

PENTECOSTAL **EDUCATION**

A JOURNAL OF WAPTE
the World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education

Latin American Contribution to Pentecostal Studies

Volume 9
Number 1
(Spring 2024)

Pentecostal Education

A Journal of the World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education
Vol. 9, No. 1 (Spring 2024)

ISSN: 2375-9690

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Aims and Scope

Pentecostal Education (formerly The Pentecostal Educator) semiannually e-publishes scholarly and practical articles related to theological education within the Pentecostal tradition to encourage the continuing maturation of Pentecostal theological education. It is intentionally practical, applied, and international.

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Cover Design by Nathan Walstad and Jiwon Kim

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The Pentecostal Educator: Editorial

It is with pleasure that this journal offers another array of diverse yet relevant topics. I trust you will immediately see the international reach of this journal and the growing contribution that it is making in the world of Pentecostal education.

I wish to give particular mention to the stellar contribution that Miguel Alvarez has made to the success of this journal. Over the past three years he has served a vital role in providing editorial services to us and his work has been evident in both the style and content of the journal. He has been asked to step back into an oversight role within his church setting, and thus, I am using this editorial to both thank him and wish him God's richest blessing. I am glad to report that we have made good progress in filling the large gap that Miguel leaves behind, and the next edition will inform you of this progress.

This is also a good time to inform you, our readers, of progress within the World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education. WAPTE is in good heart and I am most encouraged by progress being made. In January of this year the Board gathered from around the world. We met in some beautiful new facilities at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Dr Billy Wilson and his team provided outstanding hospitality and our meetings were successful in every sense.

One project that has taken time and interest has been early work towards establishing a global association within WAPTE that could provide some level of accreditation services. It was a joy to welcome Michael Ortiz, the President of the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE) to our meeting. This engagement resulted in our Executive Director Barry Saylor being an engaged participant in recent meetings convened by ICETE in Rome. Micro-credentialing, curriculum development, establishment of appropriate standards and much more are now an active part of the WAPTE agenda.

Our Board is drawn from representative groups who are a part of the Pentecostal World Fellowship. This team has served us well but much effort is being expended in ensuring that this board is more representative both in terms of the wide constituency that we serve and in gender. Hopefully, the next photo that we publish will evidence this.

However, the following photo is of those at the recent meeting, and I am very grateful for their service. The venue is the beautiful Center for Spirit Empowered Research at Oral Roberts University.

Paul R Alexander
Senior Editor, WAPTE Chair

Latin American Contribution to Pentecostal Studies: An Introduction

Due to the global scope of *Pentecostal Education*, I realized it would be good for our readers worldwide to take a look at the ideas of some Pentecostal scholars in Latin America. For different reasons, this vast continent has remained anonymous to English-speaking academia. Good Latino theologians in North America continue to make solid contributions to knowledge. That is outstanding and worthy of recognition, but the voices from Latin America are still not heard strongly enough in the discussion arena.

This volume highlights some of those voices committed to the Great Commission. Some focus their articles on theological, social, ethical, and cultural issues. Each presentation follows academic guidelines by which a statement of purpose is designed, and solutions are recommended for each case in the context of the study.

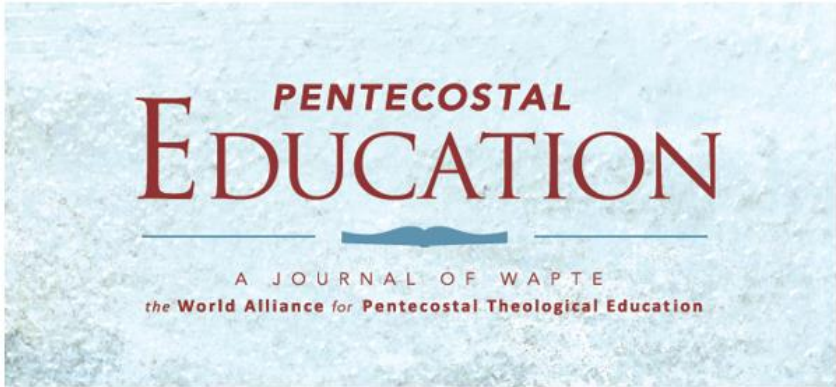
Latin America met the first Pentecostal missionaries early in the 20th Century. Those missionaries connected well with the people in the margins to the extent that the movement eventually became the home of the disenfranchised. This is so because, historically, Pentecostalism attracted the masses among the poor. Through the emphasis on salvation and individual responsibility, Pentecostals were able to transform communities and bring hope to their new converts.

With these ideas in mind, the reader will find the articles in this volume useful. In the Pentecostal world, there is room for diversity of opinions and healthy dialogue. May the Spirit grant us peace through genuine understanding.

As I am concluding my editorial responsibility for the journal, I am pleased to offer this journal issue under the theme “Latin American Contribution to Pentecostal Studies” as a special gift to global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity.

Miguel Alvarez
Executive Editor

Watch for the Upcoming Issues!



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This Is How Latino Pentecostals Interpret the Biblical Text: A Method that Integrates Spirit, Scripture, Community, and Tradition

Miguel Alvarez

Abstract

This study explores the Latino Pentecostal reality in the task of interpreting the sacred text. The movement is connected to a number of Christian traditions that reached the Latin American communities mainly through cross-cultural missionaries arriving from mission agencies of the Global North. Over the years, Latino Pentecostals have had their faith influenced by three streams: Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Catholic. Early in the twentieth century, Evangelical and Pentecostal missionaries became the movements of greater influence in Latin America. Nonetheless, the Catholic Church was the only source of Christian knowledge in the region for about four hundred years. So, most new converts in both the Evangelical and Pentecostal churches were former Catholics. Thus, to study Latino Pentecostal hermeneutics requires one to survey the work of the Spirit, the knowledge of the word, the wisdom of the community of faith, and the testimony of the church tradition. As controversial as it may seem, this methodology combines these four elements in order to represent the reality of the Bible reader in the Latino community.

Keywords: Latino hermeneutics, Spirit revelation, knowledge of the word, community of faith, testimony of tradition, integrative method of interpretation

Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to reason with regard to the way in which Latinos read and interpret the biblical text. In effect, I am proposing an integrative method that interprets the process by which Latinos study Scripture. This discussion will include historical roots, theological references, and practical aspects and elements related to Latino identity. The study focuses on three Christian traditions usually recognized as

having the greatest influence in Latin America — Catholic, Evangelical, and Pentecostal.

This study does not attempt to combine points of view, ideas, or academic assessments of differing Christian views that assume certain compatibility when combined coherently, such as eclecticism.¹ Rather, this is an attempt to conciliate diverse theories and thoughts, taking from each what is most important in order to resolve existing contradictions.

More specifically, this study proposes a dialogue over points of view with regard to biblical interpretation, considering the three sources of interpretation most recognized among Latinos. Historically, the majority of Latinos have lived with a religious background of Roman Catholicism. Even though some have left the Catholic Church to join Evangelical or Pentecostal groups, their principles, as well as cultural, educational, familial, social, and religious values, continue to be Catholic as an *antonomasia* figure of speech. The reasons are clear: for more than 500 years, Roman Catholicism has prevailed over Hispanic culture and society.²

This study aims to present a portrait of Latino reality, including its connection to and integration with the Christian faith. Over the years, the Latino community has received teachings from Catholic, Evangelical, and Pentecostal churches, to mention the movements of greatest influence. Thus, to carry out a study such as this, it is necessary to review some works by Catholic, Evangelical, and Pentecostal authors. As a result of the methodology employed, the reader will observe that in the Latino community, there are multiple theological combinations, which can also be seen in the field of biblical interpretation.

¹ Eclecticism is a conceptual approach that does not hold rigidly to a paradigm or set of assumptions. Rather, it relies on multiple theories, styles, and ideas to obtain complementary information on a topic or simply applies different existing theories on particular cases. It also seeks to reconcile the various existing theories and currents, taking from each of them what is most important or acceptable, to break down existing contradictions. See, for instance, Stephen C. Yanchar, and David C. Williams, “Reconsidering the Thesis Compatibility with Eclecticism: Five Proposed Guidelines for Method use,” *Educational Researcher* 35:9 (2006), 3-12.

² See the satirical work of Eduardo del Río, *500 Años Fregados pero Cristianos* (México City: Editorial Grijalbo, 1992), 42.

Historical Roots

With regard to Protestantism and its more significant ramifications among Latinos, these movements have perhaps one hundred years of historic activity.³ With regard to time, the Catholic Church reached the Latinos 400 years before the Evangelical and Pentecostal movements, which is significant regarding the influence of the Christian traditions on Latin American soil. This important historical framework allows to understand the Christian Latino profile better. In the context of this study, it is possible to state that Latinos can be Evangelical or Pentecostal, but in general, they will reflect the Catholic background of the culture, society, education, and family, something that distinguishes them as different from other Christian contexts.

On the other hand, in this presentation, we will differentiate between Evangelicals and Pentecostals for two reasons: first, they are two separate movements with some doctrinal differences, and second, they have a different manner of relating to the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Although this discussion does not enter the field of pneumatology, it is important to mention it since, among Latinos, these differences are not considered. Nevertheless, they are evident in the implementation of doctrinal teachings and ministerial practices in the congregations. It is also important to note that some Pentecostals, particularly the more traditionalists, insist on being identified as Evangelical, whereas the neo-Pentecostals are not interested in that traditional identification precisely because of their new way of interpreting the church, Scripture, and the manner in which they exercise their ministry.

With the rise of Pentecostalism in the twentieth century, the Latino community experienced a significant shift in its appreciation of Christianity.⁴ As an example, the Pentecostals stressed a more militant spiritual experience in living out the Christian faith. In their re-encounter with the biblical text, they made the written word come to life in the lives of the believers and the community itself.⁵ In addition to the

³ Angelina Pollak-Eltzand and Yolanda Salas de Lecuna, eds. *El Pentecostalismo en América Latina entre Tradición y Globalización* (Quito, Ecuador: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 1998), 7.

⁴ See, for example, Pablo Aberto Deiros, *Historia del Cristianismo en América Latina* (Quito, Ecuador: Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana, 1992), 775.

⁵ See the point of view of Manuel Antonio Garretón, ed., *América Latina: Un Espacio Cultural en el Mundo Globalizado* (Bogotá, Colombia: Convenio Andrés Bello, 2002), 238.

authority of the sacred text and the revelation of the Holy Spirit, Latino Pentecostals also included historical precedents of the Christian tradition and the community of faith in the interpretation of Scripture. The result is a dynamic interpretation seen as a process that ultimately leads to a discernment of God's will for his people in a determined historical context.

Historically, the Evangelical and Pentecostal missionary movements brought a North American evangelical and cultural perspective to the Latino communities. The American missionaries arrived with a historic evangelical background birthed in Great Britain but developed in the United States. Upon entering the Latino world, with its dominant Roman Catholic religious and cultural influence, the American Evangelical and Pentecostal ministers encountered significant theological contradictions.⁶ Of course, the backdrop of the contradiction was the new Evangelical and Pentecostal “converts,” the result of evangelization among the Latino Catholics.⁷

To best understand this phenomenon, we employ a dialectical perspective⁸ in which the following contradictions are presented: Latinos generally come from a Roman Catholic background (thesis). On their part, the Americans come from an Evangelical background (antithesis). The Latino community has incorporated hermeneutical principles from both backgrounds (synthesis). For the purposes of this discussion, I should state that my intent is not to promote one extreme or the other. Rather, my objective is to explain what is distinct about Latin American Evangelical and Pentecostal movements. The geographical and historical context places them in a position that provides a different perspective with regard to the Christian life. In this framework, one can imagine a combination in Latin America, which could be Catholic/Evangelical or Catholic/Pentecostal. In some cases, it could even be tripartite, that is, Catholic/Evangelical/Pentecostal, which would come to be the

⁶ See, for example, José Ignacio Saranyana, and Carmen José Alejos-Grau, eds., *Teología en América Latina: De las Guerras de Independencia hasta finales del Siglo XIX (1910-1899)* (Madrid, España: Editorial Iberoamericana, 2008), II, 294. This collection offers theological and political views from a Catholic perspective.

⁷ Juan García Pérez Véase, ed., *América Latina, Treinta Años de Transformaciones 1962-1992* (Madrid, España: Universidad Pontificia Comillas), 199.

⁸ A good resource for understanding how to employ the dialectical method is found in Raúl Rojas Soriano's book, *Investigación Social: Teoría y Praxis* (México City: Plaza y Valdés, 2002), 162.

synthesis of a dialectic confrontation between the most prominent Christian faith movements in the Latino community.

Table 1: Theological Contradictions (using the Dialectic Method)		
<i>Thesis</i>	Latino Evangelicals and Pentecostals	Roman Catholicism: culture, education, society, religion.
<i>Antithesis</i>	American Evangelicals and Pentecostals	American Evangelicals and Pentecostals: new spiritual experience.
<i>Synthesis</i>	Convergence of Opposing Theological Positions	Different Evangelicals and Pentecostals: incorporate principles from both backgrounds.

The previous discussion requires the finding of a point of convergence that would explain theologically the Evangelical and Pentecostal movements that arose among Latinos after the dialectical encounter between both currents of modern Christianity in Latin America. After the incursion of classical Pentecostalism in Latin America in the 1960s, new currents began to develop that combined Pentecostal and Catholic principles in church life, particularly regarding the interpretation of the biblical text. One example of these currents was the Charismatic Movement, which was evident in the Protestant and Evangelical churches and the Catholic Church itself. In this case, and for space, we will center our study on the interpretation of Scripture, a new paradigm for the traditional hermeneutic crucial to understanding the new generation of Latino Evangelicals and Pentecostals. As we have explained, these movements have characteristics that are very typical of their background and historical context and, as such, need to be considered when studying the biblical text.

Methodology

Traditionally, Latinos have studied Scripture either through the methods used by the Catholic Church or by those historically taught by Evangelicals and Pentecostals.⁹ Due to space limitations, this document

⁹ An author who refers to the differences in biblical interpretation between Catholics and Protestants is Juan Driver, *La Fe en la Periferia de la Historia: Una Historia del Pueblo Cristiano desde la Perspectiva de los Movimientos de Restauración y Reforma Radical* (Guatemala City: Ediciones Semilla, 1997).

will not treat the historical, traditional methods but rather will focus on describing those elements that form part of a methodology that can be seen in the new generation of Latino Evangelicals and Pentecostals. These elements form part of a method we have chosen to call integrative interpretation. Below, we offer the more noticeable elements that form part of this integrative method and are concomitant with the lives, teaching, and preaching of the Latino community.

An Integrative Method

In the book *El Rostro Hispano de Jesús*, I describe in more detail what I call the integrative interpretation method. This needs to be understood as a process of interpretation that (1) systematically integrates the particular functions of the written revelation of the word of God; (2) includes as well the active participation of the Holy Spirit with regard to understanding, illumination, and wise decisions that are in agreement with Scripture; (3) the interpreter studies the testimony of the history and the influence of tradition on the interpretation of the biblical text; and finally, (4) the interpreter submits to the spiritual authority of the community of faith, whose function is to ensure that all interpretation, or action derived from such, does not contradict nor negate the truth and efficacy of the written word.¹⁰ The integration of these four elements confirms the legitimacy of an interpretation complete and accessible to a diverse community such as the Latino one.

This method integrates divine and human activity.¹¹ For any interpretation to be accepted or confirmed, it should pass through this process of rigorous examination, which will indelibly legitimize or invalidate the interpretation of the text. There is little room for error when the elements of the word of God and the Holy Spirit, in addition to the history, tradition and authority of the community of faith are

Another important work in this field is the book by David Suazo Jiménez, *La Función Profética de la Educación Teológica en América Latina* (Viladecavalls, España: Editorial CLIE, 2012).

¹⁰ See my article, “Hacia Una Hermenéutica Esperanzadora,” in Raúl Zaldívar, Miguel Álvarez, and David E. Ramírez, eds., *El Rostro Latino de Jesús I* (Barcelona, España: Editorial CLIE, 2014), 99-169.

¹¹ See, for example, the analysis of John Calvin’s divine in human natures by Darren Sumner, “Calvin on Jesus’ Divine-Human Activity,” in *Out of Bounds: Theology in the Far Country*, <http://theologyoutofbounds.wordpress.com/2012/04/24/calvin-on-jesus-divine-human-activity/>, accessed 11 June 2014.

dynamically integrated.¹² Interpreters may disagree with regard to strategy, emphasis, and the implementation of revelation, but when it comes to an order of hierarchical importance, the Scriptures are supreme and over all other elements. Then, in terms of importance, comes the revelation of the Holy Spirit that confirms Scripture. Historical precedents and tradition legitimize the impact, while the spiritual authority and the judgment of the community of faith approve or disapprove of the practical application of the interpretation.

Intervening Agents in the Integrative Method

The integrative method is like the pneumatic method, which in its dynamic includes the word, the Holy Spirit, and the community of faith.¹³ The difference between the two is that the integrative method includes historical testimony and the influence of tradition in the dynamic process of interpreting the text. In the Latino community, the inclusion of tradition is vital, precisely due to the Catholic influence in its theology.

In the Catholic Church, the study of history and tradition is necessary to understand the interpretive exercise of God's people throughout time. This is perhaps one of the areas of concern among Evangelical and Pentecostal interpreters, whose understanding of historical continuity

¹² Kevin L. Spawn and Archie T. Wright, *Exploring a Pneumatic Hermeneutics* (Bloomsbury, UK: T&T Clark, 2012). This book considers the academic treatment of biblical interpretation within the classical Pentecostal movement, which has demonstrated great numerical growth. The first part gives a historical summary of biblical interpretation in the Pentecostal tradition. In the second part, six Pentecostal scholars analyze the future of biblical interpretation in said tradition. The authors discuss several key questions. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in biblical interpretation? What are the presuppositions, methods, and goals of Pentecostal biblical interpretation? In the third part, three non-Pentecostal theologians (Craig G. Bartholomew, James D. G. Dunn, and R. Walter L. Moberly) analyze the propositions described by the Pentecostal theologians. These critical responses expand the study of biblical hermeneutics and encourages other theologians toward further study on the subject. The final chapter evaluates the objectives of the discussion in a futuristic light.

¹³ See Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2009). Archer presents a detailed and comprehensive analysis of Pentecostal hermeneutics. He identifies the hermeneutical filter through which the Pentecostal story and identity is understood. Archer gives attention to the narrative and to the convictions of the community of faith. This model builds on the significance of the Bible text, the community of faith and the role of the Holy Spirit.

may be influenced by denominational differences, particularly due to historical interest. The challenge here is to connect objectively the process of textual interpretation with the history of the Christian church and with the history of textual interpretation itself. The latter should be considered by interpreters of the Scriptures in order to study the historical evidence in a hermeneutical proposition that could affect all of Christendom and not just one segment.

For the process of interpretation to be objective, it is necessary that all interpreters remove their denominational hats and begin to see the church as one body with different members and different functions, but all contributing to the well-being of the same. I believe this is what was in the mind of the Holy Spirit as he guided Paul to write to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 12). For this to happen, the integrative method proposes the four previously mentioned agents. This method is inclusive and involves a dynamic activity incorporating the agents that participate in the interpretation of Scripture.

