in mission contexts. The same ongoing small groups also led to a deep bonding among students in a short time period as they shared their experiences and their ideas about the material being introduced on the course.

Small group discussions and visits to mission projects and communities in the area were deemed favourite methodologies by the students. Faculty commented on the powerful use of the small groups as learning tools through the types of questions asked and the products created together. The visits gave a shared point of reference for later discussions and concrete experiences of contextualized mission in specific communities. The students most frequently named the two recent mission and evangelism documents (Protestant and Roman Catholic), and the sharing of personal mission experiences, as the 'content' most important for their understanding of mission. Several also mentioned the Bible studies and the final session on 'constructing' essential elements of a mission theology.

The two most frequently mentioned 'new ideas' about mission that students of both Cuban and US groups named were:

1. The importance of context for mission – of starting 'from the bottom up', as one person described it. In the sharing of their different contexts for mission, they were able to affirm some common challenges as well as name differences that context engenders.
2. 'Integral' mission in its fullness, including the 'whole person' (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual) and 'the person within their society'. Some connected 'integral mission' with the idea that

mission needs to focus on entire systems that seek to uncover root causes of problems and to see them in their societal context.²²

3. Several students mentioned having a different understanding of ‘interfaith dialogue’²³ as a result of the course, by placing it within the community context. Some widely held convictions at the end of the course were: the importance of relationship in mission; humility on the part of those engaging in mission, along with respect for the dignity of each person encountered; and that the creation of space in mission for dialogue was an important practice.

All the students were able to name specific parts of the course that they would be able to apply to mission in their local context (Cuba and US) as well as to international partnerships or with people of other nationalities in their own communities. Attention to context and history, opportunities for sharing life stories and equality of participation, were among some of the applications named in both.

On the course’s final day, participants worked in small groups and then the larger group to create together and build consensus around what they deemed ‘essential elements in the praxis of mission’, whether in Cuba, the US or together. Their final list of essential elements of mission included:

- Integral Mission as the mission of God for individuals (‘the whole person’), society and all creation.
- Contextual mission in the context of communities.
- A spirituality of joy and peace as we engage in mission.
- Ecumenical and interfaith dialogue, in relationship and with respect.
- Addressing structural causes of injustice (being prophetic).
- Transformation of the church itself for creative mission by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Suggestions for Future Applications of the Course Design and Methodology

There is an oft-quoted poem from the Cuban poet Antonio Machado (*Hacemos Camino al Caminar*) [We make the road by walking].²⁴ These brief five days together were a process of ‘making the road’ by walking it together. As one student commented during the evaluation discussion on

²² C. René Padilla, ‘What is Integral Mission?’ Del Camino Network: <http://lareddelcamino.net/en/images/Articles/what%20is%20integral%20mission%20cr%20padilla.pdf> (accessed 5th May 2015).

²³ ‘Principles and Guidelines for Interfaith Dialogue’, Scarborough Missions: https://www.scarboromissions.ca/Interfaith_dialogue/guidelines_interfaith.php (accessed 5th May 2015).

²⁴ Chris Cavanagh, ‘Some Poems by Antonio Machado’, in *Comeuppance* (blog), 30th December 2008: <http://comeuppance.blogspot.com/2008/12/some-poems-by-antonio-machado.html> (accessed 30th March 2015).

23rd January 2015. In some ways, our experience as a diverse group was an example of the concepts we talked about. We had to work hard at communicating, crossing boundaries and being in real relationship.

Some theological educators will have the opportunity to develop a similar, bi-national course for seminarians in two countries and may be able to adapt this basic design and methodology for such a course. Others will not have that possibility, but I believe there are some practices within the approach described here that could yield some similar lessons through working hard at communicating, crossing boundaries and being in real relationship with each other in the diversity of the class and with others outside the class. Some examples:

1. 'Modelling' basic tenets of critical pedagogy in the structure of a course, for example: planning for equal participation of all, even as it relates to the use of space; respect and dialogue as integral to the course methods; various ways of examining power dynamics, such as drawing on personal experiences and juxtaposing them with larger societal or historical frameworks, so that individuals can begin to see how they 'fit' within the culture/society, including their own privilege, where applicable. Narrative was an integral part of the course described and there are many possible ways it might be used within a 'traditional' seminary course.
2. Finding creative ways to include other voices, particularly community voices, as integral to the course. Perhaps a seminary might partner with another seminary in the same geographic area, but from a different Christian (or other) faith tradition or one that has a different racial, ethnic or language group composition. Perhaps there are local congregations composed primarily of non-dominant culture/race/ethnic groups who might be willing to partner with seminarians in particular discussions about, or activities in, mission.
3. Finding ways to get out into the community and practise skills of listening and diagnosing together issues within the community and bringing those experiences back into 'the classroom'.
4. Introducing simulations and case studies very intentionally into courses for practice in listening, analyzing and practising mission concepts.
5. Integrating missional concepts and practices and critical pedagogy within other theology and ministry courses, so that they are not limited to one course of study.

The examples here would require less in terms of 'content', but more in terms of practice. Given that most seminarians will be likely to participate in only one course on mission in the entirety of their seminary experience, developing skills in the practice of mission is essential.

'We make the road by walking'. This course was one small attempt at a different approach to theological education for mission, one that sought to ground mission theologically, biblically and historically in particular

contexts; to integrate local and global concerns; to develop greater critical consciousness and analysis of past and present mission challenges; and to create space for the collaborative development of mission praxis across the many borders we erect among ourselves.²⁵ My deep thanks go to the faculty team that walked with me in this experience: to the Seminario Evangélico Teológico (SET) faculty team in Matanzas, Cuba, professors Daniel Montoya, Clara Luz Ajo, Ofelia Ortega and Reinerio Arce, and to Clifton Kirkpatrick of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

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²⁵ See Jo Ella W. Holman, *'We Make the Road by Walking': An Intercultural, Contextual Approach to Teaching and Learning for Mission*. Doctor of Ministry Project Report, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 2015.

EMERGING CONTEMPORARY CONTEXTS OF MISSION: THE CUBAN CONTRIBUTION TO EDINBURGH 2010

Carlos E. Ham

Introduction and Historical Background

The World Mission Conference, which was held in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1910, under the slogan 'The evangelization of the world in this generation', marks the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement. Although among the delegates there were missionaries from the United States serving in Latin America, this continent was excluded because it was considered 'Christian' or already 'evangelized' due to the historical presence of the Roman Catholic Church in the region.

Since these missionaries did not agree with this thesis, considering the Latin American continent 'pagan', they held a conference in New York in March 1913 on Foreign Missions of North America, thus forming the first Committee for Latin America Co-operation (CLAC), which would be responsible for co-ordinating future mission conferences in Latin America and therefore marking the beginning of Latin American ecumenism.

The first conference to be organized was the Congress for Christian Action in Latin America, which was held in Panama City in February 1916, but was still considered 'foreign' as it was conceived and co-ordinated by missionaries and executives of foreign missions and proceedings were held completely in English. Nevertheless, there was an intentional effort to develop the educational level of the churches and leaders in the region, through the creation of theological seminaries, as well as their social services, the founding and building of hospitals and other similar institutions. There was an increased awareness of the need to pass these ministries into the hands of Latin American Protestants.

Subsequently, CLAC planned two conferences, one in South America and one in the Caribbean-Central American region. The first one was held in Montevideo, Uruguay, in March 1925, but still did not reflect a genuine Latin American identity, as this event continued to be sponsored by North American missions. However, it was considered a bridge between the Congress of Panama and the Congress of Havana, which was the second CLAC conference. As an illustration of this, it was carried out in both languages, i.e. English and Spanish.

The Havana Hispanic-American Evangelical Congress was held on June 1929, as stated above, for the Protestant churches of the northern part of

Latin America, namely, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Central America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean (Cuba and Puerto Rico).¹ As its name implies, this Congress opened a new chapter in the search for Latin American Protestant identity since it was planned and organized by Latin Americans and held entirely in Spanish.

The chairman of the meeting, Gonzalo Baez Camargo, noted in this regard that in Panama the Anglo-Saxons dominated, while in Montevideo the Latin Americans had a much bigger role to play, but in Havana, the role of the Americans was like that of the Latin Americans at the Panama meeting.²

So the importance of the Havana Congress is that for the first time it gathered the Latin American Protestants as agents of God's mission in the continent, 'walking with their own feet' and without US tutelage, as had occurred in previous congresses. Just as the Edinburgh conference had a global impact, so in Latin America the Congress of Havana marked the beginning of Latin American unity for mission and thus created the basis for Latin American Protestant missionary work until now. Furthermore, the Havana Congress also contributed to a socio-political awareness among all participants, as various analyses were made on new contexts of mission emerging in the region.

It is precisely after the Havana Congress that various councils of churches and seminaries in different countries of Latin America were founded. Some historians also marked this congress as the beginning of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI), and there was even a reference to the need for creating an international federation of Protestant churches, which actually took place in 1948, with the creation of the World Council of Churches.³

As a matter of fact, one of the reasons why this new Protestant missionary movement became popular, particularly among the intellectuals of the continent, was its variety of concepts and practice of freedom. There were new ideas related to Christian thought as well as new and relevant understandings of democracy. These progressive trends permeated the historical and overwhelmingly Roman Catholic tradition that had imposed a monolithic, hierarchical and clerical style of church life. The fact that the common people in the pews could have access to different translations of the Bible and have active participation in the liturgy and work of the church brought significant changes. In many countries, most missionary efforts by Protestant churches became more attractive to people than those of the Roman Catholic Church.

¹ Hence, most references to the Caribbean region in this article are to these Spanish-speaking islands, which are also part of Latin America.

² Gonzalo Báez-Camargo. *Hacia la renovación religiosa en Hispanoamérica* (Mexico: Casa Unida de Publicaciones, 1930), 23.

³ WCC, 'Building an Interfaith Community', *oikoumene*: www.oikoumene.org (accessed 30th May 2015).

Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Havana Congress

A conference took place at the Evangelical Theological Seminary of Matanzas (SET), Cuba, 22nd-26th June 2009. Its purpose was to celebrate the eightieth anniversary of the Havana Congress. This event was done in the framework of the centennial celebration of the World Mission Conference of Edinburgh. Other continental organizations included the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI), the Cuban Council of Churches (CIC), the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Center (CMMLK) and the Evangelical Theological Seminary of Matanzas (SET) that organized the event.⁴

The 92 participants, namely, church and ecumenical leaders, as well as scholars from churches and ecumenical movements – 42 from abroad and 50 Cubans – met under the theme ‘Mission and Evangelism for the 21st Century in Latin America and the Caribbean’. They represented a wide range of Protestant denominations and a variety of movements, which testified to the diversity and vitality of Latin American and Caribbean Protestant movements eight decades after the Havana Congress.

There were three themes that were central in the reflections of the 1929 Havana Congress. These themes continued to be pivotal in the task of reading God’s mission from a Latin America perspective. Such themes continue to be central to God’s mission in the 21st century. The three themes were: (a) Latin American Protestant identity, rooted and embodied in the culture and history of their people; (b) Christian unity in relation to common witness in Latin America; and (c) The holistic character of church’s mission, in obedience to God’s commission to proclaim the Kingdom of God by word and deed.⁵

Four objectives were set for the 2009 Havana conference, which were met to a great extent, namely: (a) Conduct an analysis of the Latin American context where the churches accomplish their mission. (b) Continue studying critically Protestant mission and evangelism in Latin America over the past eighty years. (c) Reflect on the challenges and opportunities for Latin American churches to complete their transforming mission. And finally (d) Make a contribution from Latin America to the centennial celebration of Edinburgh in 2010.⁶

The participants at the 2009 event delivered a statement that covered, among others, the following sections: the meaning of the 1929 Havana Congress; some biblical paradigms for rethinking God’s mission; mission

⁴ Nilton Giese (ed), *Misión y Evangelización en América Latina y el Caribe para el Siglo XXI*: Congreso Evangélico Hispano-Americano de la Habana (Quito: CLAI, 2009), 241.

⁵ Carlos E. Ham, ‘Visión de Otros Contextos’, in *Revista Camino* (2009), 1-7.

⁶ See, Carlos E. Ham, “Comunidades Cristianas en Contextos Contemporáneos: Una Perspectiva Latinoamericana,” in *Misión y Evangelización en América Latina y el Caribe para el Siglo XXI*: Congreso Evangélico Hispano-Americano de la Habana, Nilton Giese, ed. (Quito: CLAI, 2009).

and evangelism; the perspective of marginalized sectors and a path of enculturation.

There was also a section called *Contributions to Edinburgh*,⁷ which we shared at the centennial celebration of Edinburgh 2010.⁸ This portion is sub-divided into mission and power; mission and unity; ecclesiology and mission; the integrity of mission; spirituality in mission and real discipleship. In the following pages, we will proceed to summarize the main points of this statement.

Meaning of the 1929 Havana Congress

Apparently, those who attended the conference in Edinburgh were not aware of their different ideological assumptions – for instance, that Christian missions established an evangelistic and ideological social pattern according to western capitalist models, or that they held a natural understanding that Christianity as a religion was superior to others. They were not aware of their claims that they were above other political positions, in other words, that their mission was a-political.⁹

Edinburgh was important, however, for the recognition of the need to move beyond local and regional contexts; that the denominational divisions of the churches was a scandal that undermined their testimony; and they also refused to accept that Christians in non-Christian lands should ultimately be responsible for Christian mission, according to their own perspectives.¹⁰

The contemporary understanding of mission has changed between Edinburgh 2010 and the present day. Churches now recognize that mission begins with God and that the church does not so much have a mission, but rather that God's mission has the church. Also, that mission is a two-way street through which we Christians share what we receive from God. They are also aware that western cultures, as a cradle of violence, racism, massive pollution and unequal distribution of goods, cannot claim moral or spiritual superiority over other cultures.¹¹

The 1929 Havana congress represented historically the moment when the Latin Americans broke into Protestant missionary work as actors who took possession of the theological, political and cultural space that belonged to them. This was the space where Latin American Protestantism

⁷ Giese, *Misión y Evangelización*, 236-40.

⁸ Carlos E. Ham, 'Christian Communities in contemporary Contexts', Edinburgh 2010 (June 2010): www.edinburgh2010.org/en/resources/papersdocuments8bd7.pdf?no_cache=1&cid=33877&did=21854&sechash=e9f918b5 (accessed 20th May 2015).

⁹ Giese, *Misión y Evangelización*, 223-24.

¹⁰ Giese, 224.

¹¹ Giese, 224.

showed its maturity, its autonomy, its missiological perspective, and its evangelical and ecumenical nature.¹²

Some Biblical Paradigms for Rethinking God's Mission

'Who is it you are looking for?' (John 20:15, NIV). The question of Jesus to Mary Magdalene in Gethsemane remains crucial to mission, because the truth of the faith we proclaim must be the expression of a consistent monitoring, a constant search for the risen Jesus at all times and everywhere, especially among those to whom he always showed a preferential love: the victims of injustice, selfishness, violence, exclusion, lack of love. To listen and discover the risen Christ, particularly among those who suffer, completely changes the perspective of these events. The empty tomb is no longer a manifestation of death but becomes a real witness to the power of life.

The missionary mandate of Jesus is as simple and as deep as his own life and ministry: 'Do not hold on to me' (John 20:17, NIV). In our human tendency, we always want to control the Lord, to keep him for us, to make him mine instead of ours. This, from the perspective of the resurrection, is not only a real heresy, but an unforgivable interference between what Jesus came to offer, i.e. what God has planned for the risen Christ and what our imperfect and limited nature tries to do so often, wanting to hold him and mould him into our prejudices, and into our denominational and individualistic expectations.

The loving attitude of God invites us to rethink the issue of denominational identity, unity and mission from the perspective of orphan children, who are the most vulnerable in a world overwhelmed by the injustice of the powerful. The orphans of Latin America offer us the opportunity to approach them to affirm the loving identity of God, to unite in true bonds of unity, and to fulfil God's mission among all those thirsty for love.

In the eschatological vision, God will change the unjust order established by those who crush the weak with their boots and roll their garments with blood. The message of the prophet Isaiah raises the children in his arms to find in them the redemptive power of God:

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah. 9:6 NIV)

Jesus forgave, healed, cast out demons, taught, proclaimed, denounced, and finally offered his life, and called his followers to a discipleship of service and risk. He proclaimed the need to shift from conflict to peace, from injustice to justice, from racism to solidarity, from hate to love. That way we have been enabled to understand *missio Dei*, which is completely

¹² Giese, 224.

opposite to the alienating and escapist electronic evangelism where the Spirit is not present.

Mission and Evangelism

The first mission model implemented by Europeans in Latin America and the Caribbean was based on an evangelism that meant transposition of institutions, symbols, concepts and moral habits, first of the European and later of the American Christian cultures. The encounter between faith and the indigenous reality, between the gospel and the indigenous and Afro-descendant cultures were barely present.¹³

This model of mission still remains; it has justified not only the colonization of territories but also of minds, thoughts, knowledge, of the conception of God, of the place of God in Latin American history. Its logic remains behind the concept of mission that is used in Christian theology until now, and which is manifested in a hierarchical, patriarchal, ethnocentric and ecclesio-centric conception of the church.¹⁴ Mission is found within the same colonial logic that leads to pastoral practices of domination that ignore the importance of the other, and the value of different cultures and religious experiences.

Nevertheless, a mission that is committed to decolonization must not be limited to renewing its content, its form, its ardour, methods or expressions. A renewal of the understanding of mission itself is necessary too.

To live God's mission in a world marked by injustice is to make a break with indifference and to develop together with the churches the capacity to impact, to move to face the necessity of the other. It means raising social awareness by thinking critically and acting in solidarity with the poor and marginalized.

These two movements, of making visible the action of God in the world, and the traditions and cultures of our peoples, on the one hand; and the outrage against the denial of life, transforming the realities of injustice and death, on the other, are expressions of a decolonizing mission. Understood in this way, mission promotes the formation of free men and women, children of God, created in the image and likeness of their Creator.

Evangelism focuses on the explicit and intentional formulation of the gospel, including the invitation to personal conversion to a new life in Christ and discipleship.¹⁵ However, the values transmitted through evangelism are not alien to justice, in relation to the redistribution of

¹³ Julio E. Murray, Giese, 'Coyuntura eclesial y ecuménica latinoamericana', in *Revista Caminos* (10th January, 2009), 82.

¹⁴ See Silvia Regina de Lima Silva, 'Mission and Afro-Brazilian Cultural Reality', in *International Review of Mission*, LXXXV:338 (July 1996): <http://sedosmission.org/old/eng/silvia.htm> (accessed 30th May 2015).

¹⁵ See Jacques Matthey, *You are the Light of the World*. Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches, 1980-2005 (Geneva, Switzerland: WCC, 2005).

property, nor are they unrelated to the search for peace in the world, much less to dignifying people, or to the problem of violence and war, terrorism – in short, to human suffering.

Evangelism cannot and should not ignore human realities. Thus, when the human being is valued, everything changes: men, women and children are honoured; the sick are cared for and the elderly live and die with dignity; prisoners are rehabilitated; neglected minorities and the oppressed are released; and workers receive fair wages under decent working conditions.¹⁶

We believe that there can be no true evangelism without solidarity; and that genuine Christian solidarity means sharing the knowledge of God's kingdom, which is the promise of God to the poor of the earth. It is impossible to think of evangelism without thinking about a church that incarnates sacrificially Jesus Christ in the community where it lives and serves.

The Perspective of Marginalized Sectors

Regional autonomies, a way of correcting historical injustices regarding indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants, sometimes had a counterproductive effect, since they denied to the majority the fruits of their achievements in relation to the national power. This poses the challenge of promoting policies that respect the territories of indigenous peoples, recognizing their identities, as well as the principle of their political, cultural and territorial self-determination.¹⁷

On the other hand, women have carried most of the burden of economic suffering under neo-liberalism, and growing violence in their daily lives. Poverty, exclusion, discrimination, exploitation, inequality, inequity, violence and death, today have a female face.¹⁸

Today, the indigenous and Afro-descendant people challenge the churches to recognize the richness of their culture and spirituality, which emphasizes interconnectedness and reciprocity with the whole creation. Voodoo played a major role in the black resistance in Haiti.¹⁹ It is just one example of the real possibility of finding signs of hope in other religious expressions. The towns and communities of these people ask the churches to work in association with them, exercising mission as equals, in mutual sharing.

¹⁶ Héctor Petrecca, 'Nuestra Misión en el Siglo XXI', in Giese, *Misión y Evangelización en América Latina y el Caribe para el Siglo XX*, 101.

¹⁷ Petrecca, 'Nuestra Misión', 102.

¹⁸ Franklin Canelos, 'Los Cambios Demográficos en la Región', in Giese, *Misión y Evangelización en América Latina y el Caribe para el Siglo XXI*, 51.

¹⁹ See Mambo Chita Tann, *Haitian Vodou: Introduction to Haiti's Indigenous Tradition* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2012), 55.

Misconceptions, some based on the Scriptures, have led many people to link disability with shame, sin and unbelief. They forget that all life is a gift from God. This includes all people, whatever their abilities or disabilities; since every human being has intrinsic gifts and has something to share with others.

God's mission is to advocate the inclusion and active participation of people with disabilities in the social and spiritual life of church and society. In his ministry of reconciliation, Jesus came to break down barriers (Eph. 2:14) which locked people in and prevented them from meeting and having dialogue with each other.

A Path of Enculturation

Those who participated in the meeting in Havana in 1929 recognized that Latin America demanded both a religious reform and a real enculturation of Protestantism.²⁰ To advance in this regard, dialogue between theology and literature in Latin America is urgent since both are interested in the mythical memory and the utopian dreams of the people, regardless of western modernity.

The academic treatment of Latin American creative cultural expressions ought to provide central importance to the Christian faith and its sacred texts. It needs to analyze the rich religiosity, the beliefs and rituals, and the fears and hopes of the people.

The intersections between poetry and spirituality in Latin America are multiple and fertile: enormous contributions can be expected from the analysis of the cross-fertilization between literature and religion, between poetry and the rigour of theological thinking as expressions of human spiritual creativity.²¹

Contributions to Edinburgh

There is an inwards mission of the church. Our congregations should be evangelized in the meaning of knowing, understanding, and putting all the richness of the gospel into practice (gender equality, care for children, *diakonia* versus mere charity, re-reading the Bible in each community).

This inwards mission sets out a new relationship between genders in the church, in the family and in society, and a new perspective on human sexuality; a wider concept and practice of *diakonia* that goes beyond the

²⁰ Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, 'De la Inculturación a la Interculturalidad', in *Interculturalidad, Diálogo Interreligioso y Liberación*, Juan José Tamayo and Raúl Fornet-Betancourt (eds) (Navarra, Spain: Editorial Verbo Divino, 2005), 43-60.

²¹ Luis N. Rivera Pagán, 'Teología, Literatura e Identidad Cultural en América Latina y el Caribe', in Giese, *Misión y Evangelización en América Latina y el Caribe para el Siglo XXI*, 59-78.

dimension of mere charity; a less temple-centred church; a new reading of the Bible in the mother tongue, and better theological training of the leaders of local congregations; renewing and recreating education for children and avoiding gender divisions in the work of the church. It is urgent to recover our mystic values and rebuild hope. A different world is needed and, by the grace of the Holy Spirit of God, it is possible.

This is God's mission and it depends on God and not on our capacities. We must recognize ourselves as God's collaborators in God's mission.

We are called to promote unity through the confession and experience of the God of life (values and attitudes that promote life, such as those of the kingdom preached by Jesus). From this centrality, it would be possible to strengthen a Protestant identity which is multiple and positive, and to correct or refuse negative evangelical identities which are against life, such as 'market religion' or expressions of Christianity which destroy the local cultural foundations, etc. From this Protestant identity, the meaning of Christian mission can be redefined in the spirit of the liberating gospel, which promotes abundant life for all the people that our Lord Jesus Christ has given to the world.²²

The church should be wise and humble in recognizing the cultural and human values of the different contexts, and let itself be nurtured and taught by them in a relationship of respect and in a spirit of reconciliation and solidarity. Nevertheless, the church should not only appreciate liberating and culturally enriching symbols and traditions, but also maintain a critical spirit in order to identify the alienating and oppressive potential of the symbols which could at the same time be present in those cultures.

We should strengthen South-South relations through communicative programmes – by socializing materials, developing more relevant methodological proposals, sharing local, personal, inter-ecclesial and community experiences. One of the main axes and strategies to prioritize these would be that of indigenous peoples' dimensions, disabled people, people with minority sexual orientation, black cultures, etc.²³

Mission and Power

The church is called to offer concrete paradigms as an alternative to the consumerist ideology of globalization. It has to set limits and use its power to stop the temptation of domination, to oppose the temptation of possession and property, to include the asceticism of the first Christians who shared their food and possessions with the needy and destitute; it has

²² Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, *From Times Square to Timbuktu. The Post-Christian West Meets the Non-Western Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013), 86.

²³ Carlos E. Ham, 'Visión desde Otros Contextos: Diálogo Norte-Sur', in Giese, *Misión y Evangelización en América Latina y el Caribe para el Siglo XXI*, 135-40.

to free itself from the temptation of power and speak with the prophetic voice that our peoples need today.

The mission of the church should face the revolutionary processes that are taking place today, recognizing progress for the benefit of oppressed peoples. We can find a biblical theological paradigm in the text of the Exodus, where the oppressed people leave Egypt and head to a promised land. However, there are difficulties and a lack of progress, and there are those who want to come back to slavery.

Mission and Unity

Unity has Jesus Christ as Lord and transformer of life as its centre and foundation, and not the church. In order to strengthen this very necessary unity, it is necessary to promote spaces where we can get to know each other in order to generate mutual confidence. Unity is a process and knowing one other is an essential step towards achieving this.²⁴

It is necessary to strengthen unity and mission by identifying *new* themes, establishing a *new* contextual and prophetic agenda, united against every system which is opposed to God, to God's creation and to life.

Ecclesiology and Mission

The church is just a participant in the mission of God and, as participants in mission, our task consists of discerning the activity of God in the context of the mission and the community.

A mission which is committed to decolonization takes up the challenge of strengthening the peoples in the search for the sacred words revealed by God in their own history and cultures, and at the same time it promotes, in the church space, dialogue and appreciation of the rich religious diversity expressed but sometimes kept in the deepest recesses of the life of our peoples.²⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to move from the vision of a unique absolute truth, where we depend on someone transmitting it to us, to a shared vision of the truth, where the differences co-exist and it is recognized that each people contributes with its knowledge, truths and experience of the Divine, and that all together are enriched with diversity of wisdom and knowledge.

Without denying questions regarding many of its theological principles and practices, the charismatic movement represents a challenge for the so-

²⁴ Jaime Prieto Valladares, 'Identidad, Unidad y Misión: Las Niñas y los Niños Huérfanos de Dios', in Giese, *Misión y Evangelización en América Latina y el Caribe para el Siglo XXI*, 125-34.

²⁵ Silvia Regina de Lima Silva, 'Identidad, unidad y misión. Descolonización y cuidado, paradigmas de la misión', in Giese, *Misión y Evangelización en América Latina y el Caribe para el Siglo XXI*, 118.

called ‘historical churches’, which have not always continued to be reformed and which are stagnating in time by sacralizing their ways and formulae, and losing the capacity to adapt and give an effective response to the needs of the population. In this sense, it is important that, without renouncing biblical and theological precepts in the name of reaching new people, the spiritual needs of our peoples, which are related to symbols, emotions and feelings, rather than to extremely elaborate rational processes, be taken into account.

The Integrity of Mission

Efforts to accomplish mission and evangelism separated from *diakonia*, development, emergency aid and advocacy for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, are an offence against the integrity of *missio Dei* as it was practised by Jesus in his proclamation of the coming kingdom. In this respect, we quote the document *Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today*, adopted in the year 2000 by the World Council of Churches’ *Commission on World Mission and Evangelism*, which states that ‘Mission carries a holistic understanding: the proclamation and sharing of the good news of the gospel by word (*kerygma*), deed (*diakonia*), prayer and worship (*leiturgia*), and the everyday witness of the Christian life (*martyria*); teaching as building up and strengthening people in their relationship with God and each other; and healing as wholeness and reconciliation into *koinonia* – communion with God, communion with people, and communion with creation as a whole’.²⁶

Therefore, we emphasize the need of acknowledging the unity and complementarity between *diakonia* and the proclamation of the Good News as a concrete manifestation of holistic mission as it is conceived and practised in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Spirituality in Mission and Real Discipleship

There is an absence of real discipleship, especially when it is identified with the consumption of spiritual merchandise. Similarly, raised hands and baptism are not the main signs of discipleship. Discipleship is the way of life of people who faithfully follow Jesus: the disciples live in *koinonia* (unity, communion), in *diakonia* (service), and they practise a liturgy that is well pleasing to God.

In the words of the Latin American theologian Jon Sobrino, mission is still central today in all forms of spirituality, since that is the way of maintaining the primacy of love in the Christian life. This is especially true in Latin America, which has focused the mission of the church in the liberation of the poor, and the theology of liberation has been built upon it.

²⁶ Matthey, *You are the Light of the World*, 62.

Without the practice of liberation, spirituality in Latin America would be meaningless today.²⁷

Final Remarks

We have looked at the influence in Latin America and the Caribbean of the 1910 Edinburgh mission conference, mostly in reference to the subsequent conferences held in the region. More particularly, we have highlighted the outcomes of the celebration of the eightieth anniversary of the 1929 Havana congress, and we will now conclude this article by reaffirming the following in relation to mission and evangelism in this part of the world, mainly based on the latter.

The God of life sends the church out to share the Good News of the gospel in Christ's way, who forgave, healed, cast out demons, taught, proclaimed, denounced. Therefore, his ministry was performed in two movements, that of making visible the saving action of God in the world, in the traditions and cultures of our peoples, on the one hand; and expressing outrage against the denial of life, and in transforming the realities of injustice and death on the other.

For this, the loving attitude of God invites the church to rethink the issue of unity and mission, mainly from the perspective and for the sake of the marginalized, i.e. orphan children, the indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, the disabled, as well as the women who have carried most of the burden of the economic suffering under neo-liberalism, and that of the growing violence in their daily lives. All these suffer most keenly the poverty, exclusion, discrimination, exploitation, inequality, inequity, violence and death; these are they who are the most afflicted in a world overwhelmed by the injustice of the powerful.

Hence it is crucial for the church today to overcome the logic that remains behind the concept of mission that is used in Christian theology until now, which is manifested in a hierarchical, patriarchal, ethnocentric and ecclesio-centric conception of the church. Mission is often compromised within the colonial logic that leads to pastoral practices of domination that ignore the value, the importance of the other, of different cultures and religious experiences.

For this, the refocusing of the issue of identity is paramount for the Latin American churches today. The concern for identity is crucial today, both from the perspective of the Protestant tradition, as well as from the socio-political-cultural-religious point of view. To advance in this regard, the dialogue between theology and literature in Latin America is urgent, as

²⁷ Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino (eds), 'Mysterium Liberationis. Conceptos Fundamentales de la Teología de la Liberación', in *Espiritualidad y seguimiento de Jesús* – Section 2: *Misión: Santidad del Amor*, Vol. II (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 1990), 462.

well as the dialogue of Christian theology with other indigenous spiritualities.

It is also critical to rescue the holistic character of mission in Latin America, including *diakonia*, development, emergency aid and advocacy for justice, peace and the integrity of Creation, all as part of *missio Dei*. Understood in this way, mission promotes the formation of free men and women, children of God, created in the image and likeness of their Creator. This seeks full *koinonia*, i.e. unity, communion, as it was practised by Jesus in his proclamation of the coming kingdom come.

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WESLEYAN METHODIST MISSIONARIES: CHRISTIANIZING, 'CIVILIZING' AND EDUCATING STRATEGIES IN THE WEST INDIES (1780S-1850S)

Paula Aymer

Introduction

In 1787, the Rev. Dr Thomas Coke, John Wesley's trusted secretary, launched a missionary project on a group of islands newly ceded to Britain, in order to expose enslaved Africans in the former French colonies to the evangelistic message of salvation. For decades, the missionaries' voluntarist message about God's mercy to all, and the need for each sinner's personal conversion and commitment to Christ in return for the gift of salvation, was met with indifference by the masses of adult slaves in the new British colonies. Eventually, Methodist missionaries began promoting Sunday Schools, day schools, and rote learning, as proselytizing strategies for indoctrinating enslaved children into Christianity and eventually church membership.

By the early twentieth century, Methodist missionaries and lay people had spread Wesleyan Methodism throughout the entire arc of the Caribbean islands. Thriving Methodist congregations could be found on the Bahamian Islands and Jamaica in the northern Caribbean, but also on Aruba and Curacao, Dutch-owned islands in the far south-western Caribbean, just off Venezuela. Additionally, ex-slaves from the British West Indian islands had helped form Methodist societies in British Guiana (now Guyana), located on the north-eastern coastlands of South America. Migrant workers from the West Indian islands who laboured in the Panama Canal Zone had also established Methodist societies in Spanish-speaking Central American countries such as Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama and Belize.¹ Lay people were putting into practice Methodism's tenet of 'the priesthood of all believers'. In each new Methodist congregation, lay people held membership together long before trained clergy and missionaries arrived.

Wesleyan Methodism was introduced to enslaved and free people in the British West Indies in the eighteenth century during three periods of evangelization. In the 1760s, Nathaniel Gilbert, a British settler, and the owner of two large estates on the island of Antigua, and a convert to

¹ John Neal, 'The Disorganization of Society and Methodist Missions'. Paper presented at the *Methodist Missionary Society (MMS) History Project Conference*, 3rd-5th November (Leeds, UK: 2005). Dale Bisnauth, *History of Religions in the Caribbean* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1996), 127-33.

Methodism, began evangelizing the slaves on his plantations.² Impressed by the evangelization activities of the Gilbert family that he observed at Antigua in December 1786, the Rev. Dr Thomas Coke began to envision a missionary programme to evangelize enslaved people in all Britain's West Indian colonies. To that end, Coke set out from Antigua southwards, in January 1787, on an exploratory visit to a group of islands called the Ceded Islands: Grenada, St Vincent, Dominica, Tobago and the Grenadines had recently been ceded to Britain by France by the Treaty of Versailles (1784).³ Coke stopped first on Barbados, Britain's oldest and most settled West Indian colony, then travelled on to visit one of the Ceded Islands, St Vincent.

This would be the first missionary project organized by Dr Coke, directed specifically at huge, enslaved African populations on islands that had recently become British colonies. In the Ceded Islands, French was the predominant language and Roman Catholicism the religion practised by white French settlers, free coloureds, and many enslaved Africans.⁴ This missionary project in the Ceded Islands marked the second phase of Methodist evangelization to enslaved peoples in the British West Indies. Coke would make two return visits to the Ceded Islands and Barbados, first in 1790, and again in 1793, as he, and later other, Wesleyan Methodist missionaries and lay people launched into the whole region with the Wesleyan Methodist evangelistic message. Thus began the third, regional phase of Wesleyan Methodist mission to all Britain's West Indian colonies.⁵

Influenced by a religious revival that swept through Europe in the early eighteenth century, the group that came to be known as Wesleyan Methodists eventually broke away from Britain's state church, the Church of England. Wesleyan Methodists strongly rejected the confessional form of religion that was as central to Anglican Protestantism as it was to Roman Catholicism. In confessional faiths, tradition and theological interpretation place ordained clergy as central mediators between the laity and God. Rote learning of church liturgy and catechisms, and regular participation in religious rituals, are presented to believers as necessary for gaining God's mercy and acceptance. Importantly, confessional faiths intentionally welcome infants and young children into church membership. Early and continuous exposure to Christianity through learning of ecclesiastical rules, and participating in religious rituals are encouraged. In order to attain

² Jeffrey Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 65.

³ George Brizan, *Grenada Island of Conflict* (London: Zed Books, 1984), 48.

⁴ Brizan, *Grenada Island of Conflict*, 52.

⁵ Coke envisioned the entire British West Indies as part of a mission field administered from London under the Wesleyan Methodist system. See Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700*, 64.

God's favour and mercy, these acts of piety are best begun in childhood, and should continue throughout the life of each baptized member.

Eighteenth-century Methodist evangelicals preached from a voluntarist interpretation of the Christian gospel. Evangelicals focus on Christ's offer of salvation, and preach that the power of the Holy Spirit makes hearers conscious of their sinful lives, and impels such sinners to make a voluntary decision to follow Christ. This voluntary act puts the sinner on the path to righteousness, and therefore worthy to receive salvation and the gift of God's presence in this life, and especially after death.⁶ The evangelistic message is usually directed to adult hearers, and delivered in impassioned sermons and exhortations based on pertinent scriptural texts and accounts of the personal salvation experience of the evangelist. In Methodism, each convert becomes part of a community of evangelists consisting of lay people and clergy. However, children usually hold an ambiguous, if not marginal, place in evangelical voluntarist theology and practice, and remain bystanders and observers until they have their own personal history of sinfulness, and claim conversion experiences in adulthood. Wesleyan Methodism's evangelical theological stance created schism within the hierarchy of the Church of England, in which John Wesley, and nearly all British people had been baptized as infants.⁷ By the late eighteenth century, Methodist evangelicals had attracted and converted thousands of 'unsaved' adults in Britain and North America.

The voluntarist salvation message preached by the Methodists was directed to the poor and working classes in Britain who were encouraged to accept the assurance of salvation and inner peace that the Holy Spirit provides despite existential conditions. However, in the West Indian slave colonies, British Methodist missionaries were engaging with a very new demographic. Their potential converts were slaves owned by British slave masters and legally defined as property.⁸ The missionaries' status as Englishmen and friends of slave owners complicated their relationship with the slave population. The missionaries were hard pressed to devise methods to impart the gospel to enslaved Africans living in unspeakable conditions. Many of the slaves neither spoke nor understood English. Besides, many in the huge French-speaking slave community, particularly on Grenada, already had been baptized into Roman Catholicism. Missionaries' journals, letters, and the Methodist Missionary Society's Annual Synod Reports reveal the interactions between the missionaries and the enslaved people. Additionally, the accounts expose the pitfalls and major setbacks of a missionary project designed to evangelize foreign, vulnerable people. I examined mission strategies and initiatives introduced by the Wesleyan

⁶ Cf Acts 2:38.

⁷ Jeffrey Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society* (Oxford: OUP, 1982), 5-7.

⁸ Orlando Paterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 148-49.

Methodist evangelization project during the first five decades of its operation in the West Indian slave colonies.

The timing of the British Wesleyan Methodist mission was daring, if not audacious. Inhospitable conditions pervaded the whole region. In the post-1750s, British colonial and international trade ambitions clashed strongly with plans for political independence expressed by settlers in Britain's North American colonies, and resulted in warfare and their revolt from British rule in 1776. American merchant ships continued trading with Britain's West Indian colonies, defying the presence of British merchant and navy frigates combing West Indian waters. Britain was also at war with France, its main rival over the prized sugar production and trade with West Indian islands. Sugar was in high demand throughout Europe, and British investors wished to produce sugar on the Ceded Islands and compete with France's lucrative sugar trade from the larger French West Indian possessions.⁹ Destabilized settlers in the colonies created standing militias that were in constant fear of attack from their rivals, intrusions by American or French frigates, or revolt from their oppressed slaves.¹⁰

Wesleyan Methodist evangelicals had arrived on the Ceded Islands and Barbados in the wake of a conquering British army. Almost overnight, first by the Treaty of Paris in 1764, and finally by the Treaty of Versailles in 1784, hundreds of French Roman Catholic settlers in the Ceded Islands, along with their tens of thousands of enslaved Africans, found themselves under British, Protestant governance.¹¹ The missionaries' political and cultural identities and allegiances seemed obvious to French settlers and their slaves, but inconsequential to the missionaries. Political tensions and instability remained high in the British West Indies and would affect the Methodist evangelization project.

The enslaved in the Ceded Islands were experiencing extreme distress and destabilization even as the Methodist evangelization project was being established to convert them. Of all the newly Ceded Islands, Grenada was the most developed and was well settled by French Roman Catholic estate owners and tens of thousands enslaved Africans.¹² An intense land and

⁹ France's prized sugar producers were St Domingue (Haiti), Martinique and Guadeloupe. See Michael Duffy, 'The French Revolution and British Attitudes to the West Indian Colonies', in *A Turbulent Time*, David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus (eds) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), 78-79.

¹⁰ David Patrick Geggus, 'Slavery, War and Revolution in the Greater Caribbean', in *A Turbulent Time*, 24-25.

¹¹ Sir Charles Prestwood Lucas, *A Historical Geography of the British Colonies* Vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890) 210-211; George Brizan, *Grenada Island of Conflict* (London: Zed Books), 48.