Table 2: Agents Involved in Latino Interpretation of Scripture

	<i>Agents that participate in the Interpretation</i>	<i>Historical Sources</i>
Integrative Method	The Holy Spirit	The Trinity (GOD)
	The Holy Scriptures	The Biblical Text
	History and Tradition	Catholic/Latino Tradition
	The Community of Faith	Classical Pentecostalism

In the case of Latinos, a large majority come from a Roman Catholic background, and tradition has been fundamental to understanding the church, ministry, liturgy, and salvation.¹⁴ A method that ignores the value of history or tradition would have difficulty in being accepted by the Latino community. The same could happen with other historic

¹⁴ Alfred Kuen, *Introducción a la Eclesiología: La Iglesia Según el Plan de Dios* (Barcelona, España: CLIE, 2001), 40. Kuen describes the Catholic notion of tradition. He argues that historically there has been an oral tradition through which an apostolic teaching not found in the Bible has been transmitted. This proposition is absolutely contested by traditional evangelical and Pentecostal traditions. But in recent years more and more Latino neo-Pentecostals, especially megachurch pastors who embrace the faith and prosperity gospel, are making use of oral traditions, especially those that approach particular revelations for particular benefit. Without a doubt, this topic must be studied more specifically.

Christian entities. Of course, the diversity of theological and doctrinal positions among movements and denominations is obvious and, for that reason, generalization is not recommended in this case. Nevertheless, the study of tradition and the history of the thinking of God's people has an invaluable benefit in the formation of ideas about the origin of doctrine and theology.

In our contemporary world, many decisions of a judicial, social, and spiritual nature are based on historical antecedents to strengthen their conclusions, especially those that are of a normative nature. To recommend a method that would be representative of Latino theologies, the same should include a complete evaluation of the traditions and the role of history in interpretation.¹⁵ In light of this, the dynamic of the elements that are part of the action of the integrative method are presented below.

The Word of God

The word of God is the revelation of God to mankind. God communicates through Scriptures, which is inspired and revealed through the Holy Spirit.¹⁶ The word of God has both a divine and human nature. It is divinely inspired by God through a series of individuals subject to human limitations.¹⁷ In this way, the omnipotent God intervenes in human history and reveals himself as the divine word documented by men, not through robotic dictation by God, but rather as persons that wrote about particular situations with regard to specific human issues, but while doing so, were documenting the word of God.

Scripture is the Verbal Revelation of God

The unity between Jesus Christ and the word is a mystery understood through the revelatory activity of the Holy Spirit. The word became

¹⁵ Maurizio Ferraris, *Historia de la Hermenéutica*, XXI Editores (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Siglo, 2002) 116. Ferraris suggests that there have already been attempts to include historical and traditional aspects in the interpretation processes, not only of Scripture, but also of culture and social values. In Latin American culture, cultural and religious traditions merge, creating patterns of consciousness and faith in individuals and their society. This is naturally part of the nature and Catholic tradition of where they come from.

¹⁶ Carlos Tomás Knott, *Libro Divino, Amada Palabra* (Barcelona, España: Editorial CLIE, 1997), 70 emphasized that when the word is illuminated, the Holy Spirit enables the reader to understand what has been revealed and inspired in order to believe and obey God.

¹⁷ Knott, *Libro Divino*, 62.

flesh incarnate in Jesus. In this way, the word is divine, and it is human, functioning in an integral manner. Hebrews 4:12 is a complete explanation of the activity of the word: “For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints, and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). Jesus Christ is the origin and the fulfilment of the word. In the person of Jesus Christ, the fullness of the deity is incarnated in human nature and is subject to the limitations of the human world.

The Integration of Human and Divine Natures

Just as in Jesus Christ, both the human and divine natures were combined in the same way, Scripture combines both of these natures. This is how God makes himself accessible to humanity in order to make his purpose and his mission understood.¹⁸ The fact the Scripture is both divine and human facilitates communication between God and man. In the person of Jesus Christ, who is the incarnation of Scripture, God the Father makes himself known to man within the human reality. Milton Jordán Chiqua argues:

The Scriptures, by being inspired, are in truth the Word of God. Regardless of its human presentation, Scripture does not cease to have a divine language, in which the human language is wrapped in the divine Word, or better said, it becomes the expression of divine languages. The human language, without ceasing to be so, has been assumed by God until it also is transformed into divine.¹⁹

As Chiqua describes, when a Latino converts, conclusions are assumed regarding the idea that there is no word of God without human word. God is in every part of the inspired texts, even in the most minute details.²⁰ One of the reasons why the Latino believer venerates and makes holy certain activities and traditions is the belief that these

¹⁸ It is significant that this topic has not yet been academically discussed in depth in Latino Evangelical and Pentecostal circles. Curiously, one of the closest works written in Spanish is found in Catholic theological literature. Such is the case of the work of Ignacio Arellano, *Autos Sacramentales opletos: Dramatic and Allegorical Structures of Calderón* (Pamplona, Spain: University of Navarra, 2001), 76.

¹⁹ Milton Jordán Chiqua, *Introducción General a la Sagrada Scripture* (Bogotá, Colombia: San Pablo, 2011), 166.

²⁰ Jordán, *Introducción General a la Sagrada Scripture*, 166.

elements involve divine activity. In the same manner, the Church and Scripture are both totally divine and totally human.

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He is the source of all knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. His objective for mankind, clearly revealed in Scripture, is to guide man to the final destination of redemption offered by the Father in his Son, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit reveals Christ in the word, leading man to understand the gospel and accept God's redemption plan through faith. The Holy Spirit builds and encourages faith, ultimately opening the believer's understanding of Christ in person.

Within the Pentecostal movement, the person and mission of the Holy Spirit achieve an integrative scope.²¹ The Pentecostals recover the charismatic action of the Holy Spirit and complete the integral circle of the mission of the Trinity in which the Father sends the Son, and the Holy Spirit reveals and glorifies the Son in his divine and human fullness for the redemption of mankind.²²

The Necessity of the Illumination of the Spirit to Understand Scripture

The faith that understands the plan of redemption originates in the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit. It is he who awakens a need for God and who makes the word accessible to the understanding of an individual in need of salvation. The Holy Spirit makes Scripture relevant and gives life to specific situations and contexts as long as the revelation glorifies Jesus Christ and confirms the truth of God's revealed word.

The Role of Illumination in Interpretation

Of course, the process of interpretation of Scripture requires illumination as well as the direction and revelation of the Holy Spirit.

²¹ Alexis Riaud, *La Acción del Espíritu Santo en la Almas* (Madrid, España: Ediciones Palabra, 2005), 163. This Catholic classic exposes the essential notions about the role that corresponds to the Holy Spirit in the work of sanctification. Curiously, much of the Neo-Pentecostal theology used among Latinos is saturated with these Catholic concepts about the mission of the Holy Spirit. In the particular case of this author, his work points towards the doctrine of sanctification, which demonstrates that not only the evangelical Wesleyan movement has influenced Latino Pentecostalism.

²² See Elizabeth Salazar-Sanzana, "Pentecostalism in Latin America: A Look at its Current challenges," in Harold D. Hunter, and Neil Ormerod, eds., *The Many Faces of Pentecostalism* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2013), 114-25.

The “depth of the riches of God” (Rom.11:33) can be available to the person whose motivation is conducive to understanding the truths of Scripture. The Holy Spirit²³ convicts individuals of sin and leads him to repentance (John 16:8). Through faith, a person accepts the offer of salvation and becomes a disciple of Christ to live according to the values, teachings, and purposes of the word.²⁴

Table 3: Sources that Collide with Contemporary Latin American Hermeneutics			
	<i>Traditions</i>	<i>Distinctive</i>	<i>Challenges</i>
The Integrative method of interpretation considers the most influential traditions in the Latino world	Catholic	History: Doctrine, theology, continuity, tradition	Revitalization of holiness and the spiritual life
	Evangelical	Holiness: Order in the church, <i>missio Dei</i> , discipline	Connecting to the charismatic activity of the Holy Spirit
	Pentecostal	Revitalization de la actividad of the Holy Spirit in the church: Creativity, new possibilities	Order in the church and finding its place in the historical continuity of the Christian faith

The Revelation of Jesus Christ in Scripture

The truth about the person, mission, and purpose of Jesus Christ is revealed in the word of God. This revelation occurs under the influence of the Holy Spirit on human understanding. The Holy Spirit also fills the believers and equips them for effective service through spiritual gifts.²⁵

²³ Lucas Buch Rodríguez, *El Papel del Espíritu Santo en la Obra Reveladora de Dios* (Roma, Italia: Edizioni Santa Croce, 2013), 203 affirms that the influence of the Holy Spirit over tradition is a primary source of understanding of the Scripture.

²⁴ Gregory J. Ogden, *Manual del Discipulado: Creciendo y Ayudando a Otros a Crecer* (Viladecavalls, España: Editorial CLIE, 2006), 37-45. This work on Christian discipleship forms part of a theological collection published in Australia. Fortunately, it has been translated into Spanish, but this kind of literature is not common in Latino Evangelical and Pentecostal theological circles.

²⁵ A significant source in this area is the book by Don Little, *The Way to Follow the Way* (Bloomington, IN: West Bow, 2012). However, prior to quoting Little, I did a search in the Spanish literature giving specific attention to the subject of signs following the believers, and I was not able to find one that was academically solid. There are some teachings and sermons on the subject, but

This has been a profound legacy from the American classical Pentecostalism to the Latino community.

The Testimony of History and the Influence of Tradition

The value of the testimony of history and the influence of tradition on the interpretation of the Scriptures can be appreciated in the doctrinal and theological formation of Christian communities over time. Upon reviewing the church's dogmas, doctrines, and theological positions, the interpreter of Scripture comes to see the importance of tradition in the history of thought of the people of God.²⁶ Tradition could have a positive as well as a negative side. The positive aspect encourages healthy growth that allows the believer to understand Scripture in relation to his world. The negative side is that which holds back revelation and remains fixed on the static traditions of the past, which were relevant to previous generations but, with time, have become irrelevant and of no value for the generations that followed.²⁷ The study of tradition should include the analysis of both positive and negative past traditions for the benefit of the present generation.

This agent also considers the methodology that has been utilized historically in interpreting sacred Scriptures. The historical-critical method, grammatical-historical method, inductive method, and others have been implemented particularly in biblical exegesis.²⁸ The integrative method relies on these other methods to support and test the validity of the treatment given to the biblical text. In doing so, the integrative method recognizes the importance and value of the historical methods of interpreting the word of God. Regarding exegesis, the integrative method employs the traditional methods, although interpretation utilized in expository preaching is primarily based on the inductive method.

most are translations from English to Spanish. Due to its very nature the challenge is more evident for Pentecostals, since they are the ones that refer to the subject; the Pentecostals live by this, and so they have no excuse.

²⁶ See Juan Jesús García Morales, *La Inspiración Bíblica a la Luz del Principio Católico de la tradición* (Roma, Italia: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2012), 173-179.

²⁷ This subject is widely discussed by Daniel Orlando Alvarez in *Mestizaje and Hibridez: Latin@ Identity in Pneumatological Perspective* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2016), 176-87.

²⁸ Regarding this subject, see the book by Bernhard Gromand, and José Ramón Guerrero, *El Anuncio del Dios Cristiano* (Salamanca, España: Ediciones Secretariado Trinitario, 1979), 161.

The Doctrinal Foundation

The historical impact of Scripture on human history can be appreciated most through the doctrinal foundations and the theology developed by the people of God over time.²⁹ The Nicene Creed, for example, has served as a doctrinal foundation for many centuries and has remained immovable as a testimony of the doctrinal development of the church. The study of ecclesial and theological currents of the church throughout history helps the interpreter understand the doctrinal foundation and the historical thought of Christianity.

The History of the People of God

In the history of the influence of Scripture on God's people, a great number of truths, dogmas, principles, and symbols have been preserved through traditions.³⁰ Obviously, a tradition seen from a purely human perspective is framed in a diverse context of actions and decisions taken by different generations. To understand it, tradition must be analyzed in the context in which it developed.

The History of Christian Thought

In an objective interpretation of Scripture, it is necessary to study the history of the traditions and the historical thought of God's people. There are truths that were discovered a long time ago that cannot be ignored by the interpreters of today. The symbols and meanings found in the past have great value for those seeking historical evidence of the faith.³¹ The balance between historical interpretation of tradition and the

²⁹ Véase, Amerindia, *Construyendo Puentes entre Teologías y Culturas* (Bogotá, Colombia: Casa San Pablo, 2011), 177. This work presents the historic challenges facing the world, the church and theology in the past 60 years. It also discusses some of the historical, social, and political processes occurring in Latin America in recent years.

³⁰ John Barton, *La Interpretación Bíblica Hoy* (Barcelona, España: CLIE, 2001), 25. The author presents the relation between the "critical" study of the Bible and the "pre-critical" and "post-critical." He also analyzes the role of history in the study of the Bible, the relationship between Christian and Jewish investigation and the recent history in the Bible as literature. See, also, the work by Eduardo Arens, *Los Evangelios Ayer y Hoy: Una Introducción Hermenéutica* (Bogotá, Colombia: EEP, 2006), 205.

³¹ José Saramago wrote a very polemic novel that makes a literary criticism of the manner in which some Christian values and beliefs have been traditionally assumed. Saramago not only won the Nobel Prize for Literature with this novel, but also stirred an interest in a more objective study of the traditional

revelation of today leads to revealed truth in a healthy way for the needs in a contemporary reality.

The Authority of the Community of Faith in the Interpretation of Scripture

This element in the integrative method is based on the experience and counsel of the church. A healthy interpretation of Scripture will necessarily recognize the value of spiritual authority in the community of faith, the assembly of believers, or the congregation itself.³² The church has a clearly established order which believers have a duty to honor. This helps maintain healthy relationships and permits the members to find their place in the congregation where the Holy Spirit has indicated.

The Testing by the Believers

The community of believers has the authority to evaluate the revelation that has been presented by a group or by one of the members of the community. The group wisdom establishes a balance with all of the previous proposed elements and decides if the interpretation is correct or not. This was the procedure established by the apostle Paul to avoid disorder and disobedience in the congregations (1 Cor. 14:29). The testing by the community of faith is necessary to maintain order and health in the church.³³

religious values, especially the historical Catholic teachings, this being the reason for including this editorial information in this article. See, José Saramango, *O Evangelho Segundo Jesus Cristo* (Lisboa, Portugal: Editorial Caminho SA, 1991).

³² With regards to the spiritual authority of the community of faith in hermeneutics, see the classic work by David Paul Henry, *The Early Development of the Hermeneutic of Karl Barth as Evidenced by His Appropriation of Romans 5:12-21* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985), 1-4.

³³ The academic resources, in Spanish, about congregational participation in textual interpretation are found in Catholic literature. Latino scholars tend to look to them for the process of interpretation. The closest the Latino community is found in American Pentecostal textbooks published in recent years. See, for instance, Rubén Muñoz Larrondo, "Toward a Latino/a Vision/Optic for Biblical Hermeneutics," in Fernando Lozada Jr. and Fernando F. Segovia, eds., *Latino/A Biblical Hermeneutics: Problematics, Objectives, Strategies* (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014), 203-230. This article provides information about congregational participation in the process of Scriptural interpretation. It emphasized the function of church members in the making of decisions that affect the life of the congregation.

The Approval of the Church

In the same way that Jesus Christ and Scripture are one, the church also has a divine as well as a human nature. Contrary to what dualism teaches, these natures are a constant in the revelation of God to mankind. It is God himself who chooses to intervene in human society, making himself available through the Scriptures, visible in Jesus Christ, and revealed and understood through the Holy Spirit.³⁴ The church, therefore, has the mind of the Holy Spirit, who guides into all truth (John 16:13) and is able to decide in conformity with the mind of Christ in matters related to the interpretation and application of Scripture in the community of faith.

Obedience and Submission to Spiritual Authority

Obedience and submission to the governing authority of the community of faith is indispensable in the application of the integrative method. The concept of membership is vital in order to cultivate an attitude of submission and group health.³⁵ Latino communities emphasize the importance of submitting every matter to the counsel of the community of faith in order to find balance in everything that affects the group or an individual member.

An example of the dynamic interaction in the interpretation of Scripture utilizing the four agents is found in Acts of the Apostles chapter 15. The following is a description of the action taken by the New Testament church.

³⁴ María del Carmen Aparicio Valls, *La Plenitud del Ser Humano en Cristo* (Roma, Italia: Iura Editionis, 1996), 184. The author reflects on the accessibility of God to mankind in the person of Christ, who is revealed to the human mind by the Holy Spirit. This position is similar to that manifested by biblical scholars in the Latino community.

³⁵ See W. T. Conner, *Doctrina Cristiana: las Doctrinas Fundamentales de la Fe Cristiana Expuestas con Claridad Bíblica* (El Paso, TX: Casa Bautista de Publicaciones, 2001), 55. This is a manual of classic evangelical doctrine written very early in the 20th century and has been used by different evangelical generations. This manual contains North American evangelical doctrines that for many years confronted the fundamental doctrines of the Catholic tradition in Latin America. At this point it is necessary to study what the result of this dialectical confrontation has been, according to the plan of this document.

The Practice of the Integrative Method in Scripture

During the Jerusalem council, believers came together to resolve a very fundamental theological issue. The topic: salvation through works of the law or faith alone. Acts 15 serves as a model for church leaders to use as a method of interpretation that includes the four basic elements in interpretation: (1) The guidance of the Holy Spirit, (2) the authority of Scripture, (3) the historical testimony of tradition, and (4) the consensus of the community of faith.

Acts 15 describes a meeting where it is recorded that the decision of the council was a corporal and integral response regarding the question of the admission or not of the Gentiles to the full communion of the church. As a result, James was able to confidently declare, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us” (v. 28). The participants of the Jerusalem council were certain of the direction and authority of the Holy Spirit in their decisions. This is what determines the central activity of the Holy Spirit in the hermeneutical task and in the entire life of the church in general.

Furthermore, during that meeting the council appealed to the centrality of the Scriptures, the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the experience of faith, the testimony of tradition and history of the people of God, and the use of the consensual reason of the community of believers. James said with complete certainty that the Scripture agreed with the missionary report and Peter’s argument that all the prophets, particularly Amos, included the Gentiles in the church family, according to God’s eternal purpose (vv. 14-18: cf. Amos 9:11-12).

For their part, Paul and Barnabas presented their field report and told of their missionary experience in preaching the gospel among the Gentiles (v.12). Peter reminded the council members of their personal calling to preach to the Gentiles, particularly with what happened during his visit to the home of Cornelius and his friends (vv. 7-11). But one should also note that James equally appealed to and made use of the testimony of tradition when he asked the Gentiles to observe at least those four prohibitions based on the law (vv. 20-21; cf. Lev. 17:8, 10-12, 13; 18:6-23). Peter added that the Gentiles should be accepted into the church due to their sanctification by faith and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that they experienced (vv. 8-11). Likewise, James argued, based on law and tradition, that Gentiles were not required to practice circumcision (vv. 13-21). Obviously, it was under the direction of the Holy Spirit that the council was in common agreement and had a positive effect on the growth of the church.

Thus, it is clear that the method that worked in Scripture was integrative. It included the word of God with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the testimony of history and tradition, and the confirmation of the community of faith. This same integrative method of interpretation can be applied in all Christian communities today, particularly in the Latin one, where said methodology could work adequately and serve as a bridge in the diversity of theological positions among Latin Americans.