¹² Raymund P. Devas (Rev.), *A History of the Island of Grenada, 1489-1796* (St George's, Grenada, West Indies: Carenage Press, 1974), 74; and Mark Quintanilla, 'The World of Alexander Campbell', in *Albion, North American Conference on British Studies*, Vol. 35 (North Carolina, Appalachian State University, 2003), 255.

property grab had ensued as British investors purchased or confiscated estates, including slaves, from French residents, and immediately introduced sugar-cane production as the sole crop to replace mixed agricultural production that had been practised by the French settlers for almost a century. As estates changed hands, slaves found themselves resold within the British colonies or transported and sold to other estates within the colonies.

Methodist missionaries arriving in the Ceded Islands in the last decade of the nineteenth century were confronted with large, disparate and very mobile contingents of enslaved Africans. Weekly slave ships deposited large numbers of disoriented Africans on the shores of the Ceded Islands. Runaways and vagrants from abandoned estates roamed backwoods on Grenada.¹³ The islands of St Vincent and Dominica each had large clans of Native People who strongly resisted the British presence. Eventually these natives would be uprooted and removed to make way for the arrival of thousands of newly arriving Africans, along with throngs of Creole negroes transported internally or regionally to cultivate sugar-cane plantations in the Ceded Islands. Even when the missionaries did manage to evangelize successfully, the aggressive market for slave labour could disrupt any nascent formation of the Society. Converted slaves could be summarily sold and transported far away. Missionary Catts, stationed on the island of Dominica, bemoaned the fact that ‘Hope, an excellent Negro, a good preacher and leader, preached a farewell sermon on the beach, just before he and his companions were about to board ship’. He had been purchased by a Mr Houston of Grenada.¹⁴ Unfortunately, missionary reports hardly record how intense social and political turmoil and instability personally affected their potential converts. Turmoil continued even after slavery had ended in 1838.

The Methodist missionaries’ arrival soon after the British takeover made them unpopular with French settlers and their slaves. Besides, slaves in the Ceded Islands spoke French, Spanish and various African languages; therefore they could hardly understand the basics of the evangelistic message that had been so effective in attracting tens of thousands from Britain’s working class.

In 1806, Missionary Sturgeon on Grenada reported:

... the gospel has not been carried into the country among the Negroes on the plantations. The diversity of the language however, between the town and

¹³ Brizan, *Grenada Island of Conflict*, 96-99. See also, *St Georges Chronicle & New Gazette, Advertisements for Slave Sales*, Vol. III, nos. 136, 137, 138 (St George’s, Grenada, West Indies, November, 29; December 10, 1790).

¹⁴ Missionary Catts’ Journal entry, 9th April 1823 (*Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Notices*, 1823), 135.

country, confined our early missionaries to the former, and for some time we had no hopes of extending the work.¹⁵

In the early nineteenth century, Sir Richard Ottley, Chief Justice of Grenada and one of the whites converted by the Methodists, wrote:

The slaves of the interior showed themselves stupidly indifferent. Backwardness and apathy characterized the mass of the Grenada slaves. The chapel is frequently attended by the higher orders; the Negroes attend with extreme reluctance. They seem to regard this as another task imposed by their masters.¹⁶

Over the first thirty years of the Methodist missionary presence in the Ceded Islands and Barbados, membership in the Methodist sect grew very slowly. In 1811, Wesleyan Methodism on Grenada could only claim thirty members: 11 whites, 13 free coloureds, and six slaves (Moister, 1878). In 1820, Missionary Shrewsbury wrote that he had only 'a little flock' on Barbados, and that he had attracted only ten Negro converts out of a slave population of 100,000. Of the 38 members, five were Irish soldiers.

Not only did the enslaved find the Methodist evangelistic message of salvation difficult to understand, but also they soon discovered that its demands were onerous when compared with those of Roman Catholicism. Almost as important as the conversion experience for Methodist evangelicals was a series of acts of piety to be practised regularly by converts as they continued their Christian 'walk' and grew in sanctification. Some of these included membership in the class meeting, participation in Sunday worship, weeknight or evening prayer meetings, and involvement in Love Feasts – a time of prayer, singing and testimonies – held quarterly. Additionally, membership was formalized through class tickets. These signified faithfulness at church, class meetings, and the payment of dues.

Wesleyan Methodist membership came with other constraints for slave converts. At the beginning of each year, members of every Methodist Society were presented with questions about their adherence to the Gospel, and their faithfulness to the rules and discipline of Methodism. Any slave sufficiently brave that moved to seek membership in the new Christian society knew well that reproof, suspension and expulsion constantly threatened new members once other congregants found that they were slaves or former slaves.¹⁷ Annually, scores of adult Methodist slaves were

¹⁵ Extract from Missionary Sturgeon's Journal, Grenada, 1806, in *WMMS Reports*, Vol. I (Clerkenwell, London: Rodgers Publishers, 1789-1820), 19.

¹⁶ *WMMS, History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society*, Vol. II, G.G. Findlay and W.W. Holdsworth (eds) (London: Epworth Press, 1921), 189.

¹⁷ Karen Fog Olwig, *Global Culture, Island Identity* (Newark, NJ: Harwood Publishers, 1993), 92. Olwig writes convincingly that Methodism's rules and discipline excluded the overworked field slaves and privileged those 'of certain economic standing'. Missionaries regulated the lives of new converts using 'reproof, suspension, and expulsion'. See John Horsford, *Voice from the West Indies* (London: Alexander Heylin, 1856), 30.

'read out' for having broken the rules and discipline of the Society. Methodism's expectations and its demands contradicted the slaves' reality of survival under extremely harsh conditions.¹⁸ In the years preceding emancipation, slave membership in Methodist societies in the Ceded Islands and Barbados fluctuated constantly.

Soon after arriving in the former French-owned islands, missionaries faced the realization that many of the enslaved people had already been baptized. The pervasive presence of Roman Catholic priests and a large Roman Catholic membership among French settlers and slaves in the Ceded Islands, and especially on Grenada, irritated British Protestants. Before the arrival of the British, Roman Catholic missionaries had used Grenada to the south, and Martinique and Guadeloupe to the north, as their bases from which to make fairly regular visits to other less developed islands such as Dominica, St Vincent, and Tobago, to perform the baptismal rite to enslaved adults and children.¹⁹ Methodists (as did other Protestants) disrespected Roman Catholicism, and whether slaves were baptized as Roman Catholics or not, the Wesleyan Methodist missionaries and Anglican clergy in the Ceded Islands described Africans as 'heathens'. The Methodist missionaries tried in vain to reconvert enslaved Africans whom they considered to have been led astray into Roman Catholicism.²⁰ Missionary Goy revealed his British ethnocentric prejudices in the following journal entry.

In his journal, William Dixon, recorded that negroes considered Roman Catholicism to be the religion that was able to manage their human and spiritual relations. Hence, they believed they will go to heaven after death because a Catholic priest has baptized them. In their family and community relations they also had deep respect for godfathers and godmothers.²¹

Although by 1820, the missionaries had gained access to many plantations on Grenada, St Vincent and Dominica, adult slaves continued to show indifference or respond unpredictably to the missionaries' evangelistic message. On Grenada, when rounded up by estate managers to listen to the missionaries, slaves often fell asleep on the ground, or turned their backs as the Wesleyan Methodist evangelicals attempted to preach,

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¹⁸ Cox notes that the missionaries were denying their own 'entanglement with a brutal form of imperialism, the slave plantation, a connection that some slaves regarded as obvious to anyone', in Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise*, 67.

¹⁹ Devas, *A History of the Island of Grenada, 1498-1796*, 19.

²⁰ The British seized the large Roman Catholic chapel in Fort Royal, and transformed it into the main Anglican chapel on the island, and discontinued six Roman Catholic chapels near large plantations throughout the island. See Brizan, *Grenada Island of Conflict*, 50.

²¹ William Dixon Goy's journal entry, 23rd June 1822, in *Missionary Notices*, Vol. IV (Clerkenwell, London: J. Rodgers Publishers, 1821-1823), 104.

while some slaves were bold enough to retort, 'We like our priests better.'²² Perhaps Roman Catholicism's confessional faith required acts of piety that were less demanding and which were more suited to the slaves' difficult existence.

As we have seen, Evangelical Wesleyan Methodism had caused schism within the Church of England and the repercussions were very evident in Britain's West Indian colonies. The Wesleyan Methodist missionary presence in the Ceded Islands and Barbados annoyed the Anglican hierarchy in the colonies. Besides, Anglicans questioned the social status of Methodist clergy, and the theological foundations of Methodism. During his visits to the colonies, Coke had worked quickly to cultivate acquaintances with leading Anglican clergy in the slave colonies in the hope of mitigating Anglican resistance to his proposed plans to establish a Methodist evangelistic mission to the enslaved Africans. Coke's personal charisma worked only temporarily with the Anglican clergy on Barbados and St Vincent, in that Methodist missionaries subsequently experienced ostracism and harassment by the Anglican political authorities on these islands.

Enslavement of Africans on Barbados began in the mid-1600s. However, at the time of the Methodist missionaries' arrival on the island in the late 1780s, Barbados' slaves had never been invited to become Christian. For well over a century, British settlers and their children on Barbados had access to Christian confessional rites from assigned parish priests. The colony's Anglican clergy and other slave owners were highly suspicious of the Methodists. They feared that the huge, English-speaking slave population would gain ideas about freedom if they became Christian. Well into the 1830s, 'many of the planters... vented all their wrath against them (the missionaries)... and laws were repeatedly passed by the local legislature prohibiting the missionaries to preach without licence, which licence the magistrates might refuse to give at pleasure'.²³

Some two decades after the mission had been established, Missionaries Nelson and Shrewsbury reported that evangelization progress among the enslaved people on Barbados, was slow: '... the slaves are most awfully depraved. Hence our congregation is almost wholly composed of free persons – two-thirds of them blacks and persons of colour, the rest, the white inhabitants of the place.'²⁴

Children have always been somewhat excluded from the strict practices of evangelical piety; however, by the 1820s, missionaries on Grenada and

²² From Missionary Shrewsbury's Journal entry, 8th March 1818, in *A History of the Wesleyan Methodist Society*, Vol. II, Findlay and Holdsworth, 189.

²³ William Moister, *Wesleyan Missions: Their Rise, Progress and Present State* (London: Woolmer Press, 1883), 215.

²⁴ WMMS, Letter from Missionaries Shrewsbury and Nelson, 8th November 1821, Barbados, in *Missionary Notices*, Vol. IV (Clerkenwell, London: J. Rodgers Publishers, 1821-1823), 265.

St Vincent were beginning to have some success among the slave population, especially among enslaved children. Slave children born in the West Indies on British-owned estates, and who had not been deeply exposed to African religions or Roman Catholicism, seemed more amenable to the missionaries' teachings than were adult slaves.²⁵ Wesleyan Methodist preachers in Britain and North America, had already begun educating and 'civilizing' street children and children from poor families in Methodist Sunday Schools.²⁶ British missionaries arriving in the slave colonies would have been acquainted with Methodist Sunday School and Day School programmes. Besides, the setting up of Sunday Schools for slave children complied with strict directives sent from the new, officially formed, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in London (WMMS), and disseminated to its missionaries in the slave colonies:

Your particular designation is to endeavour the religious instruction and conversion of the ignorant, pagan, and neglected black and coloured population of the island or station. Your only business is to promote the moral and religious improvement of the slaves to whom you have access...²⁷

By the second decade of the nineteenth century, slave attendance at Methodist-held meetings grew as rumours of emancipation spread. However, by the end of that decade attendance at meetings fluctuated greatly as 'a spiritual lethargy due to the unsettlement of the negro mind and its preoccupation with the approaching enfranchisement',²⁸ increased, even as their children crowded into Sunday schools and special classes run by missionaries. The missionaries' programme had changed its focus from fervent evangelization to that of a 'civilizing' educational effort. It was designed to impart Christian values, especially those that were being celebrated in British society which focused on hard work, thrift, and obedience to authority and to God.²⁹ In the decades just before emancipation, Methodist missionaries introduced rote learning of Bible verses, hymns, the Methodist catechism, and sometimes reading, into their weekday meetings. Fiery evangelizing was left for sermons preached

²⁵ Slave owners barred from slave communities any practices they described as pagan African religions. See Edward Cox, 'Religious Intolerance and Persecution, the Shakers of St Vincent, 1900-1934', In *The Journal of Caribbean History*, Vol. 28:2 (1994), 211.

²⁶ Sabbath Schools, as they were called, were closely linked with spreading support for missionary societies. See Anne M. Boylan, *Sunday School* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 1.

²⁷ WMS, *The Report of the Wesleyan Methodist Society* xii, 'Instructions to Missionaries' (London: T. Cordeux Printers 1824), 1.

²⁸ WMS, *The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Society*, Vol. III: (London: Epworth Press), 183.

²⁹ See Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty* (New York: Random House, 1985), 42-63.

during Sunday services that were attended mainly by small numbers of whites, free coloureds and free Negroes.

The missionaries' enthusiasm for their work with children is evident in the following excerpts from their journals: on St Vincent, Missionary Bellamy wrote to a Mr Benson:

A gentleman of high respectability requested me to undertake the religious instruction of his Negro children. He sent sixty negro children neatly and uniformly dressed according to their sex. The children are healthy, pretty, active and interesting. Sixty little negroes... with their eyes sparkling and their black countenances glistening, and your missionary standing on the top step, instructing them in the principles of our most holy and beneficent religion. Mr C. continues to send them regularly to our chapel every Sunday, and we have liberty to go once a week to his house to instruct them when he assembles them in his fine large hall. I feel a peculiar attachment to the children (and did from the first time I saw them) and a pleasure in instructing them. Riding through the cane-field, working bowing, negro slaves, and child slaves with little hoes. I talked to them a few moments and told them to work well, and be kind one to another and fear the great God as he saw them.³⁰

Also, in a report to the annual synod, Missionaries Shrewsbury and Goy wrote:

The schools established at Clark's Court and other estates promise us hereafter, an abundant Missionary harvest. Before we attempted to teach the children to read English, they hardly attended our instructions to the adults, and when they did, it was in general, greatly to the annoyance by disturbing us while thus engaged. Now when we go to the estates they flock around us, immediately assemble themselves in the chapel, have learned a great deal of their catechism etc., and try to talk English, which they never attempted before.³¹

The missionaries reported that the children in their school in St George's, Grenada's capital, 'mostly free children of colour', numbered 160, with a regular attendance of 100 to 120. At another school, serving children from the Clarks Court and Calivigny estates, there were 240 children, and at a third school in the town, Gouyave, there were 50 children.³²

Missionaries Goy and Shrewsbury recorded that their evangelization strategies on Grenada consisted of:

... a short and easy catechism, suited to their (the slaves') capacity. We also generally require all the grown children to be present that these, in their youth, may be acquainted with those truths, which are able to make them

³⁰ WMS, *Missionary Notices relating principally to foreign Missions*, Vol. II, 1819-1820 (London: J. Rogers Printers), 248-49.

³¹ WMS, *Report of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, 1821-1823* (London: T. Cordeux Printers, 1821), 42.

³² WMS, *Report of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, 1821-1823*, xci (London: T. Cordeux Printers, 1821), 42.

wise into salvation. Many have a great facility in committing to memory passages and whole chapters of Scripture. They repeated the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, and First Corinthians Chapter 13.³³

Missionaries Shrewsbury and Nelson on Barbados reported that:

Besides preaching on a Sabbath evening once a fortnight, we catechize about forty children, and instruct a class of adult catechumens, six of whom we have selected for baptism on the 18th of the present month. We view them as the first fruits of this mission amongst the thousands of Pagan slaves who are living on this island. Africans – the slaves are most awfully depraved. Hence our congregation is almost wholly composed of free persons – two-thirds of them blacks and persons of colour, the rest – the white inhabitants of the place.³⁴

Educating children had become a major form of teaching and indoctrination into Christianity. As the emancipation of slaves seemed inevitable, the political and imperial clout of the Church of England became evident through its direct intervention in the building of schools in the slave colonies. The Bishop of London created two West Indian bishoprics, and directed Anglican priests in the West Indian colonies to reach out to slaves and their children.³⁵ Almost simultaneously, Methodist missionaries began seeking funds to support and increase the numbers of their schools in the colonies.³⁶ The baptism of infants and children began to assume major importance among denominations in the colonies, as numbers of baptisms began to be used in each denomination as evidence of their relevance and support for the Britain's controversial decision to end slavery. The annual number of baptisms performed, schools built, and student populations and attendance, became mandatory items in Circuit Reports presented at annual Methodist District Synod meetings. In a brief, hopeful period immediately after emancipation, Wesleyan Methodists along with other denominations in the colonies competed with each other in building schools, training teachers and assigning schoolmasters.³⁷

Methodist Missionary Notices record that the declaration of emancipation in 1834 was extremely upsetting to the slave population and

³³ WMS, 'Journal of Missionaries Goy and Shrewsbury', Grenada, 7th October 1818, in *Missionary Notices*, Vol. II (London: J. Rogers 1819-1820), 173.

³⁴ WMS, 'Journal of Missionaries Nelson and Shrewsbury', Barbados, 8th November 1821, in *Missionary Notices*, Vol. II (London: J. Rogers, 1819-1820), 223.

³⁵ In 1823, Bishop Lipscomb was appointed to Jamaica, and Bishop Coleridge to Barbados to oversee the new Anglican outreach programme. See Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise* (2008), 92.

³⁶ See Shirley C. Gordon, *Reports and Repercussions in West Indian Education, 1833-1838* (London: Ginn & Co., 1968), 12-14.

³⁷ The Lady Mico Charity Grant, 1834, began an experiment in Teacher Training Colleges. See Frank Cundall, *The Mico College Jamaica* (Kingston, Jamaica: Gleaner Company Ltd., 1914).

their mission, in that it did not come with full freedom but, instead with a six-year, mandatory, apprenticeship period overseen by slave owners and clergy. However, to the dismay of the missionaries, many former slaves stopped attending church services, some absconded from estates, while others who were Methodists broke the Society's rules and discipline. In 1836, Missionary Rathborne on St Vincent reported that he had excluded 89 persons from the Society. Grenada also had a very large number of expulsions that year.³⁸

The formerly maligned Methodist Society, had raised its status from that of a sect to being one of the respected, established Protestant denominations in the colonies. Only occasionally, during revival meetings, and usually in particular congregations, could be heard dramatic and emotionally intense sermons and exhortations that had been Methodism's tradition for encouraging sinners to voluntarily accept Christ's offer of salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit's indwelling. Even as membership into Methodism continued to attract respectable, ambitious blacks and people of colour, Methodist Sunday schools and day schools became more inclusive of all children. Children educated in Methodist-run schools during the third decade of the missionary project, would be the generation from which the first coloured, and black 'indigenous', Methodist lay preachers, class leaders and ministers would emerge.

Methodism's administrative structure had become focused on educating children, and training and encouraging lay leadership. By necessity, because of the paucity in British missionary appointments to the colonies, or by design, the educating and 'civilizing' methods turned out to be Methodism's most significant proselytizing strategies in furthering the post-emancipation spread of Methodism throughout the West Indies. Wesleyan Methodism had become a religious bureaucratic organization that dispensed a kind of neo-confessional faith, complete with rules and discipline mandated from its headquarters in London. The new Christianizing strategies, enacted through formal education, augmented, if not steadily replaced, the voluntary conversion experience that, for almost a century, that had been, for Methodists, a necessary sign of salvation and possible inclusion into membership in the Methodist Society.

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³⁸WMS, *Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Notices* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Divinity School Archives, Box 39, 1836), 150.

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PART SIX

**REFLECTIONS ON LATIN
AMERICAN MISSION**

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WHERE ARE THE EVANGELISTS? THE PHENOMENON OF EVANGELISM IN LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY

Raúl Zaldivar

Introduction

The ministry of evangelism by the Protestant churches had its origins at the end of the nineteenth century, when American and European missionaries arrived in Latin America to evangelize and to establish evangelical churches. The Roman Catholic Church had already been there for three hundred years.

For a long time, foreign missions agencies controlled the new churches planted in Latin America, and for decades the new congregations found themselves dependent on foreign administrative representatives. This system was challenged for the first time at the *Congreso Latinoamericano de Evangelización (CLADE I)* [Latin American Congress of Evangelism] held in Colombia in 1969. CLADE challenged the Latin American Church to become independent and to begin building a theological base from a Latin American perspective.

In this article I will document a Latin American church history of evangelism. This work will be scientific and will meet the need to understand the current situation of the Protestant churches in Latin America.

The History of Evangelism and a Timeline

It is hard to believe that Protestant Christians in Latin America have suffered persecution, that many members were humiliated and put in jail, or that they were once considered heretics and stoned without scruple by religious fanatics.¹ It is also difficult to believe that a few decades ago,

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¹ This essay is based on a historical account of interviews made by the author in the early 1980s with pioneer pastors such as Adán Osorio, Pedro Oliva and Rosendo Llanes, among others, in countries such as Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico. These people told me stories of how they were persecuted and put in jail for no crime other than preaching the Gospel. The author of this essay himself suffered persecution: he was preaching in a church in the town of San Francisco de la Paz, Honduras, in the early 1980s when fanatics stoned me. On the other hand, I can also mention the testimony of Cipriano Romero Muñoz who was a former Catholic converted to the Protestant faith. He used to tell, with tears in his eyes, how he

Latin American society thought that the evangelical faith was only for the poor and ignorant, and that the evangelical church did not have any kind of influence in the higher echelons of government.

I use the expression, ‘It is hard to believe’, because today the exact opposite applies. We live in the age of mega-churches in which it is not rare to see congregations with memberships of over sixty thousand people in Latin America.² These are churches with sizeable buildings, TV and radio networks, with many of their members working in public administration, serving in government, as professors in prestigious universities, and working in liberal professions in all areas of society.

Finally, in order to put this essay into perspective, it is important to mention some statistics. According to a report released by the Pew Research Center,³ 69% of the Latin American population is currently Catholic while 19% is affiliated to Protestantism. Even though the Catholic Church is larger numerically, it lacks its past belligerence, because a vast majority of those who claim to be Catholic are nominal Christians.⁴

This essay traces the history of evangelism from the arrival of the Protestant churches in Latin America to the present, a journey that has taken over a hundred years. In order to understand the blossoming of the Protestant churches in Latin America, let us consider the seeds that were planted since the period of colonization.

himself threw rocks at Protestants Christians, only because he was made to believe that they were evil people.

² One example is the Tabernáculo Bautista de San Salvador. Pastor Edgar López Bertrand claims to have 70,000 people just in the central church. For more information about this congregation, see the report of Ana Lidia Rivera, ‘El Hermano Toby: “No Estamos de Acuerdo con lo que Hace Israel”’, in *El Diario de Hoy* (22nd July 2014): www.elsalvador.com/noticias/2002/7/22/nacional/nacio17.html (accessed 10th February 2015).

³ See the statistics of the Pew Research Center, ‘Religion in Latin America: Widespread Change in Historically Catholic Region’, in *Religion and Public Life* (2014): www.pewforum.org/2014/11/13/religion-in-latin-america (accessed 9th February, 2015).

⁴ See Morgan Lee, ‘Sorry, Pope Francis: Protestants are growing across Latin America’, in *Gleanings* (November 2014): www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2014/november/sorry-pope-francis-protestants-catholics-latin-america-pew.html?paging=off (accessed 11th February 2014). The author states: ‘Enthusiasm for the first pope picked from Latin America has prompted predictions of a “Francis effect” revival among the region’s Roman Catholics. Time will tell, but a new report shows exactly what the former Archbishop Bergoglio of Buenos Aires is up against in his own backyard: Protestants are remarkably ascendant across 18 nations and one US territory.’

The Christianization of Latin America by the Spaniards

After the discovery of the New World, the European powers knew that the only way to subdue the population was by using force, which is exactly what they did. The period that followed the discovery is referred to as The Conquest in which the *conquistadores* [conquerors] massacred millions of people in order to establish a colony in this vast territory. In order to legitimize the mission, Pope Alexander VI issued the sadly remembered *Inter Caetera* bull⁵ in which the Pope granted the Territories west of the Azores to Spain and the Eastern territories to Portugal⁶ so these powers could evangelize the savages and uncivilized natives of the new world. After the Europeans had subjugated the natives, a new period started: colonization. This was the longest of all the three periods.

It is in this third period that the Spaniards created the Indian Law by which they regulated civil and social life in the New World. The main authority of this system rested in the *Consejo Supremo de Indias* [Supreme Council of the Indies], located in the southern Spanish city of Seville. The first thing they did was to politically divide the new world into vice-royalties – for example, Santo Domingo, Mexico, Lima and La Plata were all vice-royalties. For each vice-royalty there was a Catholic bishop who was the head of the church for that specific region. One of the characteristics of this time was an overlap between the jurisdiction of what was political and what was religious. In the time of colonization, the main purpose of the church was to evangelize and convert the natives to Roman Catholicism. The means used by the Spaniards to Christianize the Indians were diverse, including the use of force or torture.⁷ The following section will study the different methods of evangelization during the colonial period.

⁵ See Alexander IV, *The Papal Bull Inter Caetera* (4th May 1493): www.let.rug.nl/usa/documents/before-1600/the-papal-bull-inter-caetera-alexander-vi-may-4-1493.php (accessed 12th February 2015).

⁶ In the International Law of the Middle Ages, one of the methods of gaining a territory was through a papal decree called a *bull*. For more information, see Charles Rousseau, *Derecho Internacional Público* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1957), 244.

⁷ Nobody explains this phenomenon better than John A. McKay, *El otro Cristo Español* (Mexico: Casa Unida de Publicaciones, 1988) Throughout this book, McKay underlines that the Christ brought by the Spaniards to the New World was different from the one born in Bethlehem. He clarifies how the brutal theocracy that ruled this continent exercised dominion over the Indians based on their greed and desire of power and riches.

The institution of the Encomienda:⁸ slavery

The *Encomienda* was a legal institution by which a Spaniard living in the new world was granted Indians to be under his authority in order to evangelize them. As legally defined, in 1503, an *encomienda* (from *encomendar*) [to entrust] consisted of a grant by the Crown to a *conquistador*, a soldier, official or others of a specified number of Indians living in a particular area.⁹ The natives were forced to engage in labour directly for the landlord, such as agriculture, house maintenance, etc. The *encomienda* system was designed to meet the needs of the colonies' early mining economy but was not officially abolished, however, until the late eighteenth century. Through this institution created by the Indian Law, the Spaniards forced millions of natives into slavery using evangelization as an excuse to legitimize this immoral act. It is clear that the Spaniards were not interested in the conversion of the Indians – they cared only about exploiting the workforce of these unfortunate people for their own benefit.

The institution of the Inquisition:¹⁰ torture

Another institution of this time was the Roman Catholic Inquisition, which is a group of institutions within the judicial system of the Roman Catholic Church with the aim of combating heresy. Any person with dissenting views or whose loyalty to Christianity and the Crown was questionable was considered a heretic. Consequently, that person faced an inquisitorial tribunal that judged the religious beliefs of the accused. If a person was found guilty of heresy, he or she would be asked to renounce their faith. If they refused to renounce, they would be tortured even to death. This violent methodology was another way to convert people to Christianity. Many confessed their faith to Roman Catholicism, not only in Spain but also in Latin America, just to save their lives.

⁸ The well-known Spanish scholar Alfonso Garcia-Gallo states how the Spaniards used the legal figure of *encomienda* to force the Indians to work for them. Under Indian Law, the natives were technically free and entitled to a salary; however, they were obligated to work for the 'Encomendero' whether they wanted to or not. On this subject I highly recommend the work of Alfonso Garcia-Gallo, *Estudios de Historia del Derecho Indiano* (Madrid: Instituto Nacional de Estudios Jurídicos, 1972), 123.

⁹ See Timothy J. Yeager, 'Encomienda or Slavery? The Spanish Crown's Choice of Labor Organization in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America', in *The Journal of Economic History*, 55:4 (4th December 1995): www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/2123819?sid=21105347920571&uid=4&uid=2 (accessed 15th February 2015).

¹⁰ The Inquisition was an evil institution founded by the Roman Catholic Church in Europe but it operated in both sides of the Atlantic. Highly recommended is the book by Samuel Vila, *Historia de la Reforma e Inquisición en España* (Barcelona: Clie, 1977), 23-30.

The Liberal Period: The Advent of a New Day

A new era began in Latin America in the early years of the nineteenth century, and opened a fourth period in the political scenario of these countries after 300 years of brutal dominion by the European powers. The ideals of the French Revolution of 1789 reached this side of the Atlantic and found a place in the hearts and minds of some of our intellectuals who were the precursors of the independence movement of this continent.¹¹ By the middle of the nineteenth century, we finally had a handful of liberal governments advocating freedom of religion, lay education, and the freedom to elect and be elected – among many other principles of their liberal views.¹² The following section will study evangelization during this period.

Openings for the Protestant churches

One of the principles of the liberal revolution was freedom of religion. People were free to profess any religion they wished. This was one of the rights defended by the Declaration of Human Rights.

In this post-colonial period, when liberal politicians gained power, they allowed the American and European Protestant churches to come to the New World. Justo Rufino Barrios,¹³ the liberal president of Guatemala, allowed the Presbyterian Church to enter Guatemala to start a missionary endeavour. He granted the church a piece of property. The same occurred in other countries of Latin America, so this period is considered the time of the arrival of the Protestant churches and the arrival of Christianity in these lands.

A new era of evangelization on this continent began. The Protestants never used force to evangelize the people, they used persuasion. The only interest of the first missionaries was the conversation of unbelievers. For this reason, they were convicted to leave their homeland and begin a

¹¹ Le Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen of 1789 that originated in the French Revolution clearly states: "Les Représentants du Peuple Français, constitués en Assemblée Nationale... ont résolu d'exposer, dans une Déclaration solennelle, les droits naturels, inaliénables et sacrés de l'Homme..." This preamble, along with the 17 articles of the Declaration, inspired the people that declared the independence of our countries. Legifrance, *Déclaration des Droits del Homme* (1789): www.legifrance.gouv.fr/Droit-francais/Constitution/Declaration-des-Droits-de-l-Homme-et-du-Citoyen-de-1789 (accessed 16th February 2015).

¹² See, for instance, Raúl Zaldivar, 'Relación Estado – Iglesia y su Apertura al Protestantismo en Honduras' in *Vida y Pensamiento* 16:2 (1996), 58-75.

¹³ Justo Rufino Barrios governed Guatemala from 1873 to 1885. You will find a timeline of Barrios' period in office in Rebeca Calderón, *La Reforma Liberal de Justo Rufino Barrios: Una evaluación*. Graduation thesis at the University of Francisco Marroquín, Guatemala, 2003, 94-97.

ministry among people who opened their hearts to the Protestant churches at the beginning of this journey.

The reaction of the Catholic Church

After 300 years of control, the Catholic Church was neither willing nor ready to yield any ground to the Protestant churches. They considered Protestants as heretics and often persecuted them.¹⁴ There are many documented cases¹⁵ in which Protestant leaders were stoned in public by Catholics and put in jail without trial or due process. This type of behaviour characterized the first three quarters of the twentieth century. It is appropriate to mention that the policy of the Catholic Church towards the Protestant churches changed radically after the Second Vatican Council in which they labelled Protestant Christians as 'separate brethren' rather than as heretics. A new era of tolerance arrived in this region, and the Protestant churches were able to carry out their mission in peace.¹⁶

Despite the difficulties the Protestant churches faced during the first part of the twentieth century, pastors never ceased to evangelize; on the contrary, persecution and hostility fuelled the spirit of churches that were not willing to settle for nothing.

¹⁴ Historically, Protestantism has been a damnable heresy in Central America... the Protestant faith was tainted by association with the English, the enemies of Spain, and the traders and buccaneers who marauded up and down the coast of Central America carrying messages of heresy and treason... and the trials of Protestant heretics became a preoccupation of the Holy Office of the inquisition. See Virginia Garrard-Burnett, *Protestantism in Guatemala* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1998), 1-2.

¹⁵ The author of this essay understands, first, the responsibility of this statement. Secondly, the documented cases result from a series of interviews done by the author from 1984 to 1987 with the first converts to the protestant faith in Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico. These testimonies are recorded on tape and have never been published in book form. In these testimonies, pastors such as Braulio Medina, Pedro Oliva, Adán Osorio, Saturnino López and Rosendo Llanes, among others, tell stories of how they were stoned, imprisoned or intimidated for the crime of preaching the Gospel, in the period 1930-1970.

¹⁶ Under the chapter *Unitatis redintegratio* (About Ecumenism) of the Vatican Council, sanctioned by Pope Paul VI on 21st November 1964, the Catholic Church asked her members to keep unity with the Protestant churches whom they called *separated brothers* and asks for them to be treated with respect. This was a major change in the church policy toward the Protestant Church. See Vatican, Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Reintegratio* (21st November 1964):

www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html (accessed 16th February 2015).

The Role of Foreign Missions in Latin America

Several factors enabled Protestant missions to arrive in Latin America in a significant way. Obviously, the first was the policy of liberal governments allowing freedom of religion but, just as importantly, there was a tangible eagerness by the American churches to preach the Gospel to the entire world, even in the mountains and jungles of Latin America.

*The Panama Congress*¹⁷

The Edinburgh Missions Conference had convened in 1910. At that conference, the delegates spoke of the evangelization of the world but neglected Latin America, perhaps because they considered Latin America to be evangelized due to the presence of the Catholic Church.

The Panama missions conference attempted to correct this unintended mistake. The mission's conference was held in Panama City, 10th-20th February. The delegates made a significant statement: 'We declare Latin America a mission field.'¹⁸ This declaration would legitimize all kinds of missionary efforts from the American and European Christian churches towards this vast continent.

*Early foreign missions in Latin America*¹⁹

One of the first foreign missions in Central America was the one founded by the renowned theologian C.I. Scofield²⁰ in 1890: the Central American Mission, later known as CAM International and now called *Camino*

¹⁷ All the information about this Congress can be found in 'The Missionary Education Movement', in *Christian Work in Latin America* (New York: The Missionary Education Movement, 1917). See also the article written by historian Arturo Piedra, 'Orígenes e importancia del Congreso de Panamá', in *Vida y Pensamiento* 16:2 (1996), 8-16.

¹⁸ Unpublished paper presented to the Ibero-American Mission Congress by Luis Bush, 'Luz para las Naciones' (23rd November 1987), in São Paulo, Brazil.

¹⁹ The Gospel was first introduced by colportage many years before the arrival of the majority of foreign missions – those which came from Europe or the United States to distribute Bibles and Christian literature. Among many examples, we can quote Francisco Penzotti, who from 1883 to 1906 travelled by ship, mule, foot and other means all the way from Chile to Mexico, opening offices for the American Bible Society and establishing churches. See, for instance, Daniel Salinas, 'The Great Commission in Latin America', in *The Great Commission*, Martin Klauber, ed. (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 136.

²⁰ C.I. Scofield was a disciple of D.L. Moody. He is better known for his Bible reference work. He was the mentor of L.S. Chafer, founder of Dallas Theological Seminary and also founder of the Central American Mission. See Charles Gallaudet Trumbull, *The Life Story of C.I. Scofield* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1920): www.wholesomewords.org/biography/bscofield.pdf (accessed 16th February 2015).

Global.²¹ They were pioneers of mission in this region and were very successful in countries like Guatemala where they founded many churches and the most prestigious seminary in the continent, *Seminario Teológico Centroamericano (SETECA)*. In countries like Honduras, CAM arrived in 1896 when they founded the first evangelical church in the country's history.

Another American church committed to this mission was the *Iglesia Amigos* [Quakers, also known as Friends]. The American Bible Society colporteurs, Thomas J. Kelly and Clark J Buckley, arrived in Chiquimula, Guatemala, on 9th July 1902 and founded the *Iglesia Evangélica Amigos* [Friends' Church].²² After their successful start at East Guatemala, they extended their mission into Honduras.

With regard to South America, it is worth mentioning the story of the Swedish Missionary Gunnar Vingren who, in 1911, founded the first Assemblies of God of Brazil,²³ today one of the major churches with millions of members, even though other churches like the Anglican Episcopal Church²⁴ had already arrived there. Another example in South America is the arrival of the Episcopal Methodist Church in Chile with Bishop Bristol in 1878.²⁵ The Episcopal Methodist Church was later divided into different branches, one of which is the Methodist Pentecostal

²¹ The mission of Camino Global was founded in 1890 as the Central American Mission. Camino Global was established in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua. The mission changed its name for the first time in 1975, from the Central American Mission to CAM International, to reflect the expansion of its ministries beyond Central America to countries such as Mexico, Spain, Panama, Hispanic US and Canada. Today, the scope of this outreach has extended globally. Camino Global missionaries serve on four continents. The expansive growth of online ministries has accelerated Camino Global's impact worldwide, with operations in more than 100 countries and territories. 'CAM International is now Camino Global', in *Camino Global* (2014): www.caminoglobal.org/about-us (accessed 8th February 2015).

²² See Edgard Madrid, *Historia de la Iglesia Amigos de Jocotán, Chiquimula* (Guatemala: Seminario Teológico Cuáquero, 2010), 2.

²³ Swedish missionary, Vingren, Adolph Gunnar (1879-1933) was the founding pastor of the Assemblies of God in Brazil on 13th June 1911. See Isael De Araujo, *Dicionário do Movimento Pentecostal* (São Paulo, Brazil: CPAD, 2007), 902.

²⁴ Pedro Julio Triana Fernández mentions that the Anglican Episcopalians had their first contact in Brazil 1805, but that the church was not established until the end of the nineteenth century. 'The Lord helped us to this very point,' said Triana, quoting 1 Samuel 7:12. Pedro Julio Triana Fernandez, 'A brief approximation to the history, mission, ecclesiology and future projections of the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil', unpublished paper presented to the *Latin American Mission and Global Christianity* project (2015).

²⁵ See Carlos Mortar, *Historia de la Iglesia Metodista Pentecostal in Chile* (2008): <https://www.cristianosimp.wordpress.com/historia-de-la-iglesia-metodista-pentecostal-de-chile> (accessed 6th February 2015).

Church. This is one of the largest branches of Episcopal Methodist churches today.²⁶

The Latin American Church Reaches Maturity

After eighty years of foreign ministry in the region, new generations of leaders emerged from the church, along with rapid numerical growth. We can say that by the end of the 1960s, the church in Latin America had already reached a certain level of maturity.

We will now focus our discussion on this period of the Latin American church.

The First Latin American Conference on Evangelization (CLADE I)

CLADE I was held in the city of Bogotá in Colombia in 1969. The Billy Graham Association sponsored it, even though most of the attendees were Latin American delegates. In this conference Peruvian theologian Samuel Escobar rang a bell that resonated with the entire Latin American church for years to come with his well-remembered presentation on the integral mission of the church.²⁷

Up to this time no-one had ever articulated a critical message that the church, besides its spiritual task, also had a social responsibility, especially in Latin America where more than 70% of our population lives in poverty. Escobar made it clear that the goal of evangelization and the duty of an evangelist is not only bringing people to repentance. It is also by taking action in the social context that Christians help people to live a better life.

Undoubtedly, 'this conference marked a before and after in the history of the church and the church truly was never the same after it'.²⁸ This was the beginning of widespread collaboration between Protestant organizations in Latin America and organizations such as the Latin America Theological Fraternity (FTL)²⁹ and the *Congreso Latinoamericano de Evangelización*

²⁶ See the official website of the First Methodist Pentecostal Church in Chile, at Iglesia Metodista Pentecostal, 'Historia', in Jotabeche Catedral Evangélica de Chile (2014): www.jotabeche.cl/jotaversion2/index.php/iglesia/historia (accessed 16th February 2015).

²⁷ Cf René Padilla and Harold Segura (eds), *Ser, Hacer y Decir* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Kairós, 2006). The authors state the biblical basis of integral mission.

²⁸ Emilio Antonio Núñez made this statement in the foreword of my volume on *Teología Sistemática desde una Perspectiva Latinoamericana*. Núñez also said: 'Su contenido marcó un nuevo rumbo para el pensamiento evangélico latinoamericano.' See Raúl Zaldívar, *Teología Sistemática desde una Perspectiva Latinoamericana* (Barcelona: Clie, 2004), 15.

²⁹ The FTL was founded in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in 1970 with the commitment to respond to the great challenges that the people of God faced in Latin America: poverty, illiteracy and the role of the church in governments that were oppressive.

(CLADE conferences).³⁰ The seminaries and Bible institutes that had begun to take root started to teach theology and mission from another perspective. They realized that if they were going to evangelize in Latin America, they had to think in the particular cultural, social and economic contexts of the people.

Liberation theology

In the Roman Catholic world, Vatican II meant a major change in the trajectory of Catholicism.³¹ Before this Council, the Church was largely disconnected from the laity. A tangible example of this was its use of Latin, a dead language only used by the clergy during mass.

By the end of the Council, all of these traditions and thoughts became part of history and a new church emerged from that Church Council. This became the platform for Liberation Theology. Peruvian Catholic priest Gustavo Gutiérrez dropped a bombshell in Latin America's front yard when he published his book *Liberation Theology: Perspectives*.³² This new theology soon became an important movement in the region and a significant philosophy taught at major universities of the continent.