Practical examples of the use of the integrative method of interpretation are continually observed in a large number of contemporary churches. Generally, every matter, whether doctrinal, spiritual, ethical, or congregational in nature, is committed to prayer under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Then the issue is examined by authority of the word. The wisdom of the elders of the church is then consulted to ensure that the interpretation of Scripture and the statutes—the doctrine, regulations, and tradition which are observed in the practical life of the church—remain in place and that everything is in order.³⁶ This helps maintain a healthy balance in all areas, whether spiritual, organizational, ethical, social, or simply matters that have to do with good communication.

Usually, in difficult cases, believers seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit before proceeding. This action creates a spiritual awareness that manifests itself in an attitude of reverence and humility. They then proceed to examine the case in the light of the word of God to see if there is anything that is confirmed or contrary to the principles of Scripture. In both steps, the wisdom and admonition of those who preside in the congregation are used. These elders judge whether the interpretation is correct or incorrect, whether or not it contradicts the spiritual, biblical, and ecclesial order.

In each congregation there is an order that is based on denominational statutes that have been established to maintain order in the church. In some cases, historical background research has to be used to find out how the matter was handled in previous generations or in similar historical situations. This dynamic allows the matter to be

³⁶ Mónica Aguilar Mendizábal, “Vivencias Pentecostales en Amatenango del Valle,” in Carolina Rivera Farfán and Elizabeth Juárez Cerdi, eds., *Más Allá de Espíritu: Actores, Acciones y Prácticas en Iglesias Pentecostales* (México City: CIESAS, 2007), 203-232. This work emphasizes the changes, intramural pluralism and social changes between the Protestant and Pentecostal movements of Latin America. Within that brand there is a Catholic hermeneutical basis that serves as a foundation for the biblical interpretation of contemporary currents in both movements.

resolved correctly and consistently, and in the end, all parties involved are satisfied with the decisions made by the congregation. This method is integrative because it involves all the necessary agents that attest to a complete, balanced, and total interpretation.

Here it is necessary to clarify that this integrative method, in reality, is not new. In the practical life of the church, it has already been or has been practiced empirically in ecclesial circles, especially in those where the interpretation of the text has not been so strict or rigorous. So, this methodological conception is not new. What I am doing here, rather, is organizing methodologically what has already been practiced for a long time. For example, 20th-century Pentecostal interpreters formally introduced the pneumatic method to the field of hermeneutics. From that platform, the pneumatic method became the tool most used by contemporary churches in the interpretation of Scripture. However, they failed to consider the value of the testimony offered by the historical precedents of interpretation and the traditions historically observed by the people of God. To compensate for this deficiency, some contemporary interpreters, in addition to using the pneumatic method, have relied on the inductive method for preaching and have also used, empirically, the resources of history and tradition to confirm the certainty of said interpretation. This is how the need arose to organize the integrative method, which is necessary to justify the appropriate use of all the agents that take part in the responsible treatment of the biblical text.

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Illumination of the Spirit: A Study in Pentecostal Epistemology

Edgard René Bermúdez

Abstract

This research seeks to establish a Pentecostal epistemological proposal based on St. Augustine's doctrine of illumination to explain the illumination of the Spirit. The methodology will be qualitative in nature through a bibliographic review that establishes the relationship between individual knowledge and the illumination of the Spirit. It presents the view that individual knowledge is a necessary condition for enlightenment; further, that the breadth of individual knowledge is proportional to the degree and magnitude of the illumination of the Spirit present in a person. Through this study, one will see that the Spirit enhances the intellect for the understanding and apprehension of new knowledge because of the patient intellect. Thus, the illumination of the Spirit is subordinated to individual knowledge. This view is not asserting that the Spirit is unable to illuminate, but rather the epistemological potentiality of the human intellect affects the degree to which illumination may occur.

Keywords: illumination of the Spirit, Pentecostal epistemology, human intellect, patient intellect, deposit of knowledge, *imago Dei*

Introduction

This research deals with the illumination of the Spirit in relation to the most basic assumptions of the intellect up to the explicit knowledge of the person, which has been called individual knowledge. Pentecostal literature has not advanced in the study of the epistemological conditions that enable the human intellect to receive the illumination of the Spirit. For this reason, this project seeks to construct a Pentecostal epistemology that allows this phenomenon to be clarified. It is maintained, then, that individual knowledge as an epistemological foundation allows the illumination of the Spirit, understanding this second phenomenon not as the deposit of new knowledge but as a potentiator of the intellect.

Through a qualitative literature review of the elements that make up individual knowledge, it is possible to establish a relationship between these elements and the doctrine of Augustinian illumination. Thus, through this study it will be demonstrated that the Spirit enhances the “agent intellect” for the understanding and apprehension of new knowledge based on the “patient intellect.” Thus, the illumination of the Spirit is subordinated to individual knowledge. This view is not claiming the inability of the Spirit but rather, the lesser epistemological potentiality of the human intellect, the less the degree of illumination by the Spirit.

Illumination of the Spirit

Pentecostalism is accused of being a religious movement that bases its theology on experience. Most Pentecostal theology holds to the existence and action of phenomena that are not explained, such is the case with the illumination of the Spirit. In Pentecostal hermeneutics, illumination is often used as a condition for receiving from the Spirit a “revealed” knowledge of Scripture, but there is no epistemology to explain this phenomenon.

Therefore, this research seeks to establish a Pentecostal epistemological proposal based on St. Augustine’s doctrine of illumination to explain the illumination of the Spirit. The methodology will be qualitative in nature, through a bibliographic review that will establish the relationship between individual knowledge and the illumination of the Spirit. It is intended to hold that individual knowledge is a necessary condition for enlightenment; further, that the breadth of individual knowledge is proportional to the degree and magnitude of the illumination of the Spirit present in a person.

Pentecostal Epistemology

Pentecostal epistemology is a newly explored field of study. Although Pentecostalism as a religious movement has been in existence for more than a hundred years, in terms of theological development it is in its infancy. Theology related to the limits and scope of human knowledge through the intervention of the Spirit¹ is an under-researched topic. The present study aims to construct an epistemological proposal in relation to the phenomenon of the illumination of the Spirit, which is often mentioned in Pentecostal schools and seminaries, but there is no explanation of it beyond what can be intuited when listening to the term.

¹ Whenever it refers to the Spirit, it is alluding to the Third Person of the Trinity, that is, to the Holy Spirit.

At the outset, it is important to explain what is meant by Pentecostal epistemology. The discipline that is dedicated to the study of the nature of knowledge that includes its defining characteristics, its substantive conditions, and the limits of knowledge and justification,² is what is understood by epistemology. Now, the term Pentecostal is absolutely associated with the “charismatic, evangelical movement” born mainly of the “holiness movement,” which had its beginning in American Methodism in the nineteenth century.³ So, the term Pentecostal is the noun of the thought or person akin to Pentecostalism, which is a branch of Christianity that arises as a spiritual revival characterized, but not defined, from one of its main doctrines: *glossolalia* or the gift of speaking in tongues⁴ as well as the continuity of charismatic gifts.

Thus, a Pentecostal epistemology seeks to explain the origin, limits, and extent of knowledge of the text generated by the direct activity of the Holy Spirit.⁵ This activity is characterized by leading the believer into all truth. That is, “The Holy Spirit guides the truth of God’s word, revealing the hidden meaning, making clear its teachings, and causing even the most familiar passages to radiate new beauty and meaning.”⁶ Along these lines, this research aims to establish the possibility of this phenomenon as well as the conditions that allow it to happen. Other authors, such as James K. Smith, approach this question but point to another type of answer.

Because implicit in the Pentecostal experience is a unique understanding of the nature of human persons (a philosophical anthropology), there is a contrast to rationalist evangelical theology, which reduces worship to a didactic sermon and conceives of our relationship with God as primarily intellectual, giving rise to a mind-centered Christianity. Pentecostalism places its emphasis on experience.

² Robert Audi, *Diccionario Akal de Filosofía* (Madrid, España: Ediciones Akal, 2004), 292-293.

³ Jorge Scampini, “La Iglesia en el movimiento pentecostal: De un modo de ‘vivir la Iglesia’ a los primeros ensayos eclesiológicos,” *Teología* 58.136 (diciembre 2021), 77.

⁴ Enrique Rodríguez, “Pentecostalismo, teología y cosmovisión,” *Península* 1 (2005), 221.

⁵ Miguel Álvarez, *Pasión por la Palabra: Hacia una hermenéutica latina* (Cleveland, TN: Centro de Estudios Latinos, 2017), 97.

⁶ Guy Duffield and Nathaniel Van Cleave, *Fundamentos de Teología Pentecostal* (Los Angeles, CA: Life Pacific College, 2002), 310.

Therefore, the Pentecostal knows *in* (or by entering into) the stories.⁷ Thus, narrative is central to Pentecostal identity since stories of faith have normative implications.⁸

From this proposal, the epistemic conditions of Pentecostals are explained since Smith indicates that Pentecostalism possesses a kind of proto-postmodern intuition about knowledge that constitutes a performative critique of modern criteria of knowledge; that is, a Pentecostal critique of the rationalism that characterizes modernist accounts of knowledge. In addition, the author asserts that implicit in the practices of Pentecostalism is the intuition that there are forms of knowledge that cannot be translated into propositions or syllogisms. In line with postmodern thought, Smith explains that knowledge is not only built from the intellectual, but that the essential quality of the human being is to be in the world, to inhabit a material environment *as a* body (not just *a* body).⁹

Although Smith's epistemological proposal is consistent with contemporary postmodern thought, there are detractors who explain that, while there is nothing wrong with Pentecostals placing a heavy emphasis on history or narrative, which is a perfect vehicle for testifying to personal experiences with God, it is a complication to know through affective narrative rather than accumulating evidence of objective truth. This brings with it the problem of never knowing the noumenal world of the Nazarene, for example. Thus, the Pentecostal finds himself stuck only with the phenomena: the various interpretations of them. In this sense, the danger of this Pentecostal epistemology is the interpretation that divorces the truth of Christianity from the objective facts that give rise to a self-refuting relativism of history.¹⁰

Up to this point, it is understood that Pentecostal epistemology is a field of study of Pentecostal theology that explains the characteristics of knowledge, the epistemic assumptions that allow for the generation of new knowledge as well as the processes that explain how it is created, all this from a pneumatological perspective. Now it is necessary to move towards the findings of this research itself through which an epistemological proposal is presented from a Latin American

⁷ James Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 76.

⁸ Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 84-94.

⁹ Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 93.

¹⁰ Richard Davis and Paul Franks, "Against a Postmodern Pentecostal Epistemology," *Philosophia Christi* 15:2 (2013), 383-99.

Pentecostal perspective. This proposal rests on the philosophical assumptions of the Augustinian doctrine of illumination to explain and argue for the illumination of the Spirit as a fundamental phenomenon of Pentecostal epistemology.

Illumination of the Spirit in Pentecostal Thought: A Reductionist Perspective

From Pentecostal thought, we hear different voices that refer to the illumination of the Spirit in very different terms. Although it should not be said that they are differing, there is simply no attempt to describe in epistemological terms what they are referring to by such a phenomenon. For this reason, there is a reductionism when talking about enlightenment. Some Pentecostal groups allude to the Greek word *ῥῆμα* (*rhema*), which is transliterated as “utterance” or “statement” to refer to “fresh revelations” of the Holy Spirit. These groups, called “charismatics,” have subordinated the biblical canon to the “fresh word” that is understood as prophecy and taught as the *rhema* of the word.¹¹

The *rhema* as a charismatic manifestation is not a clear phenomenon; rather, its authority has been abused, and this has caused great controversy within the Pentecostal movement.¹² From Pentecostal hermeneutics, it is understood that “the word continues to reveal God’s will every day, and it is the responsibility of every believer to maintain a life of deep relationship with it, not only as a book to be read as a requirement but as a source of fresh revelation that develops a greater passion for the kingdom of God and his justice.”¹³

As an exponent of classical Pentecostalism, Charles Parham points out that the anointing “illuminates the Word, offers revelation of truth, and is a filling of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁴ In contemporary Pentecostalism, Miguel Álvarez proposes that the believer who approaches the biblical text, if he wants to achieve a level of illumination such that he accesses divine truths present in the text, must submit to a level of spiritual condition relative to that of the author of the text who was inspired by the Spirit so that he can understand the message of the word correctly;

¹¹ Miguel Álvarez, *Hermenéutica: Palabra, Espíritu, y Comunidad* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2021), 33-4.

¹² Álvarez, *Pasión por la Palabra*, 53-54.

¹³ Álvarez, *Pasión por la Palabra*, 58.

¹⁴ Charles Parham, *The Sermons of Charles Parham* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Press, 1911), 22-27.

submission allows the reader to be illuminated.¹⁵ So, the epistemological conditions for enlightenment to occur depend more on spiritual aspects.

Other contemporary Pentecostal authors describe illumination as the activity of the Spirit in bringing to the memory of the human being both the word and comfort in times of need. This is because human memory, like every other function of its being, has suffered as a result of the fall. Therefore, it needs and has a “rememberer,” the Holy Spirit. This can happen at any time since the Spirit is the author of the biblical text and, therefore, can illuminate the understanding with the word in any circumstance, whether for personal or community use.¹⁶ This perspective of the ontological degradation of the human being as a consequence of sin is employed by Wolfgang Vondey, who explains that Pentecostals understand baptism with the Holy Spirit as a meeting point between the human spirit and the divine Spirit that results in the sanctification of human nature and the illumination of the image of God; these together make possible an intensification of the *imago Dei*.¹⁷

Although this perspective has more depth, it is still reductionist since enlightenment occurs at a certain moment and is a concrete act for a metaphysical and possibly ethical transformation of the human being. However, epistemological issues are not observed or defined. This research, then, establishes the epistemological mechanisms that occur in the illumination of the Spirit. For this, it is necessary, first of all, to establish the epistemic conditions that allow human beings to apprehend new knowledge.

Analysis of Individual Knowledge

Individual knowledge is the sum of all the knowledge that a person possesses, whether conscious or unconscious. This means that individual knowledge is made up of tacit and explicit knowledge.¹⁸ In the first place, tacit knowledge is that acquired through experience and is identified with the natural abilities of the subject. It is understood as a person’s *know-how* and internalized mental models. This knowledge is difficult to transmit or communicate and, therefore, not directly

¹⁵ Álvarez, *Pasión por la Palabra*, 95.

¹⁶ Duffield and Van Cleve, *Fundamentos de Teología Pentecostal*, 312.

¹⁷ Wolfgang Vondey, *Teología Pentecostal: Viviendo el Evangelio Completo* (Salem, OR: Publicaciones Kerygma, 2019), 198.

¹⁸ Mario Pérez, *Gestión del conocimiento en las organizaciones: Fundamentos, metodología y praxis* (Asturias, España: Ediciones Trea, S. L., 2008), 60.

accessible to other individuals.¹⁹ Explicit knowledge, on the other hand, is characterized by being directly codifiable, that is, transmissible and communicable.²⁰

To apprehend new explicit knowledge, focal knowledge and tacit knowledge are involved.²¹ The former pays attention to the object or phenomenon, while the latter serves as a tool for apprehending from the world what is known. That is to say, these components of the mind are complementary; they are an articulated binomial where the tacit acts as a background for the focal to occur. However, it is important to measure the unconscious quality of tacit knowledge. Sigmund Freud postulated that human reason possesses three levels of consciousness: the conscious, the preconscious, and the unconscious. Individual knowledge is composed of what is “known to be known” and what underlies the mind.

The level of consciousness refers to the experiences a person is aware of, including memories and intentional actions. This is something that the individual is aware of and accepts as part of himself. In the second place, that which is brought quickly to our attention, this material is called the preconscious. It includes information you are not thinking about at the time, but that can be remembered if necessary.²² The third and final level possesses content that does not move or jump quickly into consciousness. The unconscious refers to mental processes that the person is not aware of. Such material remains in the unconscious because making it conscious would produce a great deal of anxiety. This phenomenon occurs thanks to the fact that the unconscious contains forgotten traumatic memories and denied desires.²³

Epistemological Degrees of Knowledge

This section seeks to establish a relationship between the taxonomic levels and the levels of abstraction of knowledge in order to contrast them with the theory of knowledge present in Augustinian philosophy. In this way, concepts are integrated, and the level and type of knowledge

¹⁹ Pérez, *Gestión del conocimiento en las organizaciones*, 54-55.

²⁰ Pérez, *Knowledge Management in Organizations*, 55.

²¹ See, “The Tacit and Explicit Nature of Knowledge,” in James Cortada and John Woods, *The Knowledge Management Yearbook (1999-2000)* (Oxford, UK: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1999), 18-27.

²² Cloninger, *Teorías de la personalidad*, 37.

²³ Cloninger, *Teorías de la personalidad*, 37.

generated by the illumination of the Spirit is determined. In the first place, we can observe in parallel the empirical-non-scientific knowledge, which does not go beyond the particular and contingent,²⁴ and the sensible or sensory knowledge, which is the one that allows us to know an object through the senses.²⁵ This is a first-level knowing that is contrasted with the “outer man” of Augustinian theory. To this belong the images, the product of sensations sculpted in the memory and contemplated in the memory.²⁶ Moreover, this is what makes sensible knowledge possible.

At a second degree of knowledge, philosophical and conceptual knowledge are related. Philosophical knowledge occurs whenever the subject questions every fact apprehended at the stage of empirical knowledge. One of its main characteristics is its autonomy, thanks to the fact that it incorporates the concept of free will in the act of thinking in order to know.²⁷ On the other hand, conceptual knowledge is produced thanks to the subject’s ability to “establish concepts in the form of language, transmit them by means of abstract symbols, and make a combination of concepts through cognitive mechanisms.”²⁸ This is a second degree of knowledge since the subject has immaterialized in his consciousness the a *priori* object; that is, he places himself above a current temporality.²⁹

This level of knowledge is contrastable with the *inner man* of Augustinian theory. According to St. Augustine, this exercise of the intellect refers to the knowledge of what is universal and precise in the temporal environment; that is, it is the kind of knowledge that can be called science. Although it could be appreciated as scientific knowledge, in the first place, it is a knowledge that requires the abstraction of immaterializing sensible objects and putting them into memory to make

²⁴ Javier Bermeo, “Niveles del conocimiento,” in David Alan Neill and Liliana Cortez Suárez (eds.), *Procesos y fundamentos de la investigación científica* (Machala, Ecuador: Ediciones UTMACH, 2018), 62.

²⁵ Javier Bermeo, “Niveles del conocimiento,” 56-57.

²⁶ San Agustín, *Tratado sobre la Santísima Trinidad* (Madrid, España: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1956), 653, xii, 1.

²⁷ Augusto V. Ramírez, “La Teoría del Conocimiento en Investigación Científica: Una Visión Actual,” *Anales de la Facultad de Medicina* 70:3. (2009), 219.

²⁸ Bermeo, “Niveles del Conocimiento,” 58.