This anthropological approach to theology³³ claims that evangelization is not about winning souls for Christ, but instead is about leading millions of oppressed people to freedom by defeating the great Pharaoh represented by the political powers that own the capital and resources of the land and their greed which has condemned millions to misery.

See Raúl Zaldivar, *Teología Sistemática desde una Perspectiva Latinoamericana* (Barcelona, Spain: Clie, 2008), 91-93.

³⁰ Five CLADE congresses have taken place: CLADE I in Bogotá, CLADE II in Peru, CLADE III and IV in Ecuador, and CLADE V in Costa Rica.

³¹ In this same way, Carmelo Álvarez contends that most of the influence of Vatican II in Latin America was the emergence of Liberation Theology and its theological method, which emphasized the praxis of a liberating faith and the option for the poor, telling them that God loves them and wants their liberation. Vatican II also opened the door to new biblical hermeneutics, which has proved to be a useful tool in the practical application of the Word of God to the present and future of Latin America. In 1969, the message of liberation showed a horizon of hope to millions of poor in the region. See Carmelo Alvarez, 'Concilio Vaticano II (1962-1965): Una Valoración Protestante', in *Lupa Protestante* (12th October 2012): www.lupaprotestante.com/blog/concilio-vaticano-ii-1962-1965-una-valoracion-protestante (accessed 23rd January 2015).

³² See Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Teología de la Liberación* (Salamanca, Spain: Ediciones Sígueme, 1971).

³³ Cf Emilio Antonio Núñez, *Teología de la Liberación* (San José, Costa Rica: Editorial Caribe, 1986).

Mass Evangelism in Latin America

There is no question that Billy Graham is the person who set the pattern for mass evangelism in the twentieth century. I am referring to the evangelistic crusades that he held in Latin America that mobilized millions of people to open-air meetings. Since then, patterns of evangelization have evolved and other paradigms have been set.

*The evangelistic crusade paradigm*³⁴

As previously stated, Billy Graham set the pattern for mass evangelism. It is undeniable that Billy Graham's worldwide evangelistic ministry inspired the Argentine preacher, Luis Palau, who is well known in Latin America and worldwide. He founded the Luis Palau Evangelistic Association in the US with the intent of doing mass evangelism in Latin America.³⁵ Other Argentine preachers who have made history are Fernando Vangioni³⁶ and Alberto Mottes, the latter founding the Alberto Mottes Evangelistic Association in the US,³⁷ and both of whom contributed to the important crusades that took place in Latin America. Other great itinerant evangelists that made history in the continent are Cecilio Arrastía, Santiago Garabaya and Hermano Pablo Finkerbinder, among many others who caused significant evangelistic impacts in the region.

I would also like to mention another movement that took place in Honduras. This was the rise of the Youth for Christ Evangelistic Association, which held interdenominational evangelistic crusades in Honduras for nearly ten years and led thousands of people to the Lord.³⁸ This movement was unique in Honduras and Central America.

³⁴ This period was well documented by Rodrigo Zapata, *La Iglesia del Kyrios* (Lima: Visión Mundial Internacional, 1988), 20. See also Zapata, 'La Fiesta de Liberación de los Oprimidos', in *Misión 7:2* (Number 24, 1988).

³⁵ Luis Palau later began a worldwide evangelistic ministry. See Zapata, *La Iglesia del Kyrios*, 24.

³⁶ Fernando Vangioni was the only Latin American speaker at the World Evangelization Conference in Berlin, 1966. For information about the Berlin Congress, see Billy Graham Center, 'Text of Billy Graham's 'Why the Berlin Congress?' in 1966', in *Berlin Congress Bulletin Board* (2006): www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/berlinaddress.htm (accessed 16th February 2015).

³⁷ Fernando Vangioni and Alberto Mottes established headquarters for their ministries in the US. The reason was obvious, that in order to run a worldwide evangelistic ministry, they needed to be based in a country which provided the facilities and financial resources needed to operate ministries of that magnitude.

³⁸ The author of this article was the founder of Youth for Christ Evangelistic Association, on 21st October 1981. This was a milestone in mass evangelism in Honduras. See Raúl Zaldívar, Ignacio Alonzo and Iris Barrientos, *Entre Sueños y Desafíos* (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Demographic Honduras, 2014), 4-6.

The Pentecostal world also had its impact in the evangelistic crusade ministry. For example, many agree that Yiye Avila is the most renowned Pentecostal preacher who left a significant legacy on the continent. He was a Puerto Rican who established his own television network and a reputation that allowed him to preach not only in Latin America but also in many countries of the world. Another Puerto Rican evangelist, very famous in the early 1980s, was Jorge Raskie. In Argentina, Carlos Annacondia also made a significant evangelistic impact.

American preachers always made great impact in Latin America: these included Billy Graham and, at the end of the 1980s, Jimmy Swaggart who had considerable influence through TV and was a unique phenomenon in the history of mass evangelism in Latin America. The Latin American population was watching Jimmy Swaggart every Sunday on the TV networks, essentially making him something of a celebrity. When he announced a crusade in a Latin America country, the stadiums were simply insufficient to hold so many people.

A change in mass evangelism

A new generation has risen in the church and evangelistic crusades are no longer popular methods of evangelization. The new preferred approach of evangelistic endeavours is that of festivals. A festival is a musical event where famous Christian groups or famous solo singers, and even artists from the secular world, may perform. This type of event draws thousands of people who are mainly seduced by the music, food and general ambiance. In the middle of a lights show, there is a pause and a preacher stands up to preach the gospel. At the end, he issues an invitation to the audience, counsellors do the follow-up, and the rest of the people continue to enjoy the show. This is what Franklin Graham and Luis Palau³⁹ are doing both in the US and Latin America. They have been very successful with this new evangelistic approach.

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³⁹ Regarding this new pattern Palau states: 'The methods should always be adapted to the culture and the times. We don't know what the future holds, but we believe that biblical evangelists in those times will discover ways of making the good news clear. Just a few years ago, the concept of our festivals would have been too wild for most of us to grasp. Still, when I share the gospel now at these events, it's just me and a microphone and my Bible. The key is always going to be the messengers and the message, not the methods'. See more at: Luis Palau, 'Evangelism [Re]defined', in *Ministry Today* (2014): <http://ministrytodaymag.com/index.php/ministry-today-archives/198-words/14747-evangelism-redefined#sthash.6ZxKND33.dpuf> (accessed 10th February 2015).

The Spectacular Growth of the Church: The Age of Mega-Churches

Along with the evangelistic crusade movement, there were other evangelistic efforts in the region. The 1970s were the beginning of a new era for the church, the era of the harvest, the era of the mega-churches and the message of prosperity.

The evangelistic efforts of the early 1970s

One of the most important evangelistic efforts was *Evangelismo a Fondo*.⁴⁰ Kenneth Strachan inspired the church of Central America to begin massive mobilization that caused a revolution in the history of Christian evangelization. Many interdenominational evangelistic campaigns took place all over Central America, the Gospel was preached, and thousands of people became Christians.⁴¹

In Peru, for instance, the *Lima al encuentro con Dios* evangelistic effort put forth by the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church was a great success. One local church started an evangelistic programme with the help of American missionaries. They brought preachers from other countries to preach for two consecutive weeks in evangelistic campaigns. After the meetings, they devoted two weeks to teaching new converts. This cycle was repeated for several years. Through this method of evangelization, thousands of people came to know Jesus, many churches were founded, and the movement spread to other countries such as Chile, Ecuador and Colombia.⁴²

It is also important to mention here that the Pentecostal church from the continental US and Puerto Rico launched a visionary missionary ministry in Latin America. Up until the 1970s, the traditional denominations had controlled the church scene. However, with the Pentecostal thrust of the 1970s, millions of people became converted through the Pentecostal churches, particularly among the vulnerable. The Pentecostals entered the great metropolis of the continent and temples spread out in the poorest neighbourhoods of the cities.

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⁴⁰ Zapata, *La Iglesia del Kyrios*, 21.

⁴¹ For instance, Kenneth Strachan said: 'El crecimiento de cualquier movimiento es una proporción directa al éxito que tenga dicho movimiento en la movilización de todos sus miembros en una esfuerzo constante por propagar sus creencias.' See Dayton Roberts, *Los Auténticos Revolucionarios: La Historia de Evangelismo a Fondo en América Latina* (San José, Costa Rica: IINDEF, 1969), 23.

⁴² For a broader understanding of this movement, see Alfredo Smith, *Lima al Encuentro con Dios* (TelevidaLima 2012): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xEjDmRRnPZ8> (accessed 10th February 2015).

The age of the mega-church begins

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, the phenomenon of mega-churches in Latin America had started. It is important to mention that the decade of the 1980s, commonly known as the Lost Decade in Latin American socio-political history, was characterized by political violence in which thousands of people were incarcerated, tortured, and even murdered, at the hands of Latin American rulers or heads of states. There is no doubt that this is one of the facts that moved people to find refuge in the church. This is how huge churches started in countries like El Salvador, Guatemala and Colombia, among many others.

Another factor that fuelled this phenomenon was the emergence of indigenous ministries that were more contextualized in the specific history of certain communities. As I said earlier, foreign missions had been running the church at that time so this condition generated certain social and cultural difficulties in church governance. So, once Latin American charismatic leaders had risen in the churches, people felt attracted by their leadership and that was truly the origin of the mega-church era. Guatemala was one of the first countries involved in the mega-church movement, followed by El Salvador and later Colombia.

Finally, there is one other factor that we should consider, and it is that of church government. Traditionally, Congregational or Presbyterian government ran the church, which meant that the power of decision rested on the congregation or a body of elders. In the mega-church movement, the power of decision rests on the pastor who is also the figure around whom the church world revolves. He may have an advisory board, but he is the central figure and he usually has the final word.

The COMIBAM Congress

The Congreso Misionero Iberoamericano (COMIBAM) [Ibero-American Missions Congress] took place in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1987. It was a milestone in the history of evangelism in Latin America. Luis Bush made a historic statement in São Paulo: 'I declare Latin America a missionary force.' Here we need to remember that, in the Panama Congress of 1916, the delegates stated exactly the opposite: '*Latin America is a missionary field.*'⁴³

The COMIBAM congress fuelled cross-cultural missions in the continent. Churches from all over Latin America made commitments to reach an unreached world. A COMIBAM office was established in

⁴³ Paper presented by Luis Bush, 'Luz para las Naciones', at Congreso Misionero Iberoamericano (COMIBAM) in 1987 at São Paulo, Brazil. Since this declaration is a milestone in the history of the evangelization of Latin America, we can find it quoted in books on mission, such as Samuel Cueva, *La iglesia Local en Misión Transcultural* (Barcelona, Spain: Clie, 1991), 41.

Guatemala City, and people like Rudy Girón embraced the cause in a personal way. Brazil became the country with more missionaries than any other country of Latin America. After the conference in São Paulo, two more have taken place, one in Acapulco, Mexico, in 1997 and the other one in Granada, Spain, in 2006.

There are many things that could be said about COMIBAM,⁴⁴ but for the purposes of this essay, it is enough to say that the movement played an important role in the cross-cultural evangelization, not only of Latin America but also the world. The statement made by Luis Bush was a prophetic one; Latin Americans are now a missionary and evangelistic force reaching out to the world.

The church of prosperity

By the beginning of the new millennium, 100 years after the Protestant churches arrived in Latin America, we have some rich and powerful churches. Those days of the lack of resources and financial desolation are behind us. Now that some churches have experienced significant numerical growth and massive temples are being built, those pastors need to maintain this immense infrastructure. Besides the buildings, these churches have entered the world of the media – territory previously monopolised by the secular world.

In order to support personnel, physical infrastructure and mass media, these churches need significant sources of funding in order to maintain the size of their ministries. This simple fact introduced another element into the ministry of evangelization, and that element was money. Most mega-church pastors have begun to interpret the Bible from the perspective of money. They use the Scriptures to speak about prosperity to those who contribute to their ministries. The law of sowing and reaping has become one of the most popular messages of the Latin America mega-church movement.⁴⁵

At this moment, we have some mega-churches that manage great amounts of money and their budgets are extremely high compared with a few years ago. Many mega-churches and ministries started to experience an era of prosperity, even in Latin America. This circumstance has divided the churches. There are those in favour of prosperity and those who are against

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⁴⁴ COMIBAM has produced many documents promoting cross-cultural missions from Latin America to the world. I recommend the document produced after the final conference at Acapulco in 1997, delivered by Rudy Girón, 'El Movimiento Misionero Hacia el Siglo XXI', in *COMIBAN 97* (Acapulco, Mexico: COMIBAM, 1997).

⁴⁵ Robert Harold Schuller was an American televangelist, pastor, motivational speaker and author. He is known for his weekly *Hour of Power* on television and for his books, which are considered the foundation of Prosperity Theology. Such a theology also became very popular in Latin America, particularly among the so-called post-denominational mega-churches.

such teaching.⁴⁶ Many would argue that the use of this philosophy is often manipulative and takes advantage of the underprivileged.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that, despite the prosperity of the mega-church, there are still many congregations dealing with poverty, especially those in the rural areas and the poor urban slums throughout the region.

The Influence of the Church in Latin America

As we said at the outset, the Protestant churches were persecuted and humiliated by the Catholic Church from the start. The first generations of Christians were largely poor and the churches did not represent any kind of significant wealth. For some, those days are long gone, and while Christians think this is a time of prosperity, they also think of it as a time of great influence in the different spheres of society.

*The political influence of the church*⁴⁷

With the spectacular growth of the mega-church, many members are now part of the political structure of their countries. It is easy to find congressmen, public officers, even presidents, in some instances of Latin American history as members.⁴⁸ The church is no longer a poor and

⁴⁶ Prosperity preachers believe that no-one should live in poverty. According to them, if somebody is poor, it is because there is sin in his life or he is not following God correctly. Then they teach that the best way to become rich is through giving. The more money a person gives to the church, the more God is going to bless him. This is a law of sowing and reaping. See Juan Stam, '¿Es Bíblica la Teología de la Prosperidad?' in *Blogs the Juan Stam* (1st September 2009): www.juanstam.com/dnn/Blogs/tabid/110/EntryID/217/Default.aspx (accessed 16th February 2015).

⁴⁷ Due to the great importance of this topic, The University for Leaders has created the Faith and Politics Diploma, in order to train church members involved in public administration. One of the textbooks is by Raúl Zaldivar, Raúl and Evelio Reyes, 'Las Ciencias Políticas desde la *dimensión* de la fe' (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Editorial – Universidad para Lideres, Honduras, 2010).

⁴⁸ In recent years, Guatemala has had two presidents who declared themselves Protestants: Efraín Ríos Montt and Serrano Elías. Although many Evangelical and Charismatic Christians supported and took pride in these two presidents, they left office with a number of unresolved issues: Ríos Montt was found guilty of genocide. See Manuel Ollé Sesé, Jo-Marie Burt and Claire Colardelle, 'Genocidio en Guatemala: Ríos Montt Culpable', in *FIDH – Federación Internacional de Derechos Humanos* (September 2013): https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/informe_guatemala613esp2013.pdf (accessed 16th February 2015). In the case of Jorge Serrano Elías, he was President of Guatemala from 14th January 1991 to 31st May 1993. Serrano sparked the 1993 Guatemalan constitutional crisis when he illegally suspended the constitution, dissolved Congress and the Supreme Court, imposed censorship and tried to restrict civil freedoms, allegedly to fight corruption.

forgotten group of people, but is now a well-respected association of Christ-followers. What this means is that the church is now an organization of considerable influence in society. Christian leaders are invited to participate in important discussions of state, and their opinions are highly valued and taken into account in many instances. However, we also know that in many cases these are only mere acts of courtesy that politicians show to church leaders because, in many countries, the vote of Protestant church members is large enough to attract attention of politicians for their electoral potential.

The influence of the media

The media are no longer only in the hands of the secular world. Some churches have found a great deal of presence in them, particularly in the countries of Central America. Churches own important networks globally such as ENLACE,⁴⁹ based in Costa Rica, and other national networks of great influence in South and Central America. The Protestant churches have also entered into thousands of cable systems all over the continent, reaching into remote areas that used to be inaccessible to such media.

Despite everything mentioned above, it is important to mention that, even though I cannot give names, for obvious reasons, it is well known in Latin America that some mega-churches may have used media not necessarily to spread the gospel but to increase their popularity and image, to build the ego of the celebrity leading the church. Some of these churches do not support other ministries or the church in general, so a convincing case can be made that their main concern is merely increasing their own membership.

Final Considerations

1. According to the Bible, the church will always be subject to attacks to hinder the fulfilment of her mission. It is clear that God opened the door for evangelism in Latin America through the establishment of liberal governments, but he also allowed persecution against his followers.

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Serrano's action met with strong protests by most elements of Guatemalan society. In the face of this pressure, Serrano resigned as president on 1st June and fled the country. See also Miguel Ruiza, et al, 'Jorge Serrano Elías', in *Biografías y Vidas* (2004): www.biografiasyvidas.com/biografia/s/serrano_jorge.htm (accessed 16th February 2015).

⁴⁹ This states how Jonás González, in hope against hope, discovered what the largest television network in the Spanish-speaking world was today: '25 Años de Enlace. Una Historia de Milagros', in *Enlace* (San José, Costa Rica: Enlace TV, 2014).

2. In spite of many mistakes made by foreign missions throughout the evangelization process, the Latin American people will always be indebted to those missionaries that came to this region leaving family, comfort and wealth behind in order to obey God's call.
3. Even though there was a Catholic presence in Latin America for four hundred years, the continent has not yet been evangelized. That is why the 1916 Panama Congress declared Latin America to be a mission field. Seventy years later, Luis Bush made a prophetic statement to the contrary in the 1987 COMIBAN conference in São Paulo, Brazil, when he said, 'I declare Latin America a missionary force.'⁵⁰
4. The CLADE I conference was a milestone in the evangelization of Latin America. It proclaimed that God is interested not only in the soul of the unbeliever; he also cares for his physical condition. As evangelists, we cannot neglect the fact that more than 70% of the population of Latin America lives in poverty. Our mission has to be carried out in an integral or holistic way.
5. In the 1970s and 80s, Latin America experienced mass evangelism in the 'crusade' format made popular by Billy Graham. Argentine preachers in particular reached very popular status in the Latin American church. Puerto Rican Pentecostal evangelists also made significant contributions to mass evangelization in the continent. In the 1990s, a new generation rose up in the church, so evangelists had to change tactics in mass evangelism. The festival format became very popular among churches, which included entertainment and socialization in order to attract people to big events to hear the Gospel.
6. After a hundred years of testimony, the evangelical church has grown to take a prominent place in society. Mega-churches have emerged all over the continent. The largest churches are in Central America, which have built sizeable buildings in large cities and have even moved into the media. The current churches also own radio and TV networks of great continental influence.
7. To be a Christian at this time is prestigious. Christians are now members of political parties and governments, have important political positions, and are respected by society. There is no longer any shame for being a Christian, as in the past.
8. The Latin American church has to be aware of the dangers of being rich and influential. History shows that human beings are prone to forget the favour and mercies of God. It is true that today that we have a position of influence, and there is no problem with that; however, we should never forget our origins, or that we are his servants. This is what the Scriptures teach: whoever wants to be

⁵⁰ Luis Bush, 'Luz para las naciones'.

greatest in the Kingdom of God has first of all to be a servant (Matt. 20:26; Mark 10:43).

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THE EVOLUTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHT TO RELIGIOUS FREEDOM OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF LATIN AMERICA

Jorge Alberto Zavala Salgado

Introduction

The indigenous peoples of Latin America left a rich and diverse legacy of religious monuments. We know the Aztecs and their predecessors, the Incas and the pre-Incas, for their painted or sculpted images, and for all that has come out of their hands.

The pre-Columbian monuments clearly indicate the polytheistic vocation of the indigenous peoples and the variety of deities that they worshipped.¹ From their encounter with the Europeans in the sixteenth century, one theology and policy have defined the requirements of natural law and the fundamental rights of the indigenous peoples.

On 12th October 1492, the first European to set foot on American terrain fell to his knees and planted the cross. The following year of discovery, Pope Alexander VI issued four successive papal bulls to divide the world that was to be discovered between Spain and Portugal, entrusting the two monarchies with the mission to carry the Gospel to every creature who would be found on both sides of the dividing line. For the two Empires, evangelisation was the colony's fundamental goal. The mandate established by the Pope in his *dominium mundi* confirmed a spiritual demand that was based, ultimately, in the sovereignty of Christ.²

In this manner, the aim of the Indies was conceived as a goal of Christianity by which the existence of the indigenous peoples and their salvation constituted the supreme aim. This law regulated the entire government of the Spanish Empire in America and contained not only the Church's mission, but also the duties of the State. Evangelising and implementing justice were a single aim. The union of the two hierarchies – the religious and the political – under the king's authority, served not only to unify the solution to the problems related to the sending of missionaries, but also to guarantee their safety among the indigenous peoples.

¹ A. Von Humboldt, *Views of the Cordilleras and Monuments of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas: A critical edition*, Vera M. Kutzinski & Ottmar Ette (eds) (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012), xxxii.

² André-Vicent, O.P., *Derecho de los Indios y Desarrollo en Hispanoamérica* (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, 1975), 28.

A detailed analysis of the distinct and heterogeneous processes that have determined the spiritual reality of the indigenous peoples of Latin America is one of the most pertinent investigations, which invites the revival of their ancient religious traditions. That task significantly exceeds the scope of this work, and limits it to the study of just two aspects – first, a review of the spiritual conquest of the indigenous peoples through the imposition of the Catholic faith, and secondly, a study of the resurgence of ancestral rituals and ancient religious traditions, but such study should be done under the protection of the right to religious freedom. The reflections that arise from these two aspects constitute the third part of this chapter.

The Spiritual Conquest of the Indigenous Peoples

The indigenous peoples were opened up to the Gospel by force. The conquerors were not concerned about conserving their religious traditions, but rather about saving their souls. The Conquest was built on the dual purpose of reaching El Dorado and achieving the salvation of the indigenous peoples. The supremacy of salvation constituted the constant preoccupation of the political power and the Catholic Church.

The laws of evangelisation did not respect all religions equally, and although they had some respect for their own conscience and those they conquered, they imposed slavery. Columbus sent indigenous groups to be sold, but Queen Isabel ordered their freedom, including their repatriation. By its own inertia, the Conquest leaned towards the continuance of inherited slavery. So-called ‘forced labour’ constituted the accepted way in which the indigenous peoples were treated.

Another institution characterized by its cruelty was the *mita*, which consisted of the requisition of the workforce for hard labour and mining, under which many, especially the Peruvian Incas, suffered martyrdom. Thousands of indigenous peoples perished under the arduous labour conditions and abuse inflicted by workforce ‘commanders’.

Change was triggered by the famous sermon of the Dominican Friar António de Montesinos, given in Santo Domingo the last Sunday of Advent in the year 1511, in which he accused the Spanish colonists of mistreating the natives who worked for them, and consequently denied them confession. When these events were made known in Castilla, they provoked the response of the Head of the Dominicans, Friar Alonso de Loaysa, and of King Fernando el Católico.

The immediate consequence was the summoning of the Council of Burgos, which resulted in the adoption of the Laws of Burgos of 1512. These laws constituted an important milestone for two fundamental reasons: in the first place, because it was the first general regulatory text on the treatment of the indigenous peoples in America recently discovered; and secondly, because this constituted the seeds of a new philosophical, theological, judicial and social theory for the recognition of human rights.

The text consisted of 35 dispositions that regulated the conditions of life, work and limits to the use of the indigenous peoples as a workforce, and even more importantly, their condition as free men and their entitlement to basic human rights, such as the right to freedom and to property, was recognized for the first time.

The Laws of Burgos had a rather limited application, due to the authority of the commanders and the remoteness of the central power, which did not help in its effective application.

Nevertheless, this colonial legislation created two factors which marked the twin aims of evangelisation and the protection of the indigenous peoples: the 'requirement' and the 'assignment'.

The 'requirement' established the procedure of submission and constituted a proclamation of the Pope's and the kings of Spain's sovereignty being placed at the service of the Gospel. It required the indigenous peoples to recognize the new authority and to listen to the preaching of 'the fathers', but while enjoying freedom. The instruction was obligatory, but the adherence completely voluntary. They were not baptized except after a period of instruction and reflection. Those who did not want to be baptized would not suffer any type of reprisal.

The requirement was inspired by the biblical passage on the conquest of the Promised Land. According to the Old Testament, Joshua 'required' the idolaters who inhabited Jericho to hand over the land God had promised them. Let us remember that each city conquered by the Jews had at least one temple dedicated to some force of nature. The actual name Jericho is derived from the Hebrew word *lareaj*, which means moon. The inhabitants of Jericho worshipped the moon, the god *Teraj*. Meanwhile, on the other side of the central mountain range of Judea, in the city of Beit Shemesh, meaning 'House of the Sun', its inhabitants worshipped the god *Shamash* or, the sun god.

In the same way, the Spaniards considered it appropriate to require the indigenous peoples to hand over their land, seeing that Pope Alexander VI, as the representative of God in the world, had conceded those regions to the Spanish Crown in virtue of the papal bull *Inter caetera* of 1493.³ The inhabitants of the New World also worshipped deities related to the forces of nature, as in the case of the god *Tonatiuh*, who in Aztec mythology is the sun god, and the goddess *Coyolxauhqui*, the moon god.

Today, the institutions of the Conquest do not cease to provoke confusion and perplexity, as they did among their contemporaries. Considerable censure can be made against them, because they were the real cause of inequality between the conquerors and the conquered, and the indigenous peoples had no choice in the matter other than to submit. This may have been trumpeted as the liberating message of the Gospel yet it

³ A.E. Pérez Luño, *La Polémica Sobre el Nuevo Mundo. Los Clásicos Españoles de la Filosofía del Derecho* (Madrid, Trota, 1992), 20.

imposed the Christian faith by force, and represented an excuse to impose faith in God simply to put an end to their divinities.

Evangelisation became the violent imposition of new religious beliefs among indigenous peoples who had been 'liberated' from their idols. With the destruction of their painted and sculpted divinities, the indigenous peoples showed themselves to be more receptive before the messengers of the invisible God. The missionaries preached the gospel to them in Spanish, taught them through images and hymns, and explained the virtues of God made man.

Co-existence between the Spaniards and the indigenous peoples was not easy, because it brought about tensions and the indigenous peoples were always open to consulting their Shamans and, at the same time, to listening to the missionaries. The assignment soon degenerated into slavery. The missionaries had to work at evangelisation and, at the same time, to fight for justice, peace and respect for the indigenous peoples.

An important milestone in the fight for justice and the evangelisation of the indigenous peoples was passed on 15th June 1537, with the adoption of the controversial papal bull *Sublimis Deus* (also known as *Unigenitus* and *Veritas ipsa*) by Pope Paul III. With this papal bull, the Pope did not try to define, as some authors believe, the rationality of the indigenous peoples, but rather believing the indigenous peoples to be human beings made in the image of God, the Pope declared they had the right to freedom, to have their own possessions and the right to embrace faith, which was to be preached with only peaceful methods, avoiding any kind of cruelty.

In the eyes of others, by contrast, indigenous peoples were savage beings, barbarians, closer to monkeys than to men, for which little effort was necessary to justify Spanish domination.⁴ Among those who defended this thesis should be mentioned Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, scholar of the *Real Colegio de San Clemente de los Españoles de Bolonia*, author of the dialogue entitled *Democrates alter, sive de iustis belli causis apud Indos*, in which, relying on Aristotle, he stated that the indigenous peoples were beings of an inferior nature, with limited capacities and barbaric customs who, therefore, had to serve the Spaniards who were more gifted than they in intelligence, religion and government.⁵ As is well known, Bartolomé de las Casas directly opposed Sepúlveda's theories, producing one of the most famous doctrinal controversies in the history of the Conquest, and one that reached its climax in the renowned Council held in Valladolid, August-September 1550. Following Aristotelian doctrine, Bartolomé de las Casas considered that only perverted and cruel people who went against reasoning and live on the fringes of social order, without adherence to its laws, could be considered slaves. From this line of reasoning, given that belief in

⁴ Pérez Luño, *La Polémica Sobre el Nuevo Mundo*, 25.

⁵ J.G. Sepúlveda, and *Democrates Alter*, M. Menéndez Pelayo (ed), *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, 1982, 305-15.

freedom was innate in every human being simply by being human, he came to the conclusion that all nations and peoples, unfaithful as they were, were essentially free.

This freedom was expressed, before anything else, in spiritual freedom or freedom of thought: every man should practise the religion they desire. No one can be obligated to accept a religion determined by others, nor can their freedom or their assets be withheld for religious differences.⁶

The influence of religion in the evolution of International Law did not go unnoticed. In this respect, the work of Francisco de Vitoria, entitled *Relecciones Teológicas* (1538-1539), is very illuminating and, that of Francisco Suárez, entitled *De Legibus ac Deo Legislatore* (1612), which influenced the thinking of Hugo Grocio, came to be recognized worldwide. The contributions of these founders of International Law laid out an essentially universalist vision, as Judge A.A. Cançado Trindade has explained in the case of the *Moiwana Community vs Surinam*.⁷

The Return to the Rituals and the Ancestral Ceremonies

Five centuries after the Conquest, the indigenous movement has come to be recognised as the cultural, political and anthropological entity that it is, with a focus on the study and the appreciation of it, while the mechanisms of discrimination, in causing the damage it did to the indigenous peoples, were seen for what they were. In this sense, it must be pointed out that the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, in granting reparations against Surinam, took into account the *modus vivendi* and the cultural practices of the *Cimarrones* [maroons].⁸ It has also made reference to general aspects of religious freedom in regard to the case of the film *The Last Temptation of Christ*, where it stated the right to freedom of conscience and religion [Article 12 of the American Convention on Human Rights] allows everyone to maintain, change, profess or disseminate his religion or beliefs. 'This right is one of the foundations of democratic society. In its religious dimension, it constitutes a far-reaching element in the protection of the convictions of those who profess a religion and in their way of life.'⁹

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⁶ L. Peña Vicente, *La Carta de Derechos Humanos Según Bartolomé de las Casas* (Guatemala, Convento de Santo Domingo, 1978), 10-11.

⁷ Separate Opinion of Judge A.A. Cançado Trindade, Case of the *Moiwana Community vs Surinam*, Judgment of 15th June 2005 (*Preliminary Objections, Merits, Reparations and Costs*), 62; see also Voto Concurrante en la Opinión Consultiva No. 18 sobre *Condición Jurídica y Derechos de los Migrantes Indocumentados* de 2003, 4-12.

⁸ Case of *Aloeboetoe et al vs Suriname*, Judgment of 10th September 1993 (*Reparations and Costs*).

⁹ *Olmedo Bustos, et al, Case of The Last Temptation of Christ vs Chile*. Merits, Reparations and Costs, Judgment of 5th February 2001, 79.

The right to religious freedom of the indigenous peoples occupies an important place in the International Law of Human Rights. Any excessive interference in human beliefs, whatever the religion involved, causes harm to believers, and the International Law of Human Rights cannot remain indifferent to it. Such interference should be taken into consideration, along with other damages, for the purposes of reparation. The spiritual harm that members of the indigenous communities suffer should therefore also be seen as serious damage to be redeemed, as the Inter-American Court has established in the case of the *Moiwana Community vs Surinam*.¹⁰

In this area, the Court has pronounced verdicts that confirm not only indigenous peoples' right to religious freedom, but also their right to access natural resources and the right to the protection and conservation of such resources.¹¹ The close relationship that exists between indigenous peoples, their traditional territories and their natural resources, is an important element of their culture as is their particular lifestyle.¹² Ancestral cemeteries, significant and important religious places, and ceremonial or ritual sites linked with the occupation and use of their physical territories, constitute an intrinsic element of the right to cultural identity.¹³

Some of the arguments exposed by the Inter-American Commission in the case of *Yakye Axa vs Paraguay* centre their considerations on the premise that indigenous and tribal peoples have the right guaranteed to them by the State to live in their ancestral territory and thus to be able to preserve their cultural identity.¹⁴ Hence, it is legitimate to affirm that when the State does not guarantee the indigenous community and their members' the right to land, they deprive them not only of the material possession of their territory, but also the fundamental basis on which to develop their culture, spiritual life, integrity and economic survival.¹⁵ This leads us to expressly admit that limitations on indigenous peoples' right to property

¹⁰ Separate Opinion of Judge A.A. Cançado Trindade, Case of the *Moiwana*, 50-52, 62, 81.

¹¹ The updated list of sentences available on the website *Inter-American Court of Human Rights*: www.corteidh.or.cr/index.php/en (accessed 5th April 2015).

¹² CIDH, Informe No. 40/04, Case 12.053, *Comunidades Indigenas Mayas del Distrito de Toledo (Belice)*, 12-10-2004, 155. In the Case of the *Moiwana Community vs Suriname*, the Court noted that the relationship of the N'djuka community with its traditional land was of vital spiritual, cultural and material importance. Since culture maintains its integrity and identity, members of the community should have access to their homeland, Judgment of 15th June 2005, 86.

¹³ CIDH, *Democracia y Derechos Humanos en Venezuela*. Doc. OEA/Ser.L/V/II, Doc. 54, 30th December 2009, 1054.

¹⁴ *Inter-American Court of Human Rights*, Case of the *Yakye Axa Indigenous Community vs Paraguay*, Judgment of 17th June 2005 (*Merits, Reparations and Costs*) p 157(c); Case of the *Xákmok Kásek Indigenous Community v. Paraguay*, Judgment of 24th August 2010 (*Merits, Reparations, and Costs*), 171-82.

¹⁵ *Inter-American Court of Human Rights*, Case of the *Yakye Axa Indigenous Community vs Paraguay*, Judgment of 17th June 2005, 120 (j).

can affect the right to exercise one's own religion, spirituality or beliefs, a right that is recognized in Article 12 of the American Convention and in Article III of the American Declaration on Human Rights.

In the case *Plan de Sánchez vs Guatemala*, the Court considered that the State incurred international responsibility for the violation of Article 12 of the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights.¹⁶ The victims of these violations were the survivors and family members of the 268 massacre victims, the majority of whom were members of the Mayan indigenous peoples from the village of Plan de Sánchez, who were executed by members of the Guatemalan army in 1982.¹⁷ In the arising discussions over this right, the Inter-American Commission has reaffirmed that states have the obligation to guarantee indigenous peoples the freedom to conserve their own forms of religiosity or spirituality, including the public expression of this right and access to sacred places.¹⁸

It is also necessary to reveal the transcendence that the care of the mortal remains of indigenous peoples has, given that it constitutes a form of observance of the right to human dignity. In the case regarding the assassination of the Guatemalan indigenous leader, Efraín Bámaca, the Inter-American Court declared that 'In the Mayan culture, respect for the remains has a special cultural significance. In the Mam culture funeral ceremonies ensure a cycle of life, whereby the living interact with the dead and even with the most remote ancestors. The cycle reaches its closure at funeral ceremonies.'¹⁹

Here it is pertinent to refer to the specific rituals of the N'djuka (Moiwana Community of Suriname) which are carried out with precision on the death of a community member. Such religious ceremonies last six months to a year. These demand the participation of the largest possible number of community members and a greater use of resources than any other ceremony in N'djuka society.²⁰

It is fundamental to have possession of the remains of the deceased, as the body should be treated a specific way and placed in the appropriate gravesite of the family group. Only those who have been considered evil do not receive an honourable burial, cremation being considered very offensive.²¹

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¹⁶ *Inter-American Court of Human Rights*, Case of Plan de Sánchez Massacre vs Guatemala, Judgment of 29th June 2004 (Merits), 47.

¹⁷ Case of Plan de Sánchez Massacre vs Guatemala, 42-48.

¹⁸ OEA/Ser.L/V/II. Doc. 56/09 30th December 2009, Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, *Derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas y Tribales Sobre sus Tierras Ancestrales y Recursos Naturales, Normas y Jurisprudencia del Sistema Interamericano de Derechos Humanos*, 160-62.

¹⁹ *Inter-American Court of Human Rights*, Case of Bámaca-Velásquez vs. Guatemala, Judgment of 22nd February 2002 (*Reparations and Costs*), 81.

²⁰ Case of Bámaca-Velásquez vs. Guatemala, 86-87.

²¹ Case of Bámaca-Velásquez vs. Guatemala, 86-88.

The omission of different burial rituals is considered a moral transgression, which not only provokes the anger of the deceased person's spirit, but can also offend other deceased ancestors of the community. The latter has, as a consequence, a series of 'diseases of spiritual origin', which are manifested as real physical illnesses and can, potentially, affect the whole lineage. The N'djuka consider that said illnesses cannot be spontaneously cured, but rather should be resolved through cultural and ceremonial means and, if not solved in this way, the negative consequences would persist for generations.²²

Based on the previous analysis, the Court concluded that the Moiwana community members suffered emotional, psychological, spiritual and economical harm, constituting violation by the State of Surinam of Article 5.1 of the American Convention, related to Article 1.1 of the said Treaty, detrimental to the community members.²³

Another aspect that has gained special attention in more recent sentences is related to the cultural identity of the children of indigenous communities. The Court has stated in the case of *Xakmok Kasek vs Paraguay* that Article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes an additional and complementary obligation that lends substance to Article 19 of the American Convention, which consists of the obligation to promote and protect the right of indigenous children to live according to their own culture, religion and language.

Likewise, this Court deems that, within the general obligation of the State to promote and protect cultural diversity, the special obligation to guarantee the right to cultural life for indigenous peoples is inferred. In that sense, the Court considers that the loss of traditional practices, such as feminine or masculine initiation rituals, and the Community's languages and damages, resulting from the lack of territory, particularly affect the development and cultural identity of the Community's children, who will not even be able to develop that special relationship with their traditional territory and the particular lifestyle of their culture if the necessary measures are not implemented to guarantee the enjoyment of these rights.²⁴

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has considered in their General Comment No. 11, that 'the effective exercise of the rights of indigenous children to culture, religion and language constitutes essential foundations of a culturally diverse State', and that this right constitutes an

²² Case of *Bámaca-Velásquez vs. Guatemala*, 86-89

²³ Case of *Bámaca-Velásquez vs. Guatemala*, 103.

²⁴ *Inter-American Court of Human Rights*, Case of the *Xákmok Kásek Indigenous Community vs Paraguay*, Judgment of 24th August 2010, 261-63; Case of *Chitay Nech et al vs Guatemala*, Judgment of 25th May 2010 (*Preliminary Objections, Merits, Reparations, and Costs*), 167-69.

important recognition of the indigenous cultures' traditions and collective values.²⁵

Religious activity in Latin America constitutes a paradigmatic example of the training and development of indigenous groups from the cultural point of view.²⁶ Since 2001, UNESCO has registered various indigenous religious ceremonies and rituals in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, whose objective is to guarantee an optimum view of the intangible cultural heritage of all cultures of the world and awareness of its importance. For example, and to be comprehensive, the Andean Cosmovision of the Kallaways (2003), the indigenous festivities dedicated to the dead (2008), the pilgrimage to the sanctuary of the god Qoylloriti (2011), and the feast of the Candelaria (2014) have been so registered.²⁷ It needs to be noted that several indigenous rituals await insertion in the list.²⁸

Simultaneously, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre has urged the States Parties of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage to pay special attention to religious heritage, and has requested them to adopt all necessary measures for their efficient protection, conservation and management.²⁹

The construction of this indigenous identity, with a strong 'spiritual' component, is also linked with mystical, cultural and ethnic tourism,³⁰ which intends to recover the millenary traditions and the expression of the most narrowly local, through the tourist businesses' desires to attract excursionists keen for cultural experiences beyond the ordinary.

Final Considerations

In contrast with the imposition of the Catholic religion during the Conquest, the current resurgence of pre-Columbian religious conceptions is being noticed. It means a return, in the religious sphere, to ancient beliefs and ritual practices that had fallen out of use, but which needed to regain a lost identity.

The sentences of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights defend the culture of indigenous and tribal peoples in regard to the right to religious freedom. They affirm, in particular, the need to offer adequate and effective

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²⁵ *Inter-American Court of Human Rights*, Case of Chitay Nech et al vs Guatemala, Judgment of 25th May 2010, 168.

²⁶ WHC-14/38 COM 16, 186.

²⁷ Lists of intangible cultural heritage and Register of best safeguarding practices: www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/USL/00521 (accessed 5th April 2015).

²⁸ Lists and Register.

²⁹ WHC, Thirty-eighth session, Doha, Qatar, 15th-25th June 2014, Decision: 38 COM 7B.32.

³⁰ C. Origet du Cluzeau, *Le Tourisme Culturel, Dynamique et Prospective d'une Passion Durable de Boeck*, Paris, 2013, 30.

guarantees so that their religious beliefs, rituals and funeral ceremonies are respected, including solidarity between the living and the dead.

The recognition of indigenous people's identity, thanks to positive discrimination (positive action), implies that they enjoy social, political and cultural privileges. This has fostered the wish to constitute and show an ethnic identity based on globalized models, and has permitted the creation of organizations that, under the guise of a local spirituality, transcend national borders.