²⁹ Bermeo, “Niveles del Conocimiento,” 59.

them universal.³⁰ For Augustine, however, lower rational knowledge is nourished by the senses. This requires a greater degree of comprehension since it requires a method to systematize the data provided by sensitivity; That is why it is considered a science.³¹

At the third level of knowledge, several concepts are intertwined. To explain this level, it is necessary to begin with the level of abstraction of the holistic type. It considers the whole without reducing it to the study of its parts. That is, it is characterized by understanding and interpreting things in their totality and complexity since, in this way, their interactions, characteristics, and processes can be appreciated.³² Holistic knowledge overlaps with philosophical knowledge since philosophical knowledge also seeks to see the totality of the world. However, it is more related to scientific knowledge. It aims to understand and discover the laws or processes that govern nature, transforming or modifying them for the benefit of society. In contrast to philosophical knowledge, scientific knowledge possesses the verifiable character of science.³³

Augustine explains a final degree of rational knowledge and understands it as a higher exercise. This is understood as wisdom, which is both epistemological and ethical.³⁴ The contemplation of this knowledge depends on the inner illumination of truth. “When it is a question of what we perceive with the mind, that is, with the understanding and reason, we speak of what we see as being present in the inner light of truth with which he who calls himself an inner man is illumined and enjoyed.”³⁵ This last degree is known as the illumination of the Spirit since it is the apprehension of eternal truths that cannot be attained except through divine intervention.

³⁰ Enrique Arenas, “Agustín: El deseo de saber y conocer,” *Reflexiones del Rector* 18 (2021), 512.

³¹ St Augustine, *Tratado sobre la Santísima Trinidad*, 655.

³² Bermeo, “Niveles del Conocimiento,” 60.

³³ Ramírez, “La teoría del conocimiento en investigación científica,” 219.

³⁴ Gonzalo Soto Posada, “La Muerte del Escepticismo o San Agustín y los Académicos,” *Estudios de Filosofía* 26 (2002), 279.

³⁵ Victorino Capanaga, *Notas de Soliloquios por San Agustín* (Madrid, Spain: Obras de San Agustín: *Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos*, 1958), 40, 591.

Augustinian Illumination: Assumptions for a Pentecostal Epistemology

For Augustine of Hippo, truth is universal, transcendent, and eternal.³⁶ Since these qualities are not peculiar to sensible objects, seeking the truth within the human being is necessary. This premise is supported by the doctrine of Augustinian illumination by the following ontological proposal:

(1) In the intellect of the word of God, there exist from eternity the Model-Ideas according to which all things have been created; (2) These Ideas, so far as subsisting in the Spirit of God, contain all His attributes: they are eternal, immutable, and necessary; (3) The human mind possesses, in the manner of axioms, the likeness of the exemplary Ideas through which it arrives at the truth in judgment by operating comparisons; (4) To make use of axioms is a way of participating in the Model-Ideas, which does not mean that things are known in the Ideas since that would presuppose the direct understanding of God, which is not the case.³⁷

Illumination is an onto-epistemological proposal that explains how the subject accesses eternal truths from the divine intellect without necessarily knowing as God knows. That is to say, divinity allows human beings to know ideas as models – or, as Plato would say, as shadows—without necessarily resorting to or participating in the same epistemic resources of God. In *Soliloquies*, St. Augustine indicates that the goal of philosophical inquiry is to know God and the soul. This work begins with the knowledge of the soul since it exists both as a reflective manifestation and as a shadow of the divine essence. Therefore, Augustinian research does not require two different paths but can be summed up in one: since God is in the deepest intimacy of our soul, seeking God requires recollecting oneself in the soul, and recollecting oneself in the soul means encountering God.³⁸

³⁶ Capanaga, *Notas de Soliloquios*, 476. As can be seen, the page number is cited at the end and, in addition, the book of the classic text and the paragraph, respecting both the system of citation of classic works, and the format of this research. From now on, the classics will be cited in this way.

³⁷ Oscar Mas, “La Doctrina de la Iluminación de la Inteligencia y del Hombre Interior en San Agustín,” *Revista de Filosofía UCR* 14:39 (1976), 63.

³⁸ Capanaga, *De la Cantidad del Alma* (Madrid, Spain: Obras de San Agustín-Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1963), 420-23.

Pentecostal theology holds that man still retains something of the original *imago Dei* (James 3:9; Genesis 9:6; John 5:37; Luke 6:1).³⁹ It has already been mentioned that Wolfgang Vondey claims Pentecostals understand baptism with the Holy Spirit as the moment when the human spirit has an encounter with the divine Spirit from which results the sanctification of human nature and the illumination of the image of God, which together make possible an intensification of the *imago Dei*.⁴⁰ Biblical texts such as 2 Timothy 1:14, 1 Corinthians 3:16, and Romans 8:11 seem to indicate that the Spirit dwells within the human being. Thus, the Augustinian proposal to seek God within the soul is compatible with the Pentecostal proposal in light of what Vondey argues.

St. Augustine also indicates certain conditions necessary for enlightenment, which he calls conditions of rational vision.⁴¹ The philosopher explains that, in principle, the soul must be able to know the truth because, for this, it is indispensable to receive the help of grace, that is, the soul must be healthy, purified through the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and love in order to know the truth. In the second place, once the soul is healed by the virtues mentioned, it must look, and it is this view that reason properly performs. Finally, once reason has looked, it proceeds to the apprehension of virtue, defined at first as the right order of reason.

This epistemological proposal reconciles reason with passion or healthy emotion, which, in correct harmony and concordance, leads to God as a *sine qua none* of the rational vision of truth. In addition, he explains that in order for the soul to be enlightened, it is necessary for it to go through a process of healing and to participate in the concurrence of divine grace. This is almost a Pentecostal reading given that Pentecostal theology holds that the believer who wants to achieve a level of illumination such that he accesses divine truths present in the biblical text must submit to a level of spiritual condition relative to that of the author of the text who was inspired by the Spirit.⁴² In addition, Vondey expresses that, for Pentecostals, sanctification is progressive, which is why an emphasis is placed on sanctification as a ritual practice, which is first and foremost an emphasis on the need to practice holiness.⁴³ This

³⁹ Duffield and Van Cleave, *Fundamentos de teología pentecostal*, 137.

⁴⁰ Vondey, *Teología Pentecostal*, 198.

⁴¹ Capanaga, *Notas de Soliloquios*, 450-51.

⁴² Álvarez, *Pasión por la Palabra*, 95.

⁴³ Vondey, *Teología Pentecostal*, 90-91.

practice enables the Pentecostal to maintain a healthy soul and to be attentive to the apprehension of *virtue*.

Illumination of the Spirit: Potentiation of the Agent Intellect

In order to properly explain the illumination of the Spirit, it is necessary to distinguish two aspects of the Augustinian proposal: the fact and the mode of illumination. As for the former, there is no discussion as such; however, about the second, it is abundant. For a contemporary Pentecostal proposal, it is necessary to eliminate certain extremes in the interpretation of the mode, e.g., that of the pure passivity of the mind in the intellectual act as if illumination consisted in a total presentation of concepts by God.⁴⁴ If this were so, then all activity would correspond to God in knowledge. However, from the Augustinian system, an intellectual activity proper to the subject, distinct from that of God, is admitted “because it has the power to generate his word and verify intuition. And as grace, being a superior principle of divine concurrence does not destroy the proper action of the human will or co-operation, so the illumination of God does not exclude the co-illumination of the creature.”⁴⁵

In this research, the paradigm that understands enlightenment as a repository of knowledge in the human mind without the participation of the subject’s will is discarded. Pentecostalism has handled this perspective, explaining the phenomenon in a reductionist way: it is understood that the Spirit deposits or reveals a “fresh” or new knowledge. This paradigm was born thanks to a brief reading of the Apostle Peter and will be developed later. On the other hand, lighting should not be understood as a pantheistic proposal from which every passive human subject is supposed as if God worked in us only by illumination. Augustine often points out that human beings have intelligence different from that of God.⁴⁶

However, the acquisition of wisdom is explained by the illumination of divine truth, that is, by a richer creative influence, which makes the human soul partake not only of temporal and spatial perfections, which are still subject to motion but also of the immutable perfection of truth itself. The Augustinian theory holds that all creatures are created lights that must be kindled at their primordial source, the word, and need the

⁴⁴ Capanaga, *Notas de Soliloquios*, 525.

⁴⁵ Capanaga, *Notas de Soliloquios*, 525.

⁴⁶ Manuel Martínez, “Introduction” to *El Maestro*, por San Agustín, Obras de San Agustín, bilingual edition (Madrid, Spain: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1963), 529-30.

light to shine. Reason, as light, has the same condition; it is not light by itself, it needs to be illuminated by the first Truth in order to arrive at wisdom and justice. The gospel of the apostle John indicates that it is the Spirit who has the function of guiding human understanding into all truth (John 16:13-15).

Fray Enrique Arenas explains that Augustine's Enlightenment points out that the agent intellect is like a light that participates in God thanks to which we know and elaborate concepts. Aristotle described the human intellect as follows:

On the one hand, the intellect is capable of making all things; on the other, the intellect is capable of doing all things similar to light . . . This intellect is separated, unmixed, impassive, an act by essence . . . The agent is superior to the patient . . . And because it is separate, it is only properly immortal and eternally impassive.⁴⁷

Thus, according to the Aristotelian and Augustinian proposal, the human intellect, as an exercise of reason, possesses a patient (potential) intellect and an agent intellect (as an act). The agent intellect can make all things into being because it abstracts, and the patient intellect receives the abstracted forms. So, enlightenment is a connection between the human and the divine, a divine participation of the agent intellect, which apprehends the phenomena and stores them in the patient intellect. This, in turn, empowers the agent intellect providing it with greater resources to understand. Therefore, enlightenment is an exercise that has more to do with the faculty of understanding and *seeing* as the Spirit does. That is, the agent intellect is the point of connection between the human and the divine.

In the Pentecostal perspective, since the human mind is distinct and separate from the mind of God, it requires apprehension in order to be empowered in its being in the world.⁴⁸ When Pentecostal theologians understand the will and the intellect as *imago Dei*, they are referring to the agent intellect: the ability to *understand*. In this sense, the human being understands as God, thanks to the *imago Dei*, but without the same patient intellect. God, in an act of grace, has enabled man to understand as He does. He has empowered him intellectually and volitionally to establish communication in both directions. On the other hand, the human being is inferior to God, in an epistemological sense, because of the limited patient intellect he possesses. On the other hand, the agent

⁴⁷ Leonardo Polo, "Intellecto Personal," *Sapientia* 75:246 (2019), 7-28.

⁴⁸ Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 104-107.

intellect is infinite, which is infinitely capable of apprehending phenomena.

For Vondey, the *imago Dei* in the human being enables his rationality and his ability to commune with his Creator as well as his personality in intellect, emotion, and will.⁴⁹ These characteristics are summed up in reason, a quality that Augustine describes as “the gaze of the soul.”⁵⁰ As we have pointed out, in Latin we say *adspectus animae ratio est*, where *adspectus* can be translated into two mutually supportive paths, namely: gaze and/or aspect. In the first sense, he specifies the dynamic character of the *gaze* as a faculty of reason. From this perspective, reason and soul are not identical; the soul includes reason. In the second sense, if *aspectus* is translated as “aspect,” then the soul shows itself as reason; that is, its aspect *is* reason. It does not follow from this translation that soul and reason are identical. Augustinian ontology holds that the soul is an essence created by God and immaterial and that, in his view, “it is a substance endowed with reason destined to govern the body.”⁵¹

Therefore, the gaze of the soul, as an action of the intellect as an agent to “know,” is a capacity made possible in human beings thanks to the *imago Dei*. From this Pentecostal anthropology, it can be deduced that spiritual practices that produce sanctification in the believer empower him for the illumination of the Spirit. This, however, is only a part of the exercise of reason for the Pentecostal is predisposed to the divine connection between the agent intellect and the Spirit, but the patient intellect, as the repository of the tacit knowledge of individual knowledge, must be strengthened for a better look at the soul, i.e., a higher degree of illumination.

Dynamics of the Spirit’s Illumination

First of all, the conditions necessary for the illumination of the Spirit must be clarified. In this research, two determining factors for illumination are basically interpreted. The first is the breadth of the patient’s intellect. Tacit and explicit knowledge is “stored” here. Therefore, these can be conscious or unconscious. Among some of the primary hallmarks of classical Pentecostalism is speaking in other tongues as the initial manifestation of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.⁵²

⁴⁹ Vondey, *Teología Pentecostal*, 136.

⁵⁰ Capanaga, *Notas de Soliloquio*, 192.

⁵¹ Capanaga, *Notas de Soliloquios*, 22, 448.

⁵² Álvarez, *Pasión por la Palabra*, 39.

This provokes a theological emphasis on experience, thus generating narrative experience as a possibility of Pentecostal epistemology.⁵³

Miguel Alvarez recognizes this paradigm and states that “some have characterized the Pentecostal movement as a faith based solely on ‘experience.’”⁵⁴ Thus, the knowledge generated from the experience of life in the Spirit is empirical and sensitive. It is intrinsically popular, imprecise, subjective, particular (since it responds to immediate needs), and without method. On the other hand, Rick D. Moore states that Pentecostals also observe an inseparable interrelationship between knowledge and the experience of life in the Spirit.⁵⁵

Following Moore’s idea, Pentecostals must elevate theological discourse so that knowledge comes from experience and methodical study. In this way, we will move from empirically sensitive knowledge to philosophically holistic knowledge. This is an excellent proposal. The latter is characterized by explaining the nature of phenomena, and it is critical and universal. In the holistic sense, it understands phenomena in their totality, i.e., it describes processes, interactions, and characteristics. This is the type of study proposed in this research. The phenomenon of illumination of the Spirit is described along with the process and factors involved in its manifestation.

Therefore, the Pentecostal believer must perfect and expand the tacit and explicit knowledge in his patient intellect to bring about a greater and better degree of enlightenment. It has been explained that the agent intellect uses the patient intellect as a resource to apprehend new content, i.e., both what a person knows (tacit knowledge) and what he knows he knows (explicit knowledge). The illumination of the Spirit, then, is proportional to the breadth of the patient intellect; that is, the degree of individual knowledge of a person. For example, Alvarez explains that if the Pentecostal makes use of the critical tools that allow the believer to evaluate Scripture objectively, he will perfect his interpretation of it.⁵⁶

The second determining factor that enables enlightenment is the connection between the agent intellect and the Spirit. This connection is increased by the intensification of the *imago Dei*.⁵⁷ Vondey explains that

⁵³ Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 96-104.

⁵⁴ Álvarez, *Pasión por la Palabra*, 123.

⁵⁵ Álvarez, *Pasión por la Palabra*, 123.

⁵⁶ Álvarez, *Pasión por la Palabra*, 122.

⁵⁷ See Vondey, *Teología Pentecostal*, 193-195.

this is accomplished through the filling of the Holy Spirit. This factor is important for accessing eternal truths in the biblical text that are only transmitted through direct contact with the author. For this reason, Álvarez points out that in interpreting Scripture, the illumination of the Holy Spirit is necessary.⁵⁸ Wesleyan Pentecostals, then, possess an important inclination to establish this connection with the Spirit since the doctrine of sanctification “holds that God removes the sinful nature, which originated with the fall of Adam, in a second work of grace other than conversion.”⁵⁹ In addition, the Pentecostal emphasis on holiness is manifested through rituals that seek to satisfy both the need for post-conversion sanctification and the possibility of the believer’s complete sanctification in this life.⁶⁰

Effect of Spirit Illumination

The final product of the illumination of the Spirit is presented as an effect since this process generates knowledge not only as a final product—what in Aristotelian terms would be called an *act*—but as an *activity* of the agent intellect. That is, enlightenment is an *activity* of the Spirit in connection with reason. The latter, being *the gaze* of the soul, is not static but dynamic. However, there are degrees or types of illumination ordered hierarchically according to the Augustinian theory of knowledge.⁶¹ These degrees come in three forms, namely: (1) Illumination by the natural light of reason, by which things are judged in order that scientific knowledge, naturally given by God, may be constituted; (2) Illumination of the light of the intellect by which the first intelligible truths are intuited, also naturally given by God; (3) Illumination by the grace of God, which is given to whomever he wills in order to gain access to supernatural truths. This illumination is supernatural.

The illumination of the natural light of reason allows us to understand that there is no contradiction between scientific knowledge and faith since all knowledge is possible thanks to the *imago Dei* in the human being. That is to say, although the scientist is far from God, it is this quality that empowers him as a rational and volitional being. In this sense, the fundamentalist quarrel against “secular” or scientific

⁵⁸ Álvarez, *Pasión por la Palabra*, 133.

⁵⁹ Vondey, *Teología Pentecostal*, 78.

⁶⁰ Vondey, *Teología Pentecostal*, 79.

⁶¹ See, Enrique Arenas, “Agustín: El deseo de saber y conocer,” *Reflexiones del Rector* 18 (2021): 524-526.

knowledge is absurd. There should be no such quarrel since all knowledge comes from a natural illumination of the human mind thanks to the divine grace of enabling the human being with the agent intellect that enables him to understand as God does.

The Illumination of the Light of Intelligence is also a natural ability provided by the *imago Dei* by which concepts such as salvation are understood since God “put into the human mind the notion of eternity” (Ecclesiastes 3:11). This illumination gives him the ability to understand this intelligible category. Also, the very idea of God is accessible “for what can be known about Him is evident to anyone, for He Himself has revealed it” (Romans 1:19). Likewise, the moral conscience, which is common to all mankind, is illuminated for even non-believers show by their conscience the moral law of which they participate through the *imago Dei* (Romans 2:15).

Finally, illumination by God’s grace is supernatural in character. This type of illumination allows access to eternal truths as cooperation between the human and divine intellect through the mediation of the Spirit. Pentecostals often refer to it in the interpretation of the biblical text as they hold that the word continues to reveal God’s will each day.⁶² However, as has been explained, subjecting the illumination of the Spirit to this single function or degree of illumination is a reductionist perspective of the phenomenon, which must be overcome with the proposed Pentecostal epistemology.

Conclusions

Since there are few epistemological contributions in Pentecostal theology, the best ones are inscribed in postmodern assumptions that provoke much controversy. Because of this, Latin American Pentecostalism has opted for superficial and reductionist epistemological proposals. For this reason, a proposal for a Latin American Pentecostal epistemology has been developed to explain the illumination of the Spirit. It is concluded that the illumination of the Spirit necessarily occurs on the epistemic assumptions of individual knowledge: by the activity of the agent intellect and the tacit and explicit knowledge of the patient intellect. That is, without individual knowledge, enlightenment is impossible.

At present, Pentecostalism must formalize further its theological contributions to move from the construction of epistemology from empirical-sensible knowledge to philosophical-holistic knowledge. This

⁶² Álvarez, *Pasión por la Palabra*, 58.

proposal seeks to respond to this need by taking up the Augustinian theory of knowledge. Although Augustine of Hippo was not a Pentecostal, he provides the epistemological elements to construct a Pentecostal proposal since what he understood as the action of the word is understood today as the action of the Spirit.

This research concludes that the illumination of the Spirit is a potentiation of the agent intellect through contact or connection with the Spirit. The human being possesses agent intellect thanks to the *imago Dei*; the former is inscribed in the latter. In this sense, human beings are enabled by God to reason and know as He does. The human being does not know the same as God; that is, he does not possess the same patient intellect, but he does participate intellectually as a divine agent through the *imago Dei*. In this sense, the first recommendation for greater and better illumination is to seek the filling of the Spirit since this allows for an intensification of the *imago Dei* and, therefore, a better ability to understand how God does it.

Second, it is recommended that Pentecostals break the paradigm of academic sloppiness to hone their individual knowledge. This will provide one with the epistemic assumptions that will help for greater and better illumination of the Spirit. This is evidenced in biblical characters such as Paul and Peter, who were learned men with an important filling of the Spirit, factors allowed them to understand and receive knowledge that no one had attained.