The interpretation of the Inter-American Court on the contents of Article 12 of the American Convention in the analysed cases constitutes a positive contribution to the religious freedom of indigenous and tribal peoples. However, these peoples continue to live in an economic and social situation that has not experienced important changes despite their right to worship their traditional divinities being recognized. True change is yet to come.

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TRANSFORMATION FROM THE MARGINS: *MISSIO DEI* IN THE LATIN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

Miguel Alvarez

Introduction

In this article we discuss what makes contemporary Christians successful in building communities. Such communities base their faith and action around spiritual principles, values and virtues. We also realize that most successful Christian communities in Latin America have been established among the poor and people living in the margins¹ –Evangelicals and Pentecostals spread out across the region especially during stressful times due to social and political conflicts.

It is fair to affirm that contemporary Evangelical and Pentecostal² mission in Latin America started from and within the poor. Pastors and evangelists did not have to go to the poor. They were the poor and their missiological understanding came from within the community, as a movement originating among the poor. So it seems acceptable to add that poverty has been part of the historical background of many members in most churches in the continent. It was their faith and commitment to the transforming power of the gospel that enabled them to overcome different levels of poverty. This is perhaps the most notable characteristic observed among Evangelicals and Pentecostals in the region.

In the case of Liberation Theology, its advocates may argue that they also come from the poor and they may be rightly so described. The difference lies in the spiritual approach to life and transformation of the community. Evangelicals and Pentecostals are driven by their spiritual

¹ The context of this work points to Evangelical and Pentecostal communities. It is well known that Leonardo Boff has advocated for the Catholic model of Base Christian Communities, which seems to have been successful in Brazil. See Leonardo Boff, 'Comunidades Eclesiais de Base e Teologia da Liberação', in *Convergência* 16:1, 45. Even so, our discussion in this paper will focus on the model of communities built by Evangelicals and Pentecostals in Latin America in general.

² Although some Pentecostals consider themselves evangelicals, in the field of practical theology the two movements are different. For the purpose of this work I separate them, although they coincide on a number of theological principles. See, for instance, the explanation of Kenneth Archer on the hermeneutical differences between Evangelicals and Pentecostals: Kenneth Archer, *Pentecostal Hermeneutics for the Twentieth Century* (New York: T&T International, 2004), 140-49.

conviction,³ while liberation theologians seem to have acted out of socio-political and convictions.

Liberation theologians found fertile ground in the affirmation of Vatican II that the Church had then opted for the poor.⁴ At the same time, some evangelical theologians, such as Samuel Escobar and René Padilla, were immersed in the study of *missio Dei* and they were able to set the foundation for integral mission, which became a strong source of knowledge for understanding *missio Dei* in Latin America.⁵

Other churches, however, still struggle in their understanding of mission, for they tend to spiritualize social ills. Poverty, injustice and illness are seen as direct consequences of evil activity. Those churches may find it beneficial to learn how to address the issue of institutional sin and recognize that social evils could also be produced by evil structures of power that work against God's purpose for humanity.

Although some contemporary churches are paying more attention to church growth, such numbers also generate the ability to affect the community by transforming old paradigms into new life standards that will complete the fullness of God's purpose for the community. These churches

³ See, for instance, C. René Padilla, 'A Message for the Whole Person', in *Transformation* 9:3 (1993), 1; also Padilla, 'Evangelism and Social Responsibility: From Wheaton '66 to Wheaton '83', in *Transformation*, 2:3 (1983), 27.

⁴ The 'option for the poor' is one of the teachings for social service in the Roman Catholic Church of Latin America. Pedro Arrupe used this phrase in 1968 in a letter to the Jesuits of Latin America. As a developed theological principle, Gustavo Gutiérrez, first articulated it in his landmark book on Liberation Theology. See Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A theology of Liberation* (Salamanca, Spain: Ediciones Sígueme, 1971), 67-72. The principle is rooted in both the Old and New Testaments, and claims that a preferential concern for the physical and spiritual welfare of the poor is an essential element of the Gospel. The 'option for the poor' was instituted by Vatican II and implemented at the 1968 Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellín, Colombia. This information is available at William H. Swatos (ed), 'Preferential Option for the Poor', in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Society*, 2008: <http://hrr.hartsem.edu/ency/PreferentialOP.htm> (accessed 16th February 2015). See also, Gerald S. Twomey, 'The Preferential Option for the Poor', in *Catholic Social Thought from John XXIII to John Paul II*, John Perry (ed) (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), 116.

⁵ On integral mission, see the article of C. René Padilla, 'The Fullness of Mission', in *Mission Between the Times: Essays on the Kingdom*, René Padilla (ed) (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 188-98. Padilla argues, 'Evangelism and social responsibility are inseparable', but distinct, like two wings of a bird. As long as both 'are regarded as essential to mission, we need no rule of thumb to tell us which comes first and when'. Another scholar who impacted the evangelical world with his presentation of integral mission was Samuel Escobar, 'My Pilgrimage in Mission', in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 36:4 (October 2012), 207. Escobar formulated a concept of social responsibility structured round a Christological core – Christian mission and social justice.

may have to re-focus their attention to areas of service such as community development and integral assistance to the poor.

Evangelism and Social Concern

Most Evangelicals and Pentecostals understand that the church was designed to serve people in a fallen world. Believers are continually inspired to love to serve the community. They are taught to co-operate with the divine redemptive plan of God by sharing the good news with people and lift them out of poverty as the Lord provides for them.

Explaining this redemptive process, Darío López states that every person is unique in his or her individuality, and that every individual responds uniquely to the message of the gospel, but that all Christians are responsible for sharing the message with others.⁶ With this framework in mind, Valerio Gerber suggests that the gospel message was designed in such a way that individuals could respond to it and network with people who also have the capability of relating to other individuals and social groups. Churches assist their 'people in spiritual formation through social communities that generate personal advancement and the formation of family groups'.⁷ These are some of the reasons that 'originate and shape a society transformed by people who are capable of choosing their political and cultural ideas'.⁸ In the same way, David Harley says, 'The church should be able to understand people in their vocation and aspirations, in their rights and duties, and to speak for them in historical and social circumstances.'⁹

The gospel and society

The way most Evangelicals and Pentecostals serve the community could indicate their levels of commitment in transforming the life of every individual affected by their ministry. The deficiency may lie in the formation of agents committed to social transformation. In the case of Pentecostals in particular, they do not yet seem to have a theology of integral mission incorporated in their teachings.

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⁶ See Darío López, *El Nuevo Rostro del Pentecostalismo Latinoamericano* (Lima: Ediciones Puma, 2002), 56.

⁷ Valerio Gerber, *Missions in Creative Tension* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1971), 56. The author discusses the way Christians work through natural networks built on relationships that occur in the context of the local church. Basically, the same experience happens among the Pentecostal communities in different contexts.

⁸ Gerber, *Missions in Creative Tension*, 56.

⁹ David Harley, *Preparing to Serve: Training for Cross-Cultural Mission* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1995), 89.

Most Evangelicals and Pentecostals have been attentive to the moral conditions of the community. In their own way, they have promoted the human aspects that enrich people's lives. For them 'society is not simply a secular and worldly reality, foreign to the message of salvation. Society is made up of men and women who are the primary subjects to be served by the church'.¹⁰ What Evangelicals and Pentecostals need to do is to develop a solid teaching of integral mission which will strengthen their current efforts in the community.

Christians committed to the Great Commission realize that it is the Holy Spirit who inspires believers to proclaim the message of redemption wrought by Christ in the gospel. However, at the back of their minds, these Christians used to see social transformation as a secondary goal, as one of the blessings of being redeemed. So, since social transformation has not been at the core of redemption, those who advocate integral mission will notice that something is missing in the church's teaching.¹¹

Another area of concern is the teaching of peace and justice in conformity with the principles of the gospel. Carmelo Alvarez advocates that these teachings be openly taught, not only at seminaries but also at local church level whereby all members of the congregation will be instructed.¹²

As we have seen, social justice and peace are part of the core of integral mission. For instance, Darío López says, 'the longing for justice and peace is a legitimate concern for those who deliver a message that brings spiritual, moral and social freedom to people.'¹³ Yet, on the same subject, David Bueno also argues that, 'the gospel has the effectiveness of truth and grace that comes from the Spirit of God who penetrates hearts, predisposing them to thoughts and designs of love, justice, freedom and peace.'¹⁴ By transforming society with the gospel, Evangelicals and Pentecostals will have to 'infuse freedom, which is found in the gospel, into the human heart.

¹⁰ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 96.

¹¹ For more information on the Pentecostal theology of power and love, see D.L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 312-21.

¹² See Carmelo Alvarez 1985, *Santidad y Compromiso: El Riesgo de Vivir el Evangelio* (Mexico: Casa Unida de Publicaciones, 1985). This debate on peace and justice was initiated in Pentecostal circles at a slow pace, but it continues to draw more attention, particularly in the most recent scholarship. Unfortunately, the topic continues to be omitted or avoided at denominational leadership levels. Nevertheless, the theme seems to be picking up more ground at the schools where new leaders are trained.

¹³ López, *El Nuevo Rostro del Pentecostalismo Latinoamericano*, 61.

¹⁴ An excellent article was written by David Bueno concerning the transformation of rural communities in El Salvador under the influence of Pentecostal believers: 'The Struggle for Social Space: How Salvadoran Pentecostals build communities in the Rural Sector', in *Transformation* 18:3 (2001), 171-91.

That is the gospel that promotes a society befitting humanity in Christ Jesus. They ought to build a community that is more human because it is a society in greater conformity with the purpose of God for the world'.¹⁵

Human transformation

Social action will have to be embraced by Evangelicals and Pentecostals as an integral part of their ministry. They are becoming aware that there is a profound relationship between evangelization and human promotion. They are also aware that 'this relationship is part of an anthropological condition because the individual who connects with the gospel also forms part of a social environment and a particular economic situation'.¹⁶

José Comblin also argues 'since the proclamation of the gospel is an activity that cannot be dissociated from the plan of God for the creation and the redemption of humanity, both proclamation and social responsibility must stick together in mission'.¹⁷ So God's redemptive plan reaches the human condition in concrete circumstances such as poverty, suffering and injustice. Pentecostal scholar Daniel Chiquete also emphasizes, 'God's purpose is to restore and transform that which has been disfigured or distorted by the power of evil'.¹⁸ Thus, the community of believers is also aware that this redemptive mission is manifested in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. So the proclamation of the gospel will be completed by promoting and acting upon peace and justice for the advancement of the community.

Social responsibility

This debate on social responsibility is born out of the relationship between Christian believers and the community. For instance, integral mission takes into consideration the quality of the message delivered and the social action involved in the context. Evidently, the message will initiate individual spiritual change, which will affect the community's daily work and struggles for justice as believers bear witness to Christ as Saviour and

¹⁵ Bueno, 'The Struggle for Social Space', 172.

¹⁶ From his Catholic charismatic background, José Comblin describes how the base communities of Brazil have linked redemption with the social and economic situation of the community. José Comblin, 'Brazil: Base communities in the Northeast', in *New Face of the Church in Latin America: Between Tradition and Change*, Guillermo Cook (ed) (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 205-25.

¹⁷ José Comblin "Brazil: Based Communities in the Northeast," in *New Face of the Church in Latin America: Between Tradition and Change*, Cook, G., ed. (New York, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 218.

¹⁸ Daniel Chiquete, 'Healing, Salvation and Mission, The Ministry of Healing in Latin American Pentecostalism', in *International Review of Mission*, 95/37-371 (2004), 474-85.

redeemer. I think David Burrell's argument is valid here when he says, 'Social mission is also part of the very heart of Christian service.'¹⁹

It is clear that the Evangelical and Pentecostal communities cannot assume all responsibility for what happens in society but they can speak with authority and competence against social evils and in favour of what is good for people. When these matters are integrated with the proclamation of the gospel, then the community benefits. On this subject, Donald Dayton has written: 'Jesus did not bequeath to the church a mission merely in the political, economic, or social order. The purpose Christ assigned to his followers was holistic and included both the physical and spiritual realities of people.'²⁰

Dayton adds that 'this mission of evangelization can be the source of commitment, direction, and vigor to establish and consolidate a community according to the law and purpose of God for humanity'.²¹ As we have seen, Evangelicals and Pentecostals do not intervene directly in technical questions with regard to social concerns, but their Christian principles move them to act as the Holy Spirit guides them in any given political or socio-economic circumstance. This is more relevant in the most marginalized areas where the local church usually takes the initiative in finding solutions to problems of common interest for people.

Confronting evil in socio-political structures

As we have seen, Evangelicals and Pentecostals seem to view missiology as a teaching that embraces the idea that 'people will not respond to the gift of salvation through partial, abstract or merely verbal acceptance, but with the whole of their lives. Men and women leave their old lifestyle to initiate anew, which is also relevant and testifies of their redemption in Christ. Evangelicals and Pentecostals do not see mission as a privilege, but instead 'they think of it as a responsibility that believers have to include in the proclamation of the gospel in the context of community'.²² They commit their lives to the gospel that is capable of transforming the worlds of production, labour, business, finance, trade, politics, law, culture and social communications, where men and women live and work'.²³ Christian mission cannot be restricted to being practised purely privately, while its action cannot be relegated to the purely spiritual realm, and thus rendered incapable of shedding light on human earthly existence.

¹⁹ David Burrell, *Freedom and Creation in Three Traditions* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 208.

²⁰ Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1987), 129.

²¹ Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 130.

²² This information can be found in Allan H. Anderson, 'Structures and Patterns in Pentecostal Mission', in *Missionalia* 32 (2nd August 2004), 233-49.

²³ Anderson, 'Structures and Patterns in Pentecostal Mission', 233-49.

Today, many Evangelicals and Pentecostals are interested in learning about integral mission. They are also instilling spiritual and moral principles in the community, including those pertaining to social concern, and prophetically denouncing any human injustice.

God's Nature of Mission

According to Juan Sepúlveda, 'Theology and particularly, mission theology cannot be defined by socio-economic parameters only.'²⁴ So, the gospel does not present mission as an ideology, nor as a pragmatic political or socio-economic system that intends to change or create new political structures or socio-economic patterns aligned with particular interests. On the contrary, Sepúlveda adds: 'Believers are looking at mission as an instrument of reflection and practice of socio-economic and political justice, which ought to be exercised in accordance with the principles of the gospel.'²⁵ Evangelicals and Pentecostals in Latin America are also looking at ways to interpret and implement Christian principles to the reality of the community. They are 'exploring ways of guiding believers to choose wisely in their participation in social and political service in order to fulfil the purpose of the gospel in the community'.²⁶

Evangelicals and Pentecostals interpret social doctrine as theological in nature, specifically theological and moral, since it is a doctrine aimed at guiding people's spiritual and moral behaviour. Regarding this matter, Doug Peterson said, 'Pentecostals find this teaching at the crossroads where Christian life and conscience come into contact with the real world'.²⁷ They see it in the efforts of individuals, families, people involved in evangelism, cultural and social life, as well as of politicians and statesmen, 'to give it a concrete form and application in history'.²⁸ Brian Smith also states that 'Pentecostal mission observes at least three areas of interest in social service: (1) the theological basis that motivates mission into action; (2) the principles that drive believers to transform society, and (3) the spiritual intentionality that generates the power and the ability to face any given

²⁴ The matter of social mission as practised by Latin American Pentecostals is discussed in an article by Juan Sepúlveda: 'Pentecostalism as Popular Religiosity', in *International Review of Mission*, 78:309 (January 1989), 80-88.

²⁵ Sepúlveda, 'Pentecostalism as Popular Religiosity', 82.

²⁶ Sepúlveda, 'Pentecostalism as Popular Religiosity', 93.

²⁷ Although Douglas Peterson did not specifically address the matter of the Pentecostal theology of moral behaviour, he does seem to imply that Pentecostal mission is generally focused on behavioural change when the person is inducted into the community of faith. See his 'Pentecostals: Who are They?' in *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel*, Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden (eds) (Oxford: Regnum, 1999), 76-111.

²⁸ Petersen, 'Pentecostals: Who are They?', 84.

situation for the good of people'.²⁹ These areas of interest help the church to define the method and motivation that believers use in the transformation of society.

In principle, Evangelicals and Pentecostals' social responsibility find strength in biblical and spiritual revelation for the practice of faith. For Pentecostals, the Holy Spirit is the source of inspiration and understanding the gospel. The Spirit drives believers into social action and inspires them to understand human needs and to guide individuals to enhance the life of the community. In God's plan for the community, he created men and women with the capacity to have fellowship with one another. The practice of this principle is important in the transformation of the community.

Smith also said, 'Christians receive the divine Word by faith and put it into practice when it is activated by the Holy Spirit, who also interacts with reason in the practice of mission.'³⁰ Reason structures the understanding of faith and leads it into practical action. For Smith, 'mission is accomplished when it is driven beyond knowledge and understanding into the practical circumstances of human life. Mission deals with the typical difficulties and needs of people in the context of their life'.³¹ This event actually happens in community.

Mission in dialogue with other sources of knowledge

The teaching of integral mission should also be able to draw information from other sources of knowledge. It should have the ability to engage in dialogue with interdisciplinary and academic scholarship. This understanding of mission could become capable of discussing themes such as the implementation of the truth in a changing society continually affected by political and social ingredients that require interdisciplinary discussions in order to advocate the cause effectively.³² According to Eldin Villafañe, integral mission could interact with various disciplines that build their structures of knowledge on the principles of philosophy. 'Pentecostal integral mission should be capable of using descriptive analysis and reports that come out of the human sciences.'³³

²⁹ Both Catholics and Pentecostals in Latin America could find these three levels of missiological teaching in the Pentecostal community in the descriptive approach of Brian Smith to the matter of social concerns. See his *Religious Politics in Latin America: Pentecostal vs Catholic* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 112.

³⁰ Smith, *Religious politics in Latin America*, 92.

³¹ Smith, *Religious politics in Latin America*, 98.

³² See, for instance, Edward L. Cleary, 'Latin American Pentecostalism', in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, Murray Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen (eds) (Oxford: Regnum, 1999), 131-45.

³³ Eldin Villafañe, *El Espíritu Liberador: Hacia Una Etica Pentecostal Hispanoamericana* (Buenos Aires: Nueva Creación, 1996), 121.

However, Evangelical and Pentecostal missiologists are aware of the fact that neither philosophy nor the social sciences are neutral in the various fields of knowledge. They have their own structures and core values that determine, to a considerable degree, what they describe and the conclusions they deduce from their observations. Nonetheless, a mature dialogue is necessary and has to be done in accordance with scriptural and spiritual principles that are natural to Christian missiology.

On the other hand, social sciences will have to recognize the relevance of mission theology. This could validate an interdisciplinary dialogue that challenges the social sciences to study Christian mission from another angle. As a specialized field of missiology, integral mission aims at serving humanity from a biblical and spiritual perspective. It builds on the incarnation of the gospel in the community, which provides opportunities for believers to promote and work for the benefit of communities, especially those in disadvantaged social and economic circumstances.

Mission in the community of faith

As of now, mission service among Evangelicals and Pentecostals in Latin America fits well with their communities. For Gabriel Vaccaro, church mission expresses the way the congregation understands and approaches social structures and political movements. Mission also shows believers how to practise social justice in the community, with the goal of changing people's attitudes towards social action and promoting economic and political transformation.³⁴ This approach to mission may help Evangelicals and Pentecostals to learn how to stimulate the laity to participate in the planning, definition and purpose of mission in order to benefit people. By the same token, church leaders could trust believers to assume social and political responsibilities, using their spiritual gifts and natural abilities to transform the community.

Therefore, if social responsibility is taught intentionally, one required component is the teaching and acceptance of the priesthood of all believers, which reaches beyond spirituality. It includes economic, social and political concerns. That understanding determines the direction of the development of mission. This teaching, in turn, is integrated into the general ministry of the church in the concrete and particular situations of many circumstances. Snell states that 'understanding mission, in its most extensive meaning, helps the validation of the contributions and emphasis put on the concept of mission practiced in the community of faith'.³⁵ Let us also bear in mind that

³⁴ See for instance, Gabriel O. Vaccaro, *Identidad Pentecostal* (Quito: CLAI, 1990), 28-31; C.B. Flora, *Pentecostalism in Colombia* (Rutherford, NJ: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1976), 36; and William K. Key, *Pentecostalism* (London: SCM, 2009), 111-30.

³⁵ There are some insights about Pentecostal care and social responsibility in an article written by J.T. Snell, 1992: 'Beyond the Individual and Into the World: A

mission to the community also focuses on the integration of believers in favour of people's well-being.