Finally, it is important to mention that, thanks to the *imago Dei*/agent intellect, human beings can understand, allowing them to do science, whether they seek God or not. There is a natural illumination of humanity by God since he has provided it with “reason,” and it makes for the possibility of great advances in knowledge. However, the eternal truths of Scripture are only shown by the illumination of the Spirit.

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The Baptism of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal Theology: A Critical Comparison between the Proposals of Frank Macchia and Wolfgang Vondey

Celso Miguel Antonio Carrillo

Abstract

In this article, the author compares some ideas posted in *Pentecostal Theology* by Wolfgang Vondey and *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* by Frank D. Macchia. The study examines the concepts of both authors concerning the baptism in the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. It looks at their teaching to academically explain the topic of initial evidence. Within classical Pentecostal groups, there are those whose classification depends on their interpretation of the initial evidence. These Pentecostals do not deny the importance of the initial evidence or its place in the charismatic work of the Spirit, but they reinterpret it differently as a sign, symbol, or sacrament. This way of understanding the evidence has made an interesting imprint on the current production of Pentecostal theology. Thus, the essay studies the ideas behind the nature of initial evidence in theology as presented by these two distinguished classical Pentecostal theologians, Macchia and Vondey. Subsequently, a position presented informed by both sources but differentiated in the Latin American context and scholarship he represents.

Keywords: baptism of the Spirit, initial evidence, supernatural gifts, classical Pentecostalism, Pentecostal theology, tongue speaking, ecumenical glossolalia

Introduction

The theological understanding of the baptism of the Spirit has been one of the most important issues of Pentecostal Christianity since its origins. Within Pentecostalism (i.e., charismatic movements, neo-Pentecostal currents, and classical Pentecostalism), in fact, their understanding establishes the definitive differentiation between its various alternatives. This is exactly what some think of the initial evidence of the baptism in the Spirit. Thus, in Wayne Grudem's famous debate on the validity of

the gifts of the Spirit, Douglas Oss, as a representative of classical Pentecostalism, states: “Classical Pentecostals maintain that the initial physical evidence of the baptism of the Spirit is speaking in tongues (if it does not produce a manifestation in tongues, there has been no baptism in the Spirit).”¹

I think, like Douglas Oss, that the differences within Pentecostalism, especially between classical Pentecostals and neo-Pentecostals, lie in the way they understand the initial experience of the baptism of the Spirit, or, more bluntly, the supernatural gifts. The great difference between Pentecostalism and evangelicalism lies mainly in their pneumatology. There is not a single group of classical Pentecostals within Pentecostalism, and they have a doctrinal way of distinguishing themselves. Oss, for example, separates Pentecostals from those of the Pentecostal Holiness Church tradition,² distinguishing them by the way sanctification is understood within the movements’ soteriological scheme.

Classical Pentecostal groups can be classified depending on their interpretation of the initial evidence for baptism. These Pentecostals do not deny the importance of the initial evidence or its place in the charismatic work of the Spirit, but they reinterpret it differently: as a sign, symbol, or sign. Their particular way of understanding the initial evidence makes an interesting imprint on their current production of Pentecostal theology. This essay will attempt to examine some ideas about the nature of initial evidence as developed in the theology of two of the most important classical Pentecostal theologians of the day, Frank Macchia and Wolfgang Vondey. Subsequently, I will establish my personal position informed by and differentiated from both sources.

The Initial Evidence in Frank Macchia’s Pentecostal Theology

Frank Macchia is a renowned Pentecostal theologian. He is considered a great exponent of classical Pentecostal theology. He has been consistently associated with the conservative wing of the movement, although his works seem to be more in the moderate block. Born in 1952 in the United States, the son of an Assemblies of God Pentecostal pastor, he has dedicated his life to the service of God. Among his degrees is his doctorate in Theology, obtained at the University of Basel,

¹ Douglas A. Oss, “A Pentecostal/Charismatic View,” in Stanley N. Gundry, and Wayne A. Grudem, eds., *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1996), 311-17.

² Oss, “A Pentecostal/Charismatic View,” 316.

Switzerland. Macchia identifies himself as an Assemblies of God minister. He works as a professor at Vanguard University in Costa Mesa, California, and as a visiting professor at multiple national and international universities and seminaries. Macchia is, in addition to being an excellent author and professor of theology, a Christian of solid witness and genuine charisma.

In general, Macchia holds to a classical theology of the baptism of the Spirit and speaking in tongues as a charismatic experience. He is aware of the historical position of speaking in tongues as initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.³ However, he clarifies, “Not all Pentecostals globally embrace the doctrine of speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism in the Spirit.”⁴ In fact, Macchia goes further to assert that “some Pentecostals and Charismatics now, however, see tongues as a singular gift not immediately associated with the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”⁵ In other words, he also recognizes other Pentecostal theologies where speaking in tongues is not exclusively associated with the baptism of the Spirit. However, Macchia only describes but does not validate these non-traditional positions of classical Pentecostalism.

It would be incorrect to say that Macchia holds a traditional theology of the “initial evidence” of the baptism of the Spirit. Already in his famous article, “Sighs Too Deep for Words: Towards a Theology of Glossolalia,” he articulated an original understanding of it. This text, in addition to earning him a place of recognition within the Pentecostal academy, attracted criticism. Despite this, a second text, “Groans too Deep for Words: Towards a Theology of Tongues as Initial Evidence,” made everything clearer and produced even more impact than the first.⁶ Here Macchia is quite clear with what he proposes: speaking in other languages is an initial experience in the baptism of the Spirit, the experience should be considered a “sign” rather than an “evidence,” and

³ Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 33-8.

⁴ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 33.

⁵ Frank D. Macchia, “Sighs too Deep for Words: Toward a Theology of Glossolalia,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1:1 (1992), 47-73.

⁶ Frank D. Macchia, “Groans too Deep for Words: Towards a Theology of Tongues as Initial Evidence,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 1:2 (1998), 149-73.

the emphasis should be on the theological (not legalistic) relationship between them.⁷

The first Pentecostal distinction about speaking in tongues in Macchia's pneumatology is his conviction that tongues occur initially at the baptism in the Holy Spirit. He regularly devotes himself to this subject, for example his article, in "The Question of Tongues as Initial Evidence," published in 1993 by the *JPT*.⁸ Here Macchia acknowledges that the most important and controversial belief in classical Pentecostal theology and spirituality is the doctrine of tongues as "initial evidence."⁹ Macchia assures that, although there is no absolute formalization of theology that supports the conviction of speaking in tongues as an initial experience of baptism, the truth is that there is a biblical and historical basis that allows us to understand the importance of this doctrine in classical Pentecostalism. He explains that "tongues themselves are a sign of the Spirit of God beyond the brakes of human manipulation."¹⁰ Macchia argues that tongues are a kind of first sacrament for Pentecostals, operating as the "new sign" of the Christian church.¹⁰

The other Pentecostal distinction in Macchia's pneumatology about speaking in tongues is his critical proposal to consider tongues as a sign rather than as evidence. He has been quite emphatic in assuring this perspective and, in fact, it was one of the early proposals of his work that made his way into the Pentecostal academic community. He says: "In my work on glossolalia, I suggested changing the term 'sign' (rather than 'evidence', which is not a biblical term) concerning tongues."¹¹ The article where he devoted himself extensively to the subject is the one previously mentioned: "Sighs, Too Deep for Words," and "Tongues as a Sign." In the latter, he clarifies that, although glossolalia is the initial sign of the baptism of the Spirit, it is not the only one, although it is especially appreciated by Pentecostals.

Glossolalia is not, of course, the only visible link between the experiences of the Spirit. There are other charismatic signs, such as healing, that serve as a way for Luke to document the freedom and power of the Spirit in and through the various testimonies of the church.

⁷ Macchia, "Sighs Too Deep for Words" and "Groans too Deep for Words."

⁸ Frank Macchia, "The Question of Tongues as Initial Evidence: A review of Initial Evidence," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 2:1 (1993), 117–24.

⁹ Macchia, "The Question of Tongues as Initial Evidence," 117.

¹⁰ Macchia, "The Question of Tongues as Initial Evidence," 123.

¹¹ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 39.

Pentecostals, however, give tongues a primacy among the charismatic signs that signify the empowerment of the Spirit.¹²

Finally, Macchia has also proposed that speaking in other languages should be understood much better from a theological perspective than from a religious perspective, which tends to be legalistic. Macchia states, “In my work on glossolalia, I suggested switching to the term ‘sign’ (rather than ‘evidence’, which is not a biblical term) concerning languages and focusing on the theological rather than on a legalistic connection between them.”¹³ Of the work to which Macchia refers in this last statement is his article “Tongues as a Sign.” In it, Macchia proposes that while the church has formulated that speaking in other languages is a “legal” requirement that confirms the outpouring of the Spirit, the truth is that biblical theology and historical revision lead us to think more about the theological importance of tongues. Some time ago William and Robert Menzies highlighted the relevance of Macchia’s point of view on this. In fact, both the Menzies and Macchia have made a splendid synthesis of the theological importance for speaking in other languages. They highlight three significant areas:

- Missiological: It is important that “tongues” accompanies and is a decisive “sign” of God’s initiative to break down racial and economic barriers.
- Eschatological: The manifestation of tongues reminds us that we, like those of that first Pentecost, live in the “last days,” the period of deliverance and God’s grace that immediately precede the Day of the Lord (Acts 2:17), and that God has called us to be part of his glorious plan of salvation.
- Ecclesiology: Tongues have been described as a Pentecostal “sacrament” (a visible sign of a spiritual reality), but one that is not tied to the clergy or an institution, and therefore has a powerful democratizing effect on the life of the church. Is it pure coincidence that speaking in tongues has often accompanied a renewed vision for ministering among the secular?¹⁴

¹² Frank D. Macchia, “Tongues as a Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience,” *Pneuma* 15:1 (1993), 66.

¹³ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 39.

¹⁴ William Menzies, and Robert Menzies, *Spirit and Power: Foundations of a Pentecostal Experience* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 121-32.

The Initial Evidence in Wolfgang Vondey's Pentecostal Theology

Wolfgang Vondey has garnered remarkable attention lately. He is an emerging classical Pentecostal theologian. Regarded by his peers as one of the most brilliant theologians today, Vondey has devoted himself to the systematic study of the Pentecostal faith. His books, specifically *Pentecostal Theology*, have been received with great enthusiasm by Latino readers. This is not surprising since Vondey is one of the most respected experts on Pentecostalism at present. Born in Germany in 1967, he has studied in different schools that have provided him with an enriched vision of the theological world. Among his many degrees is his Ph.D. in Theology and Ethics from Marquette University. Vondey currently holds the chair of Christian Theology and is the director of the Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies at the University of Birmingham, a position once also held by Walter Hollenweger.

Vondey maintains views very similar to classical Pentecostalism, particularly classical full-gospel or five-fold Pentecostalism.¹⁵ In fact, he describes himself as “a classically trained systematic theologian with a doctorate in the field of systematic theology and ethics.” Vondey’s overall proposal attempts to present a constructive version of traditional Pentecostalism while analyzing the progress of global Pentecostalism. He asserts that we should not think narrowly of Pentecostalism as if there were only one class, but that we should consider it more broadly, without diluting its identity. Hence his controversial book, *Beyond Pentecostalism*, and *Pentecostal Theology*,¹⁶ published in Spanish in 2019 by Kerygma Publications.¹⁷

Now, it would be wrong to think that Vondey holds a classical view of speaking in other languages as initial evidence of pneuma baptism. To begin with, he claims that he does not have a particular interest in the subject. To continue, Vondey’s ecumenical aspirations limit him from defending radical convictions on issues not “crucial” to global Pentecostalism. All in all, Vondey has talked about tongues in all his

¹⁵ According to Bryan Spinks, Vondey “writes from the Pentecostal tradition of the Church of God.” See, Bryan Spinks, *Do This in Remembrance of Me: The Eucharist from the Early Church to the Present Day* (London: SCM Press, 2013), 426.

¹⁶ Wolfgang Vondey, *Beyond Pentecostalism: The Crisis of Global Christianity and the Renewal of the Theological Agenda* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 78-86.

¹⁷ Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology: Living the Full Gospel* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

major books and has devoted considerable parts of his articles and essays to delving a little deeper into the topic. Of special interest is his book, *A Guide for the Perplexed*,¹⁸ his essay, “Glossolalia,” found in the *Global Dictionary of Theology*,¹⁹ and the article, “Pentecostalism as a Theological Tradition,” published in 2020.²⁰

We can begin by understanding Vondey’s position on the initial evidence in *Beyond Pentecostalism*, his first controversial book to gain international attention. In this, he demonstrates sufficient awareness of the doctrine of glossolalia and of the initial evidence. For Vondey, this is one of the most separatist doctrines of classical Pentecostalism. He opines:

The adoption of the doctrine of the baptism of the Spirit solidified glossolalia as the first expression of the theological identity of the revival movement. Internal debates were often dominated by the question of the primacy of glossolalia, expressed in the performative language of the initial evidence. On a large scale, however, the whole debate also affected ecumenical perception and the integration of Pentecostalism into the theological landscape in the early twentieth century.²¹

He also describes that this conviction is directly associated with classical Pentecostalism. And, although he does not explicitly state it, he does agree with it, and he does not seem to contradict it either.

In a broader work directly focused on glossolalia,²² Vondey is more open to offering a description expressing his own theology. He begins by explaining that glossolalia is not really a practice exclusive to Pentecostalism, but something also observable in other religions and settings. However, when it comes to the Pentecostal understanding of it, we cannot think centrally of it. In fact, Vondey supports that there are different “Pentecostal” perspectives on this. He claims that there is an ecumenical reception of glossolalia in the great Christian traditions such as Catholicism and Lutheranism.²³ Again, Vondey does not commit to any particular view of the initial evidence because, as said earlier, his

¹⁸ Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostalism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013).

¹⁹ Vondey, “Glossolalia.”

²⁰ Wolfgang Vondey, “Pentecostalism as a Theological Tradition,” *Pneuma* 42:3-4 (2020), 521-535.

²¹ Vondey, *Beyond Pentecostalism*, 81.

²² Vondey, “Glossolalia.”

²³ Vondey, “Glossolalia,” 626.

position on the matter is precisely observational and self-servingly ecumenical.

This doesn't mean that Vondey doesn't develop a particular posture on speaking in other languages. We can easily understand from his many written works that he considers the gift and charismatic experience of speaking in other languages as part of the baptism of the Spirit and valid. He considers it a cardinal doctrine for classical Pentecostalism and held extensively within global Pentecostalism. However, Vondey notes that tongues are not the only manifestation on which one should focus. Rather, Vondey proposes a renewed vision of speaking in other languages calling for a terminological reformulation of "evidence" and a theological resignification of glossolalia. This is what he asserts in *Pentecostal Theology*: "As a physical manifestation and sign, speaking in other tongues cannot be considered a sacrament in itself, but must be seen as the visible and audible understanding of sacramental practice, which is the baptism in the Holy Spirit."²⁴

A Concluding Proposal between the Positions of Macchia and Vondey

I have spoken succinctly about Frank Macchia's and Wolfgang Vondey's views on speaking in tongues as initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It can be said with certainty that in general, both authors have a fairly contiguous theology on glossolalia. Even from his ecumenical standpoint, Vondey believes that there is a way in which speaking in tongues can be understood as initial evidence of the baptism in the Spirit.²⁵ And even Macchia, from his moderate position, considers the possibility of building a global Pentecostalism.²⁶ Specifically, both thinkers believe in glossolalia as an initial experience; both men think of this experience as a "sign" rather than "evidence"; and both believe that we need to think more holistically about this supernatural gift.

It is not my claim that the two scholars are indistinguishable in their views. I would say that they are rather "compensatory" or complementary, as they say. For example, although both believe that speaking in tongues is an initial manifestation of baptism for classical Pentecostalism, only Macchia seems to be intellectually committed to it. And, although both believe that we should use other terminology to refer to this manifestation, only Macchia directly proposes a term while

²⁴ Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology*, 107.

²⁵ Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology*, 106.

²⁶ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 180-191.

Vondey seems to oscillate between terms ranging from sign to sacramental sign. Finally, although both propose that we must overcome the traditional religious paradigms of speaking in other languages, it is Vondey who offers a theological way to do so while Macchia is more interested in explaining the shortcomings in this regard. In other words, while Macchia tells us that we should abandon that way of thinking, Vondey clarifies for us the way of thinking from which one should emigrate.

Personally, I tend to think as Macchia does about glossolalia, although it seems to me that Vondey's proposal is more avant-garde. To begin with, I am almost convinced that speaking in other tongues should be the initial "manifestation" of the baptism in the Spirit. I base this on the biblical evidence that we can establish through the paradigmatic hermeneutics expounded by Roger Stronstad and Bill Menzies from the book of Acts. Furthermore, I believe that this doctrine has an apologetic function in the historical development of Western Pentecostalism. In the Church of God, for example (and I also understand that the same thing happened in the Assemblies of God), speaking in tongues was a way of "seeing" what we might consider the baptism of the Spirit which was distinct from other charismatic manifestations.

I also agree that the usual terminology of "evidence" is not exactly accurate regarding this manifestation. In this sense, I think Macchia is right in assessing the flaws of the term, however, it seems that his argument about the term not being biblical is weak. Vondey rightly observes that this manifestation is not theologically linked to "evidence" but rather has another purpose.

Finally, one needs to think about the manifestation of tongues as something more than a legal or denominational establishment. It seems to be academic dishonesty to institutionally reduce an experience as rich as the baptism of the Spirit to the study of some associated sign or evidence. I am convinced that the denominational canons regarding speaking in other languages severely limit one's understanding of this unique activity of the Holy Spirit. I must admit that I have thought little about the extensions of glossolalia beyond those mentioned above. So far, I have dedicated myself to grounding my conviction about this gift and clarifying my emerging doubts as they arise. This comparative reading has invited me to dedicate some of my studies to understanding the horizons of the subject. So far, though, I am sure that Vondey and Macchia are right about the mistakes the Pentecostal Church has made in thinking legalistically about the gift of speaking in other tongues.

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The Politics of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and Structural Change

Dario Lopez Rodriguez

Abstract

Using the Lucan perspective of life in the Spirit as the basis for our reflection, the study examines the relationship between Pentecostalism and the changing of mental, social, and cultural structures. It begins by briefly describing the social, political, and cultural structures in which the community of disciples of Jesus of Nazareth emerged. Then, it explores the social composition of the community of disciples and how they challenged the patriarchal and pyramidal society of their time with their practice of including those who were socially and culturally marginalized. Then, the study continues with an analysis of the liberating dimension of the community of Jesus in a reality in which there were many forms of oppression and injustice, veiled or open, and, finally, the author elaborates on some lessons from the politics of the Spirit for today that are expressed in a proposal for citizen action that accounts for a more holistic understanding of life in the Spirit.

Keywords: liberating Spirit, faith and politics, social compassion, public theology, pentecostal ecumenism, freedom, liberating mission, life in the Spirit

Introduction

For decades and in various realities, Pentecostalism has presented itself as an apolitical religious movement. Most pastors and members of the Pentecostal community today still view everything related to the social and political terrain with a certain suspicion. They consider social and political action an earthly, mundane, transient matter, alien to life in the Spirit, and unbecoming for believers who need only devote themselves to the salvation of souls. Yet, despite their traditional apolitical stance, what many pastors and members of Pentecostal churches have a hard time accepting is that, in essence, no one is apolitical. This is because having an apolitical position is a political position, the taking of a position in favor of certain public issues. If much of Pentecostalism was apolitical and continues to be so, and this implies a lack of concern and

passivity in the face of earthly affairs, then how can one explain the anti-communist, anti-ecumenical, and pro-Zionist position that for years was part of the theological discourse and mission practice of the vast majority of the Pentecostal movement? How can one explain the visible or disguised support that Pentecostal church leaders gave to military governments, human rights-violating regimes, and corrupt authorities?

The underlying problem of a large sector of the Pentecostal movement lies not only in the double discourse, on the one hand, its self-image as an apolitical religious sector and, on the other, its militant anti-communism and anti-ecumenism, which already expresses a clear political-religious position. The underlying problem is in their understanding of life in the Spirit. Their understanding of life in the Spirit has traditionally been limited to the salvation of disembodied souls disconnected from the reality of material misery and social and political oppression in which thousands of human beings find themselves; the denunciation of individual sins (drunkenness, adultery, an lying), without any reference to structural sins (injustice, exploitation, and oppression); and confinement of faith to the private sphere of life, giving the impression that social and political issues such as institutionalized violence and material poverty in which thousands of people live (among them, many Pentecostal believers) matter little or nothing. Then, a theological approach is required closer to the biblical understanding of life in the Spirit so as not to make a dichotomy of human life, separating the sacred from the profane, the religious from the secular, and the private from the public.

Using the Lucan perspective of life in the Spirit as the basis for this reflection, we will examine the relationship between Pentecostalism and changing mental, social, and cultural structures. We will begin by briefly describing the social, political, and cultural structures within which the community of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth emerged. We will then examine the social composition of the community of disciples and note how they challenged the patriarchal and pyramidal society of their time with their practice of including those who were socially and culturally marginalized. We will continue with an analysis of the liberating dimension of the community of Jesus in a reality in which there were many forms of oppression and injustice, veiled or open. And finally, we will think about the lessons of the politics of the Spirit for our day that are expressed in a proposal for citizen action that accounts for a more integral understanding of life in the Spirit.

Patriarchal Society

Jesus responded to the emissaries of John the Baptist (Lk 7:22) with practical gestures of valuing the human dignity of the disposable social groups in the society of his time and with words that gave an account of his liberating mission in favor of it. In addition to describing the reality of exclusion and marginalization of these people, he gave a direct critique of the patriarchal mentality and socially accepted practices of exclusion in the Jewish cultural world of the first century. The patriarchal society in which Jesus lived and fulfilled his liberating mission, as was the case in the human societies of Asia Minor in the first century, had specific characteristics:

As in the vast majority of human societies, in Asia Minor too, society was pyramidal: at the top of the pyramid, the aristocracy, and at the broad base, the whole of the “proletariat”; the honorable and the humble.¹

In these societies:

The family structure was distinctly patriarchal: the *pater familias* was the highest authority, and all members of the household took their place in relation to him. The virtue par excellence in the domestic sphere was submission, absolute obedience to the superior members of the family.²

Within that patriarchal and pyramidal world, women had many disadvantages and were completely helpless:

It is no mystery that women in antiquity in general (and in many places today) occupied a socially subordinate, politically null, and economically relative position . . . In a patriarchal and sexist society like that, it was men who dictated the behavior that women should have and the limits of their personal expansion. It was understood that her sphere of action was the house and that she should be occupied with domestic chores, at the service of the men of the family or the house, if not confined to the home. Her greatest virtue was total submission. They were expected to be “modest” and to be secluded in their own world and in the service of men.³

¹ Eduardo Arens, *Asía Menor en tiempos de Pablo, Lucas y Juan: Aspectos Sociales y Económicos para la Comprensión del Nuevo Testamento* (Córdoba, Argentina: Ediciones El Almendro, 1995), 53.

² Arens, *Asía Menor en tiempos de Pablo*, 85.

³ Arens, *Asía Menor en tiempos de Pablo*, 86.

In light of this reality, and against the backdrop of this situation of subordination and invisibility of women, it is possible to understand why, according to the testimony of the four Gospels, women and children were usually not counted or considered (Matt 14:21; Mark 6:44; Lk 9:14; Jn 6:10). And it is understandable why Jesus, unlike what happened in the prevailing society and against the tide of its practices of exclusion and marginalization, he valued, dignified, and treated women in a radically different way, making them visible, and publicly accepting them as members of the alternative community he formed as he toured the cities and villages of the marginal province of Galilee (Lk 8:1-3). In this way, within the patriarchal society of the first century, Jesus was forging a new society in which all people had a place, thus breaking with mental, social, cultural, and religious structures that, in practice, had confined large groups of people, such as women, Samaritans, and others, to the attic of human relationships. This included the sick of all kinds, children, and tax collectors. What, then, was Jesus' social and political proposal in that reality in which women were made invisible along with other marginalized and excluded social sectors such as tax collectors? How did he break away from the predominant social, cultural, and religious categories of his time?

A New Society

Jesus of Nazareth, according to the testimony of the Synoptic Gospels, began to publicly proclaim the good news of God's kingdom in the despised region of Galilee (Matt 4:23; Mark 1:14-15; Lk 4:14-20). In this way, from an obscure corner of the Roman empire of the first century, a new reality began to be forged that went against the current of the socially accepted practices of marginalization and exclusion in the first century:

Jesus, the Galilean . . . announces its message from insignificance and marginality. For the poor and despised comes the word of universal love from the God of Jesus Christ. This mission leads him to confrontation with the great members of his people who reside in Judea, specifically in Jerusalem.⁴

This explains why the social composition of Jesus' movement was basically consisted of the Galilean popular sectors:

⁴ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *El Dios de la Vida* (Lima, Perú: Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones-Instituto Bartolomé de las Casas, 2004), 197.

Jesus' movement was originally anchored in the countryside . . . and it was a Galilean movement (Mk 14:70; 1:11; 2:7). The synoptic tradition is located in small, often anonymous places in Galilee. [It] silences the greater places such as Sepphoris, Tiberias, Qanah, Jotapata or Giscala . . . Originally, the movement [of Jesus] was confined to the countryside. We hear a lot about peasants, fishermen, vinedressers and shepherds and very little about artisans and merchants. Educated people are also rare.⁵

More precisely, it is pointed out that:

Geographically, Jesus' followers all originally came from Galilee, particularly from the northern shore of Lake Gennesaret (Capernaum/Bethsaida). Most of his disciples also lived there.⁶

Scholars of the New Testament, particularly of the social world of the first century, point out that “the vast majority of Jesus’ followers came from the rural lower stratum. Jesus Himself was a *tekon*,”⁷ a construction craftsman, a profession that indicates that Jesus “must be placed in the lower stratum” of the society of his time “among the relatively poor people (*penetes*, a subsistence existence), although he does not [fit] . . . among the poor (*ptochoi*, those who had to beg to survive).”⁸

To what social sectors was Jesus’ liberating mission primarily oriented, and who were his first disciples in the marginal and despised region of Galilee? The Synoptic Gospels unanimously record that it was the lowest social sectors that were put aside, those who counted for nothing, those despised and ignored at that time: women, sick people of all kinds, Samaritans, and tax collectors. They were the germ of the new society, the first fruits of the alternative society that Jesus was structuring in clear opposition to the patriarchal and pyramidal society.

⁵ Gerd Theissen, *Sociología del Movimiento de Jesús: el Nacimiento del Cristianismo Primitivo* (Santander, España: Editorial Sal Terrae, 1976), 47-48.

⁶ E. W. Stegemann, and W. Stegemann, *Historia Social del Cristianismo Primitivo: Los Inicios en el judaísmo y las Comunidades Cristianas en el Mundo Mediterráneo* (Estella, Navarra: Verbo Divino, 2001), 275.

⁷ El término *tekon* podría indicar simplemente que era un artesano de la construcción: *albañil, carpintero, carretero y ebanista al mismo tiempo*. Véase, Stegemann and Stegemann, *Social History of Early Christianity*, 280.

⁸ La diferencia entre *penes* y *ptochoi* en el primer siglo, según un autor, era la siguiente: *penes* era ‘todo aquél que no poseía suficientes recursos propios como para poder vivir *sin tener* que trabajar’ y *ptochoi* era ‘todo el que no podía sobrevivir sin *mendigar*’. Véase, Arens, *Asia Menor en tiempos de Pablo*, 146.

Of the social origin of the tax collectors and the women who followed Jesus, it is stated:

The call of a publican, with such a bad reputation, as well as the social contacts of the followers of Jesus with people of this type, are certainly very significant indications of their economic and social status. The women of Jesus' retinue mentioned by Mark must also have belonged to the lower stratum.⁹

Tax collectors, considered traitors to their fellow Jews because of their status as agents in the service of the Roman Empire, are mentioned in the Gospels along with prostitutes (Matt 21:31), pagans (Matt 18:17), and sinners (Mark 2:16f; Lk 15:1), thus emphasizing their belonging to the lowest and most despised social stratum. Of these unrepresentable characters, according to the current opinion of those years, it is said that:

They were hated, not only because they demanded more than was necessary, but also because they were regarded as collaborators of foreign power. The Jesus movement was viewed with suspicion and contempt by "decent" Jews, precisely because it also included such types.¹⁰

Of the presence of women in the Jesus movement, a practice uncommon in first-century Jewish society that even John in his Gospel records (Jn 4:27),¹¹ and of other social sectors considered less important, it indicates that:

More than any other evangelist, Luke emphasizes Jesus' association and dealings with women, thus breaking down—to everyone's astonishment—a social and religious barrier imposed by the patriarchal society of his day. The Lucan Jesus is open to those who *officially* remain on the sidelines, such as the Gentile centurion . . . and the

⁹ Stegemann and Stegemann, *Historia Social del Cristianismo Primitivo*, 277.

¹⁰ Giuseppe Segalla, *Panorama del Nuevo Testamento* (Estella, Navarra: Verbo Divino, 1989), 18.

¹¹ In "the East, women do not participate in *public life*; this is also true with regard to the Judaism of Jesus' time, and in any case with regard to families faithful to the law." See, Joachim Jeremías, *Jerusalén en tiempos de Jesús: Estudio Económico y Social del Mundo del Nuevo Testamento* (Madrid, España: Ediciones Cristiandad, 2000), 449.

Samaritans . . . Jesus reaches out to the lepers . . . and concern for the poor is a constant theme of his preaching.¹²

And it is said that in the patriarchal society of the first century:

The very fact that there were women collaborating with Jesus shows the originality of his attitude. This only fueled the prejudice and hostility of those who felt questioned by the ministry of the preacher from Galilee.¹³

All this information about the new society that Jesus was forging, constituted mostly and mainly by those who were on the margins of official society and in the attic of social, including cultural and religious relations, point out that it was a break with the mental and human relationship patterns that objectified people. Jesus thus introduces and inaugurates a new reality that questioned the existing reality. From the forger of this new reality, a new society in which all those who were treated as disposable, as non-persons, and as useless were equalized. It is stated that:

Jesus, in contrast to all the Palestinian groups of the time and in particular to the Pharisees, addressed the most marginalized categories from the socio-religious point of view: the tax collectors, the sinners, the “people of the land,” the people of the villages scattered throughout the fertile plain of Galilee. Even the pagans, perhaps proselytes, or at least “God-fearing,” were the object of his help and praise. In this behavior of Jesus, one could perhaps already glimpse that openness to the universal mission to which the early Church was to be oriented.¹⁴

Thus, the two transversal axes of the Good News of the Kingdom of God emerge clearly: the gratuitousness and impartiality of God’s love. It is gratuitousness and impartiality that make it possible for those on the margins, the ignored of the world, to be the first recipients of the good news of the Messiah’s coming into the world (Lk 1:39-56; 2:8-20, 25-32, 36-38), the first to hear the Messiah’s liberating message, and the first to join the new society that he was ushering in and inaugurating in human history (Matt 4:17-22; Mark 1:16-20). They were the focus of his programmatic message in the synagogue of Nazareth (Lk 4:16-20) and

¹² Donald Senior, “Los Fundamentos de la Misión en el Nuevo Testamento,” in Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmueller, eds., *Biblia y Misión: Fundamentos Bíblicos de la Misión* (Estella, Navarra: Verbo Divino, 1985), 188-422.

¹³ Gutiérrez, *El Dios de la Vida*, 317.

¹⁴ Segalla, *Panorama del Nuevo Testamento*, 111.

the beneficiaries of his liberating actions when he answered the question of John the Baptist's emissaries (Lk 7:18-22). This new society, structured in a completely radical way to the structure of the surrounding society, is defined in the following terms:

The community at the table with Jesus means something more: it is the announcement that the time of salvation has already arrived. The amazing thing is that among the diners in God's family are sinners and tax collectors. The peoples of the East, for whom symbolic action has a much greater significance than for us, immediately understood that the admission of religiously and morally excluded persons to the community at the table with Jesus meant the offering of salvation to sinners and the granting of forgiveness. It is only on the basis of this conception that we can understand Zacchaeus' boundless gratitude when Jesus enters his house, the house of a hated tax collector (Lk 19:1-10), and only in this way can we also understand the passionate protest of the Pharisees, whose meaning is an invitation to the disciples to separate themselves from a man who has relations with ungodly friends (Mk 2:16; Lk 15:2; cf. Lk 19:7). The message of Jesus, who announces the God who wants to relate to sinners, found its clearest but also most shocking expression in the community at table with the despised.¹⁵

But it must also be pointed out that, although social sectors considered to be of lesser value such as women and the sick, found a place in this new reality; Antagonistic political sectors, such as the tax collectors, the zealots, and the hitmen, also found a place. With regard to the situation of women and the liberating action of Jesus on their behalf, it is stated concerning Jesus:

He is not content to place woman in a higher rank than that in which she had been placed by custom; as Savior sent to all (Lk 7:36-50), he places her before God on an equal footing with man (Mt 21:31-32).¹⁶

Regarding the presence of "unpresentable" individuals in the Jesus movement, such as zealots and hitmen, it is stated:

Among the twelve, there is surely one, Simon the Zealot, who had been a member of the Zealot party before he became a disciple of Jesus. Elsewhere, I have shown that perhaps Peter, and almost certainly Judas

¹⁵ Jeremías, *Jerusalén en tiempos de Jesús*, 262.

¹⁶ Jeremías, *Jerusalén en tiempos de Jesús*, 468.

Iscariot (whose nickname seems to contain the appellation *sicarius* [assassin]) seem to have been ancient Zealots.¹⁷

Social, cultural, religious, and political differences were then not an insurmountable problem for Jesus, when he introduced and inaugurated into the society of his time a community of disciples whose social composition differed markedly from the socially accepted criteria in the Jewish world of the first century. Women, tax collectors, zealots, Samaritans, among others, found in the community of Jesus a space for life and social relations of justice based on other evaluation criteria completely different from those they were used to:

The important thing is that in a society characterized by very stable family ties with religious roots, Jesus gives rise to a community of voluntary commitment, ready because of his call to take upon himself the hostility of society . . . What matters is the quality of life to which the disciple is called. The answer is that to be a disciple it is necessary to share the lifestyle whose culmination is the cross . . . There are in the community of disciples those sociological signs characteristic of those who set out to change society: a visible structure of fellowship, a sober decision that guarantees that the cost of commitment has been consciously accepted, and a clearly defined stimulus of life, distinct from the rest of the people.¹⁸

Were there not people linked to the wealthy, social sectors in the community of Jesus? The Gospels record the presence of people such as Joseph of Arimathea (Matt 27:57-60; Lk 23:50-53; Jn 19:38), Nicodemus (Jn. 19:39), and the women who followed Jesus and served him with their goods (Lk. 8:3) as followers or sympathizers of the Jesus movement. The same thing happened when the good news of salvation crossed various geographical, social, cultural, religious, and linguistic boundaries, settling among communities of disciples outside the Jewish world. People like Lydia (Acts 16:14-15), the “noble women” of Thessalonica (Acts 17:4), and the “Greek women of distinction” of Berea (Acts 17:12) attest to this reality. More particularly, with regard to the visible presence of women in the Jesus movement and in the nascent Christian community, it is specified that:

¹⁷ Oscar Cullmann, *The State in the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 20-21.

¹⁸ John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit agnus noster* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 38-40.

A glance at the book of Acts will confirm this impression as to the important role played by women in spreading the gospel: Dorcas, Priscilla, the four prophetess daughters of Philip, whose fame spread in the second century, the women of the upper class of Berea and Thessalonica, and others. The Epistles place us in front of a deaconess [Phoebe], and possibly a woman apostle [Junias]. Eight of the twenty-six persons mentioned in the salutations of Romans 16 are women, and the rivalries among Christian evangelical workers are censured in Philippians 4. The role played by women is all the more remarkable when one considers that both Jewish and pagan circles were largely a male world.¹⁹

From this commentary it can be deduced that the social composition of the nascent Christian community, when it crossed other cultural boundaries, had a notorious female presence and a social and cultural diversity that contrasted markedly with the exclusionary pattern of the surrounding society. Thus, for example, itinerant Christian missionaries, all of them laymen, came from different places and backgrounds such as Sopater of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus (Acts 20:4). This reality explains why it is claimed that from its beginning, “Christianity was a secular movement, and continued to be so for a remarkably long time” (Green 1979:27). And, in its process of missionary expansion, communities of disciples were formed, such as the one in the city of Corinth, which, according to the apostle Paul, had a diverse social composition (1 Cor 1:26-28). The community of disciples in the city of Philippi also had a diverse social composition for among the first disciples were the merchant Lydia, the girl who had a spirit of divination, and the jailer of the city (Acts 16:11-34). And it seems that this was also the case in other parts of the Roman Empire, if we consider what the apostle Paul expresses in his letters to the Galatians (Gal. 3:27-28) and to the Colossians (Col. 3:9-11). What, then, was the social composition of the Pauline communities? Of the Pauline communities it is specified that:

It is probable that some members of the Pauline communities were therefore relatively well-off and perhaps should be placed in the group of wealthy people in their city, but they certainly lacked the decisive features of belonging to the upper stratum (nobility of blood, political power, clear indications of possession of great wealth). As for the

¹⁹ Michael Green, *Evangelization in the Early Church: The Evangelists, the Motivations, the Strategy, and the Methods* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 32-33.

Pauline communities in general, in spite of all the differences between and within the various communities in which relatively well-to-do people and small artisans, merchants, and slaves were paired together, most of their members belonged to the lower stratum.²⁰

The construction of this new reality, which contrasted and constituted a direct critique of the prevailing society, implied a clear and open break with the mental structures, and private and public conduct socially accepted and considered legal, in the first century. The break with the values and practices of the patriarchal and pyramidal society of the first century led, in the long run, to a growing conflict with the surrounding society as can be seen in the record of the missionary advance of the community of disciples according to the testimony of Acts of the Apostles. The conflict resulted in the death of Stephen (Acts 7), the forced exile of the Hellenistic disciples (Acts 8:1-8), the death of James (Acts 12:1-2), and, after several critical situations (Acts 14:8-20; 16:11-40; 17:1-8), the subsequent arrest and imprisonment of Paul of Tarsus (Acts 21:1-28:31). The break with mental and structural patterns of oppression is notably highlighted in the case of Philemon, when the apostle Paul asks him to treat the slave Onesimus as his brother. Paul's request reminds him that the Christian practice of love of one's neighbor requires going against the grain of the practices of oppression, exploitation, and exclusion that were socially accepted and considered legitimate in the human societies of the first century.

What, then, was the policy of the Spirit in the whole process of initiating, expanding, and consolidating the new society that Jesus of Nazareth inaugurated and installed in the Jewish world of the first century and that was subsequently established in the non-Jewish world? An examination of the testimony of the New Testament in the light of its cultural-historical context shows that the policy of the Spirit was to go against the grain of patriarchal society forging a society in which differences disappeared and all were equalized. It was to build a new mental structure and weave new social relationships. It was to radically change the mental pattern of racial, religious, and cultural superiority, to establish a new reality embedded in the surrounding society in which male and female, Jew and Gentile, and Greek and non-Greek had the same value, the same dignity, and the same opportunities. Jesus created a society of equals in which the human people were valuable, not so much

²⁰ E. W. Stegemann, and W. Stegemann, *La Religión de los Primeros Cristianos: Una Teoría del Cristianismo Primitivo* (Salamanca, España: Ediciones Sígueme, 2010), 402.

because of the material possessions they had or because of their racial origin, but because of their status as those who bore the image of God.

A final question remains to be answered: what are the lessons to be drawn from all this reflection for contemporary communities of disciples? What are the social, cultural, and religious structures that need to be eradicated or radically transformed because they collide head-on with the politics of the Spirit and with the kingdom of Jesus of Nazareth? Although in the next section we will answer these questions directly, we nevertheless stress that closed and vertical mental structures that express themselves in different forms and levels of social, cultural, and religious oppression have to be confronted, eradicated, and transformed if we want to build a different reality in which all people are equal. We have the same opportunities. The value of others does not depend on the material goods they possess, their location in the social structure, their cultural background, or the color of their skin.

The *Ekklesia* in the *Polis*

The *ekklelesia*, which Jesus of Nazareth began to forge and in which all those who were marginalized by the patriarchal and pyramidal society of the first century had a place where they were accommodated, introduced a new form of social relations radically different from the one that prevailed at that time. In the *ekklelesia* or community of Jesus of Nazareth, social relations were horizontal. Human beings who in the pyramidal society had no possibility of walking together in public, sitting at the same table as equals, or identifying themselves as members of the same community, found in the community of Jesus a space of integration in which they were valued and treated as equals despite the differences that separated them.²¹ Zealots and tax collectors walked together, Samaritans and Jews were treated as equals, women and men identified themselves in public as members of the same society; that is, what was impossible in the pyramidal society of the first century, Jesus of Nazareth made a visible reality and that this new reality, step by step, transformed the structures of oppression that had turned a bulk of the human population into simple objects and disposable things.

In the light of the experience and concrete practice of the community of Jesus of Nazareth, the *ekklelesia* (church) in the *polis* (city), if it wants to be faithful to its historical call and vocation, cannot accept as valid and legitimate the various forms of social, cultural, and religious oppression

²¹ Joachim Jeremías, *Abba: El Mensaje Central del Nuevo Testamento* (Salamanca, España: Ediciones Sígueme, 1981), 42-44.

that are the visible expression of a closed mentality that is vertical and authoritarian. The politics of the Spirit move in another direction, clash head-on with all oppression that objectifies human beings, and produce a new humanity in which the discriminatory practices and social and cultural prejudices that separate human beings disappear. The politics of the Spirit produce new social relations, unite those who are separated by human societies, and valorize those who are ignored and treated as mere statistical figures.

The *ekklesia* as the people of God, the body of Christ, and the community of the Holy Spirit, has a diverse social composition, is located in a concrete historical reality and in a particular cultural framework, and has a global geographical presence. The *ekklesia* is part of the *polis* and relates to it in multiple ways although it has different principles and a different way of life than those that prevail in the city. Precisely, because the *ekklesia* is part of the *polis*, and it is not an a-historical or otherworldly community, the social, political, and economic problems that occur there directly affect its members just as they affect any other citizen.

The *ekklesia* is described and presented in the New Testament as a multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multilingual community. This reality, verifiable in any current historical situation, may explain why it is affirmed that the community of disciples of Jesus Christ, from the beginning:

...brought people together across cultural and national barriers, and it seems to have reinforced the impression of making a reality of something that could become the consensus of all humans.²²

The church then, as a new reality or a new society, due to its nature and lifestyle radically different from those of the historical reality in which it is located, sooner or later will have to openly confront the structures of oppression present in the human societies in which it fulfills its mission of being the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

What are the structures of oppression present in the *polis* with which the community of disciples of Jesus Christ, the *ekklesia*, is confronted today? In the mental structure of a large part of the citizens of today's human societies, not only in Latin America and the Caribbean, there are social and cultural prejudices on which oppressive practices are based that are expressed in everyday human relationships, whether in the

²² Theissen, *Sociología del Movimiento de Jesús*, 355.

private or public space. Social problems that directly affect defenseless, ignored, and neglected sectors such as women, peasants, and immigrants among others, are machismo, racism, and marginalization. These are all common practices of oppression in human societies that unfortunately also occur within evangelical churches. The *ekklesia* in the *polis*, then, has to confront these practices of oppression contrary to the social and political proposal of the kingdom of life found in Jesus of Nazareth.²³ It has to be so, because in the kingdom of life in Jesus of Nazareth, no one is ignored or neglected, injustices and prejudices have no place, women are no less important than men, everyone has equal dignity and rights, and reconciliation and forgiveness are a reality that is practiced daily.

Although in Latin America we no longer have patriarchal societies like those that existed in the first century, there are still practices of exclusion and marginalization based on machismo or the supposed “superiority” of men over women. The macho mentality, expressed in practices of oppression against women, makes women invisible, confines them to the private sphere of life, assigns them a subordinate role in the family and in the public space, and accustoms them to resignedly accept a secondary role in private and public life. Machismo objectifies women, instrumentalizes them in favor of male “superiority,” and turns them into simple machines that reproduce children or sexual objects at the disposal of men. The existence of these oppressive practices against women, both in the city and in the church, should lead us to actively fight for a change in mentality and male-female relations in the family and in society. And it should also lead us to examine how we are personally and communally transmitting the good news of God’s kingdom and his justice, and how we are living daily the message of justice, reconciliation, forgiveness, peace, and freedom that we publicly proclaim.

Another problem that shows that there are still practices of injustice inside and outside the community of disciples is the marginalization that is often linked to the veiled and open racism expressed in words and in the treatment of others who are considered of lesser value. Are the social relations in the community of disciples the same in all cases, or does it depend on the color of the skin, the country from which one comes, the material goods one possesses, and the friendships one has? Do women have equal access to positions of power at all levels of the church as men? Do women’s opinions carry the same weight as men’s? All of these questions point in the same direction. There are still

²³ Jeremiah, *Jerusalén en Tiempos de Jesús*, 263.

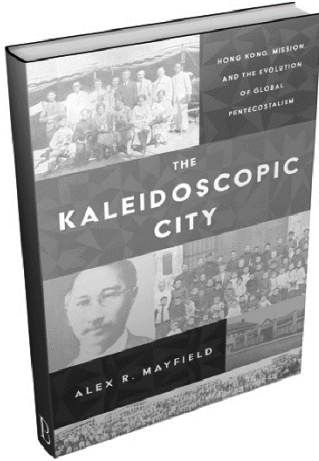
practices of marginalization and discrimination within the church, practices that are a denial of our condition and vocation as the new humanity in Jesus Christ. And continuance of these practices must be recognized and lead us to repentance so that there is a change of mentality and behavior. Only in this way will we fulfill our inalienable vocation to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

The practices of the original community of Jesus of Nazareth, followed by the communities of disciples that were established in various parts of the Roman empire in the first century, demonstrated new social relations where all had equal dignity and equal opportunities. These communities of Christ broke with the closed, vertical, and authoritarian mental structures that predominated the society and forged a community of equals with horizontal social relations. The community of equals, which contrasted openly with the pyramidal societies of the first century, remains a permanent challenge to today's communities of disciples, which often reproduce the prejudices and practices of oppression common in the human societies in which they are located.²⁴ And it remains a challenge for human societies in which the principle of equal opportunity for all is often no more than a declaration of good intention because oppressive practices such as sexism, racism, marginalization, and exclusion that affect thousands of defenseless citizens are still maintained, justified, and legally legitimized or socially accepted.

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²⁴ Oscar Cullmann, *Jesús y los Revolucionarios de su Tiempo* (Barcelona, España: Herder, 1980), 78-80.

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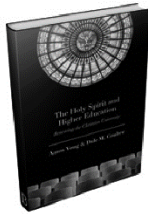
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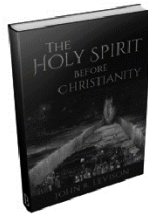
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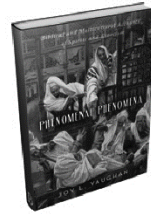
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Latinas De Valor: The Transformative Practice of Women as Servant Leaders

Mireya Alvarez

Abstract

This biblical, theological, and contextual study of prayer argues that Latino Pentecostals practice prayer as a way to enter into the presence of God. In the Latino community, the manifestations of the Holy Spirit are experienced in spontaneous prayers, joyful singing, speaking in tongues, and an openness to unplanned liturgical movement. For immigrants undergoing culture shock and feelings of disorientation, the church becomes a community of acceptance and consolation where they can cry, laugh, and express unrestrained worship. The study grounds the theology of prayer on a biblical study of Luke-Acts, arguing that Latino Pentecostal prayer aligns with Luke's theology of prayer. Luke-Acts reveals the redemptive-historical acts of God occurring in the context of prayer. She discusses the function of prayer in Pentecostalism, focusing on Hispanic and Latino churches, and concludes that Latino churches must keep prayer alive to preserve their vitality and bring renewal to the church in America.

Keywords: Pentecostal prayer, Latino spirituality, charismatic prayer, spiritual gifts, Pentecostal immigrants, suffering and prayer, immigrants' prayer

Introduction

In this study, we will see that, despite the advances of female clergy in various branches of the Christian church, the struggle for women's participatory equality in leadership continues. Women are still prevented from taking on denominational administrative positions or functions. It is undeniable that subtle gender marginalization persists, which represses

women's leadership development.¹ In this article, we call on seminaries and denominational leaders to intentionally support inclusive initiatives and promote opportunities for women's leadership.

This article considers the experiences of women ministers who work in the Honduran Church of God. The values of servant leadership will be discussed, and a description of the work of pastors and how each one represents aspects of such leadership will be presented. My ministry experience in the Church of God has contributed to observations about inequality and differential treatment of women in ministry for more than thirty years.

There is a lack of literature on the experiences of Latina women clergy. Through this article, I would like to expand on the topic of Honduran women who exercise leadership in different churches and thus contribute to the production of bibliographic sources. The purpose of this study is to explore and describe the particular way in which women exercise leadership. This study provides an overview of the principles of servant leadership and how women leaders handle discriminatory policies in their denomination and culture, as well as deal with stereotypes and ethnic prejudices. These women push aside obstacles and strive to improve the quality of life for members of their churches and communities.

Exploring the topic will contribute to the understanding of the experiences of women who demonstrate resilience and fortitude in the face of adversity and challenges. The article provides an overview of the ambiguity of the evangelical stance on women, the diminishing freedom for women in ministry, and certain concepts of servant leadership.

Although Honduran clergy in the Church of God are still associated with their North American denomination, they have navigated existing biases and exercised impactful leadership in their communities. As servant leaders, women empower the people in their congregations, strengthen social relationships, foster a sense of community, offer healing to those who suffer, and serve selflessly in obedience to their calling.

¹ Herminia Ibarra, Robyn J. Ely, and Deborah Kolb, "Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers," *Harvard Business Review* (September 20, 2013), accessed April 14, 2019, <https://hbr.org/2013/09/women-rising-the-unseen-barriers>.

Women as Leaders in the Church

The Church of God (Iglesia de Dios, IDD), established in 1886, is a Pentecostal denomination based in Cleveland, Tennessee. Its policies dictate that women cannot hold high leadership positions. A woman may opt for the rank of “ordained minister” to teach, preach, or pastor a church, but may not be considered for administrative positions reserved only for men with the rank of ordained bishop. In the last twenty-five years, some theologians in the Church of God have begun to question these restrictive policies for women, as these regulations contradict, in many ways, the original emphasis on the freedom of the Spirit that has characterized the Pentecostal movement. The gifts of the Spirit were imparted equally to men and women. “I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17).²

Jesus valued women’s uniqueness and intrinsic value during the first century, and many of his followers and disciples were women. Jesus treated with dignity women who were also created in the image of God. In the ancient world, women were mostly treated as objects, but the female gender was not ignored when the message of the good news was first proclaimed. Through his actions, Jesus foretold the equal treatment of women. Contrary to the understanding of the religious leaders of his day, Jesus allowed women to be his disciples and participate in learning as Mary and Martha did (Lk 10:39-42). The women were the first to arrive at the tomb and confirmed their resurrection to the disciples (Mk. 16:9); Lk 24:10; Jn. 20:18). This needs to be acknowledged in the context of the first century, where women were deprived of many rights, such as witnessing in the public sphere.³

Early leadership theories generally assumed that people were born with the natural traits and skills to become successful leaders. Over time, leadership studies concluded that a leader is not born but made.⁴ This concept postulates that leadership skills can be learned. In theory, a person can take leadership training to become an effective leader.

² All Scripture references, unless otherwise stated, are from the NIV.

³ Ruth A. Tucker and Walter Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 26, 85.

⁴ Catherine M. Ruvolo, Scott A. Peterson, and Joseph NG LeBoeuf, “Leaders Are Made, Not Born: The Critical Role of a Developmental Framework to Facilitate an Organizational Culture of Development,” *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research* 56:1 (2004), 10-19.

Books on leadership abound within business circles and Christian circles. For example, John Maxwell has made a global impact with his leadership concepts. Maxwell elaborates on five levels of leadership that extend from the lowest level, i.e., position, to the highest, most difficult level of leadership, i.e., pinnacle.⁵

It needs to be emphasized that, in theory, women can also experience the different levels of leadership, i.e., starting with position (having a job), permission (cultivating relationships within the organization), production (achieving results), people development (training other leaders), and pinnacle (exerting influence over individuals and organizations). However, most women in ministry can only aspire to certain leadership positions in the church. In a way, women are prevented from developing more experiences and skills because church organizations restrict the levels they can climb.

The IDD's denominational stance denies women permission to advance as administrative leaders or supervisors. They also do not have access to international positions such as director of world missions or members of the executive committee. In addition, women are not allowed to vote at General Council meetings that are composed only of male bishops.⁶ The Church of God has not yet adapted egalitarian resolutions in favor of the leadership of women ministers. Discussions during general assemblies about women's ministry are largely based on positions that question whether the Bible supports female leadership or whether women are competent to perform tasks that have traditionally been performed by men.⁷

A study conducted by Brown, Lummis, and Chang among 250 clergy (male and female) from fifteen denominations aimed to identify possible differences between female and male clergy in the United States. The findings showed that both male and female clergy in charismatic churches did not consider themselves using a democratic leadership

⁵ John C. Maxwell, *The Five Levels of Leadership: Proven Steps to Maximize Your Potential* (New York, NY: Center Street, 2011), 7.

⁶ Church of God, *Church of God Bylaws*, accessed April 28, 2019, <http://www.churchofgod.org/beliefs/bylaws>.

⁷ Adrienne Gaines, "Church of God Debates Role of Women," *Charisma Magazine* (August 2012), accessed May 20, 2019, <https://www.charismanews.com/politics/elections/20-news/featured-news/36744-church-of-god-debates-role-of-women>.

style.⁸ Ministers who graduated from seminary before 1971 were inclined to practice a directive and autocratic leadership style commonly associated with masculine values. The researchers noted that feminist ideas were not influential in seminars during the 1970s.⁹ However, pastoral leaders who graduated in the 1990s exercised a more inclusive and democratic leadership style, likely due to their involvement in a feminist subculture as students.¹⁰

Discriminatory views are palpable not only at the denominational level but in individual congregations. Church members may feel that a woman is just as capable as a man to assume pastoral leadership, but members know that electing a woman minister could cause conflict in their local church culture. Many times, a man is chosen to maintain harmony, even though a woman is equally qualified.¹¹ A pattern of institutional discrimination continues to constrain the ministry of women.

Seminary enrollment data indicate an increasing number of women, and many are yearning for a position in the ministry.¹² However, congregations and denominational systems continue to thwart women's ministries. Church leaders must initiate concrete ways to empower women in ministry. Congregations can benefit from trained women who have a calling to ministry. Many women work with faith, love, and patience (1 Thess. 1:3) despite denominational stances of inequality. We hope that the valuable contribution of women in ministry will be recognized. May women who sense God's call to their lives be clothed with courage and new hope to carry out their ministry within and beyond the walls of the church.

Overview of Servant Leadership Theory

Since the 1960s, more than 65 classification systems have emerged that determine dimensions of leadership.¹³ Leadership has been described in many ways: in terms of personality traits, behavior, group processes, power relationships, skills, goals, and influence. A common element to

⁸ Lummis Brown, *Clergy Women: An Uphill Battle* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1998), 59-60.

⁹ Brown, *Clergy Women*, 57, 121.

¹⁰ Brown, *Clergy Women*, 57, 74, 121.

¹¹ Brown, *Clergy Women*, 74.

¹² Brown, *Clergy Women*, 59-60.

¹³ Peter Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage Publications, 2007), 2.

all classifications of leadership is the “process of influence that helps groups of individuals achieve goals.”¹⁴ A significant amount of the literature elaborates on the affirmative values and characteristics of a leader. On the other hand, there has been a shift from previous models —traditional, autocratic, and hierarchical— to more relational and participatory, as exemplified in servant leadership.¹⁵

Robert K. Greenleaf (1904-1990) originated the concept of servant leadership. This approach is considered an ideal model for its values of altruism and for cultivating the importance of relationships between collaborators.¹⁶ The Judeo-Christian worldview provides a foundation for servant leadership in the following dimensions: (a) human dignity, (b) personal responsibility, (c) character, (d) community, (e) use of power, (f) compassion, (g) stewardship, and (h) justice.¹⁷

Greenleaf developed the concept of servant leadership in 1970. He claimed that his Quaker background was the basis for the ideas of servant leadership. He worked for 36 years for a telecommunications company in the United States. He started as an apprentice in line repair and worked his way up the corporate ladder as a manager, management analyst, and eventually as a training supervisor. His entire life was devoted to the study of organizations, and he served as an advisor to universities, companies, foundations, and churches. Greenleaf founded the Center for Applied Ethics, currently known as the Center for Greenleaf Servant Leadership, chaired by Larry Spears. In his writings, Greenleaf described the paradoxical nature of a servant leader:

The servant-leader is first and foremost a servant. Start with a natural feeling that one wants to serve. So conscious choice makes one aspire to lead. The best test is: do those served grow as people? Do they become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely than they are themselves, when they are cared for? And what is the effect on the less

¹⁴ Northouse, *Leadership*, 17.

¹⁵ Efrain August, *Servant Leadership: Jesus and Paul* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2006), 6.

¹⁶ Northouse, *Leadership*, 348.

¹⁷ J. Randall Wallace, “Servant Leadership: A Worldwide Perspective,” *International Journal of Leadership Studies* 2:2 (2007), accessed 24 June 2019, <https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/ijls/new/vol2iss2/Wallace/wallace.htm>.

privileged in society? Will they benefit, or, at least, so as not to be further disadvantaged?¹⁸

According to Stephen Covey, some businesses and nonprofits have betrayed a culture with an emphasis on power, position, and authority toward empowering people. At some point, bosses become servants and trainers.¹⁹ As Larry Sears explains, the focus is to be in relationship with others while improving care and the quality of organizational life.²⁰ This is also the case of some writers who advocate for servant leadership; they consider it to be the emerging paradigm for the twenty-first century.²¹

The representation of the servant is deeply rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition. The concept of serving others is based on the Bible and the example of Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:6-8). There is a great demand for moral leadership in today's world. A leader can influence through a life of moral values and ethics that shows respect for followers. There is a need for competent leaders who provide noble ideals, vision, and a powerful purpose for Christian ministry.²² The servant leadership style counters the typical perspective of takeover, pursuit of power, and dominance commonly associated with authoritarian leadership.²³ Leaders are needed with characteristics evident in the life of Jesus Christ, who exemplified a pattern of a servant-leader in his ministry.

Women as Ministers

Many women are actively involved in the ministry of God's Church. However, the IDD's designation did not lay the groundwork for accrediting women to full ministerial roles when the credentialing process was introduced in the 1920s. Ruling leaders of various Pentecostal denominations began to add additional requirements for

¹⁸ Robert K. Greenleaf, *The Servant Leader* (Westfield, IN: Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2008), 15.

¹⁹ Stephen Covey, "What Experts Say about Greenleaf and 'The Servant Leader,'" in Robert K. Greenleaf, ed., *The Servant Leader* (Westfield, IN: Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2008), 50.

²⁰ Larry Sears, "Character and Servant Leadership: The Ten Characteristics of Effective, Caring Leaders," *The Journal of Virtues and Leadership* 1:1 (2010), 25.

²¹ Sears, "Character and Servant Leadership," 24.

²² Northouse, *Leadership*, 357-58.

²³ Robert Banks and Bernice M. Ledbetter, *Reviewing Leadership: A Christian Evaluation of Current Approaches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 108.

ministry that undoubtedly contributed to the exclusion of women.²⁴ Over time, Pentecostal and holiness groups became more identified with the fundamentalist and evangelical world, which reduced the public role of women in the church. At the IDD, credentials for women evangelists allowed women to participate in the preaching work. However, men were granted credentials with ministerial privileges that allowed them to officiate at marriages, baptize, and receive new members. It was not until the 2000 General Assembly that women were allowed to perform certain ministerial functions. The IDD authorized women to also officiate at marriages, baptisms, and reception of members, but women with access to the same offices or privileges that only male ministers possess have not been allowed to be ordained fully.²⁵

Some leaders and ministers claim that the issue of ordination has nothing to do with women's abilities. Pastors who disagree with equal rank for women are concerned about making changes because the church has to "be faithful to the biblical text even in a contemporary society that sees it as intolerant or outdated."²⁶ Disparaging views of women in ministry usually occur when proposals to include women in the bishopric arise during general assembly sessions.²⁷ However, there is growing concern about the male hierarchical system in the denomination.

Pentecostal scholars emphasize that the voice of Pentecostal women can no longer be ignored. To be sure, women are heavily involved in church planting, evangelism, and educational opportunities. It is time for the church to "support, bless, and commission women for greater leadership in ministry."²⁸ A growing number of church leaders recognize women as strategic partners in leadership for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Women ministers in the Church of God in Honduras stand out as exemplary leaders despite their denomination's unique challenges and barriers. While churches in North America still debate the role of women in ministry, churches in Latin America have opened up opportunities for women to exercise authority in church administration

²⁴ Mark Chaves, *Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Organizations* (Harvard, MA: First Harvard University Press, 1997), 114.

²⁵ David Roebuck, "Loose the Women," *Christian History* 58:2 (1998), 38-39.

²⁶ Lisa Stephenson, *Dismantling the Dualisms for American Pentecostal Women in Ministry: A Feminist-Pneumatological Approach* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

²⁷ Gaines, "Church of God Debates Role of Women."

²⁸ Kimberly Alexander and James Bowers, *What Women Want: Pentecostal Women Ministers Speak for Themselves* (Langham, MD: Seymour Press, 2013), 128.

as local church counselors, district supervisors, and directors of education.

There are several women pastors in Latin America who led thriving congregations. Despite their efforts, the denomination at the international level has yet to recognize the value of women ministers and endorse their inclusion in the bishopric.

The Debate on Women in Ministry

The debate over women in leadership continues to be a divisive issue in evangelical churches. There are two main positions represented by the complementarian and egalitarian groups (although there is a variation of views between the two). Complementarians believe that men and women are equal in value, but have different roles: men should lead, and women should submit to men's leadership. The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood is the complementarian organization that advocates for gender role differences.²⁹ Traditionalists consider the egalitarian group to be made up of evangelical feminists who ignore male leadership. Complementarians question the ideological agenda of evangelical egalitarians on the grounds that their positions are unbiblical, and their theological conclusions are deficient.³⁰

Egalitarians, on the other hand, advocate the ministry and ordination of women, based on the spiritual gifts imparted to a person and not on the criteria of gender, socioeconomic class, or race (Gal. 3:28). The egalitarian organization, called Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE, 1989), promotes the biblical justification of equality.³¹ It holds that man and woman were created equally before God. The patterns of domination and bias that are implicit in male supremacy are considered contrary to biblical principles. Inequality continues to prevail when half of the church's membership is denied positions of authority and responsibility.

A good number of evangelical churches are committed to biblical inerrancy and adhere to a literal interpretation of Pauline passages in

²⁹ The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW, 1987), accessed May 30, 2019, <http://cbmw.org/uncategorized/the-danvers-statement/>.

³⁰ Stanley Grenz, "Anticipating God's New Community: Theological Foundations for Women in Ministry," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 38 (1995), 595-611.

³¹ Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE, 1989), accessed May 30, 2019, <https://www.cbeinternational.org/content/about-cbe>.

relation to women in ministry. For many centuries the cultural norms of the first century era were overlooked. The Church of God's stance on inerrancy prevents many sincere Christians from examining new interpretations of difficult passages. Unaware of the customs and expectations of distant times, many are unaware that the followers of Christ functioned effectively in the work of the church. The few isolated texts that seem to restrict women's full freedom should not be interpreted simplistically and in contradiction to the rest of Scripture. In fact, the biblical and theological basis for the submissive role of women in the Christian church over the past two thousand years was based on a few restrictive verses.³² They were interpreted as a ban on women in ministry. Today, these Pauline verses are still used as a justification for silencing women's voice and leadership in the church.

Women as Servant Leaders

Some Pentecostal churches in Latin America have paved the way for women to participate in public ministry. Women have the opportunity to preach, pray, and evangelize in home groups.³³ Home worship services are largely run by women. Through these activities, women are trained in practical skills, including public speaking, which increases a sense of confidence in being a leader.³⁴ It is common and acceptable for women to participate in leadership roles.

Women like Maria Atkinson (1879-1963), who was the first woman to bring Pentecostalism to Mexico, set an inspiring model for women in ministry.³⁵ Many of the Pentecostal pioneers devoted their time and effort to sustaining the church in various ways: praying, fasting, cleaning, cooking, evangelizing, and visiting those in need. Pentecostal women gladly take on roles as servant leaders in their ministry practices.

Regarding servant leadership, Juana Bordas affirms that women, minorities, and people of color have a long tradition of servant leadership in their cultures which are considered holistic, cooperative,

³² See Mary Malone, *Women and Christianity: The First Thousand Years* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000).

³³ Verónica Pérez, "Education and Leadership of Pentecostal Women, Sign of Hope for the Church: A Reflection," in Daniel Chiquete and Luis Orellana, eds., *Voices of Latin American Pentecostalism* (Concepción, Chile: RELEP, 2011), 475-92.

³⁴ Elizabeth Brusco, *Reformation of Machismo: Evangelical Conversion and Gender in Colombia* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1995), 476.

³⁵ Brusco, *Reformation of Machismo*, 478.

communal, intuitive, and spiritual.³⁶ Bordas believes that servant leadership is the most appropriate philosophy for both men and women to adopt. Service-oriented characteristics are exactly those that are in line with the best qualities of servant leadership.

In certain cases, women who adopt a collaborative leadership style may be misunderstood or disrespected. They may feel out of step with leadership styles where male control predominates. Some aspects of the relationship, such as serving, caring, listening, empathizing, and healing are part of the realm of feminine qualities. For Reynolds, servant leadership could serve as a driving force in promoting gender integration in organizations. The faith-driven woman leader will look for ways to transform systems so that diversity is recognized, honored, and celebrated. Latina women in ministerial leadership positions have a clear idea of their vocation and are willing to endure hardship to carry out their calling.

Based on ministry experiences in Latin America, I have observed the motivation and persistence of women in the Church of God in Honduras. Although women still face leadership barriers in the church, it is important to underscore that they have overcome obstacles and made respectable contributions to their communities. Women ministers exhibit characteristics such as empathy, collaboration, sensitivity, and helpfulness. Traditional leadership styles emphasize power or control over people. Female pastors display a less hierarchical leadership style and relate to others with greater flexibility and collegiality. Such trends are seen as conducive to creativity and productivity.³⁷ These feminine principles seemed out of place in the days when a “strictly male cloning production” prevailed in corporations.³⁸

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³⁶ Juana Bordas, “Introduction,” to Robert Greenleaf, *The Power of Servant Leadership* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1998), 13.

³⁷ Brown, *Clergy Women*, 51.

³⁸ Sally Hegelsen, *The Female Advantage: Women’s Ways of Leadership* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1995), 39.

in organizations.³⁹ The faith-driven woman leader will look for ways to transform systems so that diversity is recognized, honored, and celebrated.⁴⁰ Latina women in ministerial leadership positions have a clear idea of their vocation and are willing to endure hardship to carry out their calling.

Honduran society is plagued by political instability.⁴¹ There are few employment opportunities. Organized crime has skyrocketed, and a high homicide rate has escalated. In 2018, thousands of Hondurans traveled north in “caravans” that attracted worldwide attention. Women pastors in Honduras have overcome barriers and obstacles in their cultural context. Despite the limitations in a Third World country, female clergy seem to have positive results, such as the growth of their congregations, leadership formation, spiritual development, and training skilled workers.⁴²

Many women have contributed to the expansion of the church as teachers, deacons, cell group leaders, worship leaders. In general, they are valued and not restricted from ministry in local churches. In 1986, of the 243 pastors, about 15 were women. Currently, there are approximately 178 female pastors out of a total of 1100 pastors.⁴³ Of the 178 women in ministry, 75 credentialed and 103 are not yet credentialed.⁴⁴ About 250 female students are enrolled in various Bible training schools.⁴⁵ Female pastors are highly esteemed and regarded as role models because of their loyal commitment to the church.⁴⁶ Their preaching is carried out with authority and is done in a classic

³⁹ Kae Reynolds, “Servant-Leadership as Gender Integrative Leadership: Paving a Path for More Gender-Integrative Organizations through Leadership Education,” *Journal of Leadership Education* 10:2 (2011), 159.

⁴⁰ Banks and Ledbetter, *Reviewing Leadership*, 31.

⁴¹ Kurt Alan Ver Beek and James D. Nealon, “Don’t Give Up on Honduras,” *Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars* (December 2018), accessed June 29, 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/dont-give-honduras>.

⁴² Patricia Ohlott, Aparna Bhandary, and Joan Tavares. “What Women Want: Comparing Leadership Challenges in Europe and the US.” *Leadership in Action: A Publication of the Center for Creative Leadership and Jossey-Bass* 23:3 (2003), 14-19.

⁴³ Information from the National Office of the Church of God in Honduras, July 2019.

⁴⁴ Information from the National Office of the Church of God in Honduras, July 2019.

⁴⁵ Interview with Carmen Corrales, July 2019.

⁴⁶ Interview with Suyapa de León, July 2019.

Pentecostal manner. Preaching and teaching emphasize a personal encounter with God, prayer, healing, speaking in tongues, the gifts of the Spirit, and deliverance.

Servant Leadership Values

The concept of servant leadership is discussed as an appropriate lifestyle for churches and other Christian institutions. Organizations function well when they take care of their growth processes.⁴⁷ There are congregations that are obviously dedicated to the advancement of people. Such congregations are healthy and invest time in training leaders. They are not quick to emphasize failures or censure others.⁴⁸ Time and resources need to be invested in the educational and ministerial growth of both men and women.

Spears was one of the first authors to develop a conceptual framework for servant leadership based on Greenleaf's writings. He distinguished ten characteristics as the essential elements of servant leadership: (a) listening, (b) empathy, (c) healing, (d) awareness, (e) persuasion, (f) conceptualization, (g) foresight, (h) stewardship, (i) commitment, and (j) community development.⁴⁹

The table below shows other conceptual frameworks of servant leadership. In some cases, there are virtues that coincide from one theorist to another. Our world is increasingly saturated with information and yet hungry for wisdom. These virtues are urgently needed for leadership around the world. Many people aspire to climb the ladder of leadership to gain a position of power over others. But servant leaders seek to recognize, affirm, and empower the lives of the people in their organization.

The table below shows different proposals according to the advocates of servant leadership:⁵⁰ Spears (1998), originally included in the list, is later treated extensively.

⁴⁷ Peter L. Steinke, *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach* (Hendon, VA: Alban Institute, 1996), 54.

⁴⁸ Steinke, *Healthy Congregations*, 54.

⁴⁹ Larry Spears, "Character and Servant Leadership: Ten Characteristics of Effective, Caring Leaders," *The Journal of Virtues and Leadership* 1:1 (2010), 25-30.

⁵⁰ Adapted from James D. Lanctot and Justin A. Irving, "Character and Leadership: Situating Servant Leadership in a Proposed Virtues Framework," *International Journal of Leadership Studies* 6:1 (2010), 35.

Graham 1991	Buchan 1998	Farling 1999	Laub 1999	Russell 2001	Patterson 2003
Inspira- tional	Self- Identity	Vision	Valuing People	Vision	Love
Moral	Recipro- city	Influence	Developing People	Credibility	Humility
	Build Relation- ships	Credibility	Strengthen community	Confidence	Altruism
	Concern with the Future	Confidence	Authenticity	Model	Vision
		Service	Provide Leadership	Initiatives	Confidence
			Sharing Leadership	Appreciation	Empower
				Empower- ment	Service

We live in a time when organizations yearn for leadership that projects toward constructive service to reduce suffering and injustice in the world. Christianity needs to implement its values in all areas of society. “Servant leadership is a counterbalance to the glorification, deification, and idolatrization of leaders who have neglected or forgotten what they are for.”⁵¹

Spears’ Servant Leader Qualities

Below is a description of Spears’ servant leader qualities with examples showing how each quality is embodied in the lives of Honduran women pastors.

Virtue of Listening

The virtue of listening refers to the ability to pay attention or know how to listen attentively to others. A leader listens to what is said and what is not said in order to discern the will of a group. It is important to understand the needs of your followers. Reverend Sagrario Rosales demonstrates the ability to listen to those she leads. Sagrario has a degree in psychology and theological studies. She is the pastor of the IDD of Loarque, a congregation of about 400 people. Young leaders play an important role in the ministry of the church. Sagrario listens to

⁵¹ Don Fricks, *Greenleaf: A Life of Servant Leadership* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Khoeler Publishers, 2004), 2.

the yearnings of the younger generations who are sometimes considered defiant by their inquisitive minds and the way they dress. There are many youth leaders in the church who have the freedom to minister creatively while evangelizing and organizing retreats. Sagrario has been an advocate for women in ministry even in the times when traditional ways of thinking prevailed in Honduran churches. She and her husband currently serve as national supervisors for Honduras.

Empathy

Empathy is one of the qualities of servant leaders. Empathy refers to a genuine desire to help others. It is vital for leaders to understand the needs, feelings, and emotions of the people under their direction. Honduran women ministers show empathy in many ways. For example, at the altar they pray and encourage discouraged people. They plan spiritual retreats where many lives are restored. People are filled with faith and hope and eventually become involved in the service and leadership of the church. Reverend Kari Garcia, who studied law, is a member of the pastoral staff of the Oasis of Love Church. She leads the youth ministry along with her husband. They started with a group of eighty-four young people and now more than three thousand attend weekly services. The church has set up cell groups not only in homes but also in schools and offices. Young people receive biblical training and cultivate a culture of prayer. Kari strives to see each of their lives “blossom and find a place of ministry in the church.”⁵²

Health

Servant leaders care about the healing of wounded people and also strive to heal themselves. Learning to heal is “a powerful force for transformation and integration.”⁵³ The ministers acknowledge that many people have suffered emotional pain and are going through a brokenness of spirit. Ministers who operate within a Pentecostal framework believe that people must achieve a sense of integrity. Rev. Leyla Yadira Zuniga is a single woman who pastors Los Robles Church. She holds a master’s degree in theology. Leyla has served in two positions usually assigned to men. She was a district pastor for eight years (2011-2019) and currently serves as regional educational director (since 2010). Los Robles Church has a diverse population of approximately 250 people. Many lives have been transformed and young

⁵² Interview with Kari Garcia, November 2016.

⁵³ Fricks, *Greenleaf*, 17.

and old serve joyfully in the congregation. Members recognize Pastor Leyla's dedication and selfless service. There is a team of intercessors who accompany Leyla during home visits to pray for the sick and anoint them with oil (James 5:14).

Sensitivity and Perception

The Rev. Daisy Villatoro is the pastor of Torre Fuerte COG, a 400-member congregation. Honduran society is plagued by social ills, for example, broken families, hunger, crime, and violence. Daisy's ministry has led her to a greater perception and awareness of the reality of people living in poverty. Her effectiveness as a leader has increased by understanding the needs of people in the community. Daisy shares stories of how she has dealt with gang members and drug addicts. Church leaders conduct prayer walks and deliver food to the homes of those in need for special occasions such as Christmas. Many lives have been transformed and they serve enthusiastically in the church. Cell groups meet during the week at various locations around the city. The church also has a ministry called Connections, which are workplace Bible studies.

Persuasion

Servant leaders practice persuasion when decisions need to be made. Such leaders seek to convince others rather than pressure them into conformity. In a society where authoritarian leaders prevail, women clergy exercise leadership through consensus-building. The Rev. Celia Rivera pastors Word in Action Church in the northern city of El Progreso. The city is plagued by two violent maras (gangs) that dispute its territory and drug outlets. Celia urges church members to help beggars on the streets as an act of Christian witness. The church has teams of volunteers to distribute basic toiletries in public hospitals. "I want my church to be involved in social activities."⁵⁴

Conceptualization

Servant leaders seek to cultivate and promote big dreams.⁵⁵ The servant leader must broaden his thinking to include conceptual thinking beyond the realities of the day-to-day. Rev. Carmen Corrales has served as director of the national education department since 2011. She is the first woman to hold this position where only male ministers were assigned.

⁵⁴ Interview with Celia Rivera, July 2019.

⁵⁵ Greenleaf, *The Servant Leader*, 23.

Carmen believes that teamwork is essential to carry out educational plans and goals. “I believe we must strive for excellence