The mission of reconciliation

By virtue of its mission, the community of faith is enabled by the Holy Spirit to show integral concern for every individual. The community of faith is made aware of the importance of enhancing the quality of life and social relationships built upon the implementation of justice and godly love. The convergence of these elements becomes the very fabric of human society. For Anthea Butler, 'mission depends decisively on the quality of protection and promotion offered to people. It seeks to promote and implement this condition to every community'.³⁶ So the dignity of humanity and the right of every individual constitute the basic components of healthy relationships between individuals, communities and nations.

Mission to the community also carries a prophetic duty, which denounces evil when it is present in human relationships. For instance, violence and injustice are social evils that are continually working against God's purpose for society. The community of faith is called upon to assume a prophetic rôle to uncover the forces of evil that violate human rights. The gospel pays special attention to the mission of protecting the poor and the weak. The rights of the poor are not to be ignored or trampled upon. Communities that allow this kind of evil are becoming strongholds for a greater expansion of violence and cycles of injustice. People living under these things eventually rise up against the abuses and imbalances that lead to significant social upheaval.³⁷ Significant social responsibility comes into being when Christians respond to questions regarding social justice.

Mission to the community liberates people from everything that oppresses them. It gives people the opportunity to fulfil God's purpose and design for all human beings. So mission indicates the path for the

Call to Participation Into the Larger Purposes of the Spirit on the Basis of Pentecostal Theology', in *Pneuma*, 14:1 (1992), 43-57.

³⁶ Anthea Butler, 'Facets of Pentecostal Spirituality', in *Consultation with Pentecostals in the Americas*, Huibert Van Beek (ed) (Geneva: WCC, 2005), 65-75. In her article, Butler defends the promotion of human growth and transformation as the main reason for the existence of the church in the community. Any other kind of spiritual formation will be a distortion of Christian mission.

³⁷ On the matter of upheaval and social imbalances, see Antonio González, *El Evangelio de la Paz y el Reinado de Dios* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Kairós, 2008), 56-63. González argues that the gospel of peace may also be understood by observing social realities. This helps to understand the authentic Christian position against violence as it is seen in the present world order. The non-violent approach is an ethical and strategic option inspired by the example of Jesus, Gandhi and other peacemakers who fought for human freedom. Thus, it is necessary to check our theological options in the Kingdom of God and ask ourselves what is really the meaning of that peace carried by the gospel.

establishment of harmony, and the path that a reconciled society should follow in order to experience love, justice and harmony in the community. Plutarch Bonilla states, 'Mission works in a society that anticipates with its ethics and moral standards the new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells.'³⁸ And rightly so – Christian mission will have to anticipate the coming of that new humanity by working in the community.

Our Mission to humanity

In the case of Evangelicals and Pentecostals, the first recipient of mission is the community. All Christian believers are expected to experience their faith in the community. The call is for Evangelicals and Pentecostals to include in their teaching the fact that social responsibility is a critical part of mission, and that social responsibility plays a significant role in the obligations of Christians with regards to peace and justice.³⁹ Moreover, some congregations have gifted members who are capable of serving in public office with a great deal of success.

This awareness of social responsibility also includes the assumption of responsibilities that affect the design and organizational functions of the community. Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians can make significant contributions to the political structures and economic systems that operate in the community. Social responsibility is not only sensitive to the needs of the individual, but to the corporate needs and groups that form society.

To accomplish the above, Evangelicals and Pentecostals may have to adjust to the fact that the ultimate goal of mission is to affect all people in the community. Hence Christian mission provides everyone with the opportunity to decide for or against Christ's gift of redemption and to become the person that God intended them to be when he created them. So Evangelicals and Pentecostals may have to incorporate the teaching that mission is also designed to reach out to benefit all people groups. That mission ought to be practised by all followers of Christ in order to reach individuals and community needs.

Mission, spirituality and renewal

In the case of Pentecostals, there is some evidence that certain leaders are now studying the movement's mission contribution to the community.⁴⁰

³⁸ Plutarch Bonilla, 'La Misión de la Iglesia Según el Libro de los Hechos', in *La Biblia en las Américas*, 5:53 (1998), 12-16; see also Russell Chandler, 'Fanning the Charismatic Fire', in *Christianity Today*, 12:39-40 (24th November 1967), 39-40.

³⁹ Villafañe, *El Espíritu Liberador*, 125.

⁴⁰ This self-study for the significance and continuity of the Pentecostal movement in the new millennium was clearly documented by Grant McClung, at the turn of the 21st century: 'Pentecostals, The Sequel: What Will it Take for This World

Although they show significant advances, they also admit limitations in the integration of understanding and practice of mission. They do integral mission as part of their faith commitment, but without any formal training in it. For this reason, Pentecostals claim that their commitment to mission does not depend on arguments related to cultural differences or to political ideologies prevailing in certain contexts. Rather, they make sure that their service remains faithful to the spiritual inspiration that moves mission into practising principles of ministry that are biblical and consistent with theologically sound reflection.⁴¹

This continuity of revelation may cause Pentecostals some headaches. On the one hand, they remain focused on approaching the Holy Spirit for guidance and revelation for ministry but, on the other hand, such continuous searching may become a source of heresy, since some hyper-spiritual individuals could trespass beyond certain theological and doctrinal limits, making claims of 'new' or 'fresh' revelations. Over-enthusiasm has always hunted Pentecostals in bad predicaments. This is one issue that they will have to work on as they continue to do mission in the community.⁴² Nevertheless, they should not be limited or afraid of practising mission holistically, for the Holy Spirit will continue to lead the movement to serve well among the poor.

As we have seen, Evangelicals and Pentecostal congregations do not restrain from assuming social responsibility. On the contrary, they are driven to reach out to the suffering and assist in the solution of the needs of the poor and marginalized. Very often they do this as a personal initiative or sometimes they even act together as a congregation. Evangelicals and Pentecostals have always served in the midst of poor people and they have been considered as a model in experiencing the gospel with the community. For Evangelicals and Pentecostals the community of faith is the first point of contact with the gospel. The next step is to witness to those who are not part the community. The aim is to transform the lives of people, so the potential for practising integral mission is there. It will only take intentional promotion and teaching among the churches for this model of mission to be implemented.

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Phenomenon to Stay Vibrant for Another 100 years?', in *Christianity Today* (April 2006), 30.

⁴¹ See Mario G. Méndez, 'La Iglesia: Fuerza del Espíritu, Su Unidad y Diversidad', in *Pentecostalismo y Liberación: Una Experiencia Latinoamericana*, Carmelo Alvarez (ed) (San José, Costa Rica: Departamento Ecueménico de Investigaciones, 1992), 112. The author defends the continuity of the Pentecostal faith and mission in the midst of cultural change and new theological arguments from other Christian streams.

⁴² Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 109.

Mission and Social Concern

In Latin America, Evangelicals and Pentecostals have learned that they play a significant role in the spiritual and social condition of the community. Although they still show limitations in formulating biblical doctrine for church mission, they act in good faith when confronting social evils in the community.⁴³ These efforts also enable churches to analyze and propose practical solutions to social problems and recommend directions that lead to peace and justice.

Evangelicals and Pentecostals also articulate a reliable understanding of the social issues that disturb their communities. According to Luis Orellana, they are learning to co-operate with Christian anthropology by revealing the inviolable dignity of every individual.⁴⁴ Chuck Kraft also argues that Evangelicals and Pentecostals have the potential to understand the human struggle of economics and analyze political realities in the design for the community'.⁴⁵ These Christians are learning to promote and inspire genuine human values that are sustained through the implementation of the principles of the gospel to individual needs, cultural practices and community life.

Then, we can also speak for Evangelical and Pentecostal anthropology in support of various pastoral tasks that care for individuals and their well-being in the community. Carmelo Alvarez suggests that, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Evangelicals and Pentecostals are able to guide the mind and heart of individuals through sound judgement. Through this guidance, new and healthy values precede their decisions and the way they conceive and build new patterns for their lives.⁴⁶ Concerning this, Luis Orellana also wrote: 'Present-day society is confronted by the need to understand the difference between the principles of the gospel and the cultural values assimilated by people.'⁴⁷

⁴³ Luis Orellana, 'El Futuro del Pentecostalismo en América Latina', in *Voces del Pentecostalismo Latinoamericano* IV, Daniel Chiquete and Luis Orellana (eds) (Hualpén, Chile: RELEP, 2011), 141-56. The author describes the historical foundations of Pentecostal thought and gives a clear description of the development of mission in Latin American contexts of ministry.

⁴⁴ Orellana, 'El Futuro del Pentecostalismo en América Latina', 141-56 (149).

⁴⁵ One author, from the evangelical charismatic stream in North America, who deals with contemporary issues regarding Christian anthropology, is Chuck H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 6. In the very first section of his book, Kraft discusses the dignity of the human person and the purpose of God for humanity.

⁴⁶ Alvarez, *Pentecostalismo y Liberación: Una Experiencia Latinoamericana*, 56.

⁴⁷ Luis Orellana, *El Fuego y la Nieve: Historia del Movimiento Pentecostal en Chile, 1909-1932*, Vol. I (Concepción, Chile: CEEP, 2008), 27-37. The author describes the internal struggles of Pentecostals in Chile. At some point they were challenged to either abide by the principles of the gospel or by the cultural values of the moment.

Evangelicals and Pentecostals make the gospel human and available to every individual. The gifts of God are also made available to every person in the community by the ministry of Christian believers. Juan Driver argues that not only are they now taking a step forward in evangelism but also that a new stage of history in their mission is present in their service to the community.⁴⁸ It is remarkable that, in their own way, Evangelicals and Pentecostals have found that society is in need of a proclamation of the gospel that also focuses on dealing with human need.

Spirituality and social action

As stated earlier, social action is still new to most Evangelicals and Pentecostals but is now becoming part of their theological formation. Early in their history, both movements realized that the church existed to work in favour of human growth and transformation, and their participation was needed in order to comply with this part of ministry. Bernardo Campos supports this idea by indicating that Pentecostals, in particular, have been able to interact with society and culture. Through their mission, they ensured that people experienced hope in concrete situations, especially in times of difficulty and despair.⁴⁹ Campos adds: 'Social action works in concrete realities and prepares believers to experience the human awareness of evangelization. For example, serving the poor and the weak makes the experience of the gospel complete and builds awareness of redemption to the community in general.'⁵⁰

If Evangelicals and Pentecostals want to be socially responsible, they will have to guide believers in a twofold exercise: help them to discover the truth and discern the path to success in their service. Also, they will have to encourage Christians to bear witness to people in an authentic spirit of service. That way the gospel will be complete and effective in social transformation. Bernardo Campos argues that 'this is pure Christian mission, for they understand that, once they are filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit, they are enabled to efficiently proclaim the full gospel to the poor, the weak and the marginalized'.⁵¹ This service will have to include the witness of spiritual gifts operated by believers committed to Christ. This mission makes social action credible, for in its practice, one can see the internal logic and consistency of ministry, which is endorsed by the Holy Spirit.

⁴⁸ Juan Driver, *La Fe en la Periferia de la Historia* (Guatemala: Semilla, 1997), 67.

⁴⁹ Bernardo Campos, 'Pentecostalism: A Latin American View', in *Consultation with Pentecostals in the Americas*, In Huibert Van Beek (ed) (Geneva: WCC, 1996), 62.

⁵⁰ Campos, 'Pentecostalism: A Latin American View', 63.

⁵¹ Campos, 'Pentecostalism: A Latin American View', 55.

Theology of social responsibility

One recommendation for the Evangelical Pentecostal churches is to embrace the formative value of social responsibility. As we have seen, Evangelicals and Pentecostals recognize that the blessing of new life is the result of the combined effort of the Holy Spirit and the believers. This combination enables them to pursue integral redemption for the individual and the community. David Bosch says: 'This fraternal solidarity takes place in the search for social justice and peace, whereby the fullness of Christian service is presented in actual history. This could be found in the content of the message and methodology of mission employed by Christians.'⁵² This approach to mission enriches the reception and application of the gospel by virtue of the dynamic contribution to the areas of community served.

Evangelicals and Pentecostals may not find it difficult to understand that the teaching of social action enables believers to evangelize and promote the humanization of temporal realities. This is similar to what Newbigin found, that 'the community of faith is the bearer of a spiritual ability and practical understanding of ministry that provides support to the mission of transforming community life. Such action helps Christian service to conform its actions to the plan of God'.⁵³ This attitude could motivate them to promote freedom, which is constructed when people approach social responsibility with the truth. It would help individuals to become socially responsible.

Promotion of dialogue on social issues

Social responsibility is also instrumental in the dialogue between the community of faith, the civil authority and the political community. Dario Lopez refers to the importance of dialogue as an appropriate instrument for the promotion of attitudes modelled on the teachings of the gospel.⁵⁴ But just as in western societies, he argues, 'such actions promote authentic co-operation and productive collaboration in the redemptive process of humanity'.⁵⁵ By the same token, Evangelicals and Pentecostals will have to recognize civil and political authority in their call to serve society. In many cases, pastors have approached local authorities with the purpose of supporting their service.⁵⁶

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⁵² Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 355.

⁵³ Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 275.

⁵⁴ See Darío López, *Los Evangélicos y los Derechos Humanos: La Experiencia Social del Concilio Nacional Evangélico del Perú, 1980-1982* (Lima: Centro Evangélico de Misiología Andino-Amazónica, 1998), 102.

⁵⁵ Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, 95.

⁵⁶ Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, 76.

If we observe the social interaction that takes place in contemporary Evangelical and Pentecostal communities, we can see that they are participating in multiple dialogues that foster collaboration with the various groups of society. Such dialogues continue to broaden their range of service. For example, a group of Pentecostals is now defending the dignity of people and promoting peace and justice.⁵⁷ Other groups are speaking on behalf of those in poverty and marginalization. Others are combating poverty and hunger in the world and promoting an equal distribution of the goods of God's earth, as well as providing housing and literacy. Moreover, Evangelicals and Pentecostals are participating in national, regional and global consultations that promote ministries on behalf of the emerging generation.⁵⁸

Missio Dei in the community

Evangelicals and Pentecostals believe that the community of faith has a role to play in the fulfilment of God's mission. Both movements began to understand and practise mission in various ways through each local member according to the gifts of each person's calling. Mario Méndez thinks Evangelicals and Pentecostals are now responding to the responsibility of proclaiming and bearing witness to the gospel, on the understanding that every mission effort involves all who believe and are willing to obey the call of the Holy Spirit to serve.⁵⁹

Also, in relation to social responsibility, Samuel Escobar argues that Christian mission is biased to the poor. It is clear that in the story of Jesus God becomes vulnerable along with the poor and marginalized.⁶⁰ In the person of Jesus, God assumes a mission of transforming the world by way of Christian mission. Incidentally, most church members are not found among the wealthy and powerful, but rather among the poor and

⁵⁷ This group is called Pentecostals and Charismatics for Peace and Justice, which unites scholars and practitioners round a table to reflect on issues pertaining to such matters. Information on this group could be found at PCPJ: 'Charismatics Peacemakers and Peacemaking', Pentecostals for Peace and Justice: www.pcpj.org/index.php/resources-topmenu-45/86-charismatic-peacemaking-and-peacemakers (accessed 10th November 2009). This group claims to work within their traditions and heritage to promote the peace and justice of Christ while also co-operating with fellow believers from other parts of the body, and concerned folks from other faiths or no faith.

⁵⁸ See, for example, Niñez Enrique Penedo, *Adolescencia y Misión Integral: Nuevos Desafíos de la Educación Teológica en América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Kairos, 2012), 24.

⁵⁹ Méndez, *La Iglesia: Fuerza del Espíritu*, 24-26.

⁶⁰ Samuel Escobar, 'Local church – Your Time has Come', in *Edinburgh 2010: New Directions for Church and Mission*, K.R. Ross (ed) (Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 2010), 11-12

vulnerable. What does mission mean when its representatives come from contexts of poverty and exclusion?

This ministry in the community context involves the service of devoted believers who are capable of using their spiritual gifts and natural talents. 'Their faithful witness and service is needed particularly in times of intense condition of poverty. Situations like these open significant opportunities for serving people and reminding believers of their principles of holiness and sincere love to the poor and marginalized.'⁶¹ Here we realize that either Evangelicals or Pentecostals could easily be found at the service of the incarnated Christ. It is this Christ whose love for people is shown through Christians who propose new opportunities for humanity. They are believers from the community who carry this mission to other communities.

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⁶¹ López, *Pentecostalismo y Transformación Social*, 38.

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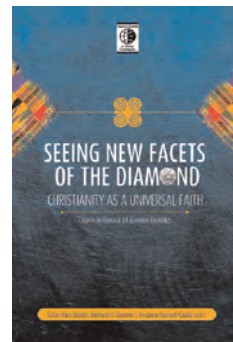
Our aim here is to build a bridge between Muslims and Christians with Jesus in the centre of the discourse. As an idea, 'resurrection' is shared by and is central to the eschatologies of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. In Islam, the belief in life after death, resurrection and the day of judgement are so central that they are considered to be one of its 'Five Pillars'. Life has meaning because in resurrection, humanity will meet its maker on the Day of Judgement.

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In the five years since Kwame Bediako passed away there has been a growing desire among colleagues and friends to put together a book that would honour his memory. The title has been chosen to reflect the range of interests and concerns that motivated Bediako's scholarly work, including his founding and nurturing of ACI.

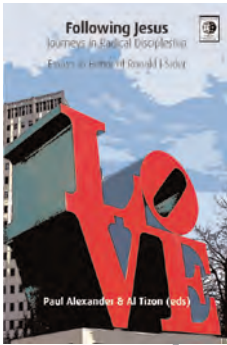


Bernhard Reitsma

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Bernhard Reitsma lived and worked among Christians in the Middle East for several years. He has shared their struggles and was challenged to reconsider different kinds of Israel theology. In this the core questions is whether the God of my enemy can also be my God. How can the God of the present State of Israel also be the God of the Palestinians?



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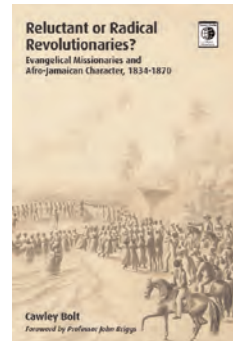
Ronald J. Sider and the organization that he founded, Evangelicals for Social Action, are most respected for their pioneering work in evangelical social concern. However, Sider's great contribution to social justice is part of a larger vision – biblical discipleship. This book brings together a group of scholar-activists, old and young, to reflect upon the radical implications for the 21st century.

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J Kwabena Asamoah-Gyada

Pentecostalism is the fastest growing stream of Christianity in the world. The real evidence for the significance of Pentecostalism lies in the actual churches they have built and the numbers they attract. This work interprets key theological and missiological themes in African Pentecostalism by using material from the live experiences of the movement itself.

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This work describes the re-shaping of mission in Latin America in recent years. It covers a broad spectrum of Christian movements that coexist in the area. The book includes themes related to theology of mission, ecclesiology, history, social action and leadership. It is designed to serve as a guide to understand different Christian trends in contemporary Latin America. Most contributors belong to the young generation of Christian leaders emerging in different locations of the region - from the Central America, the Caribbean, and South and North America. They are sensitive to the differences that are part of denominational identity. This work is unique and calls for a meaningful and mature dialogue among Christians in the continent.

Latin America is still a continent of hope where Christianity continues to grow in the midst of poverty, social and political struggles. Christian workers are seeking for unity and mutual understanding. Promising young leaders are emerging and bringing innovation, vision and dynamism to the Latin American church in every country.

If missiological writing from and about Latin America in the English language has been lagging behind, this volume heralds the revitalization within this arena and area. Alvarez has mobilized a younger generation of bilingual missiologists who have lived or worked across the Americas to provide an update and perspective on Latin American mission that anticipates developments in the next generation even while looking ahead into the middle of the 21st century global context. May this tribe increase!

Amos Yong, Professor of Theology & Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena CA

This volume is completely unique! I am impressed by the level of maturity shown by the writers. Most of them are part of the new generation of scholars that is reshaping mission theology in Latin America. Their papers are open to dialogue and mutual understanding. Alvarez has gathered excellent documents from writers of the North, Central, South America, Brazil and the Caribbean. This effort is remarkable!

Dario López, Professor of Mission Theology, Seminario Biblico Gamaliel and Administrative Bishop of the Church of God in Peru

This book produces just what it promises. It is a compendium of scholarship and practical wisdom for endeavoring mission in Latin America in the 21st century. This fresh resource for scholars, people, and preachers alike will influence the scope and direction of mission in Latin America in the future. Read, reflect, enjoy, but most of all, take seriously its claims and propositions.

Johnathan E. Alvarado, Senior Pastor, Grace Church International, President and Professor of Theology, The Greater Atlanta Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

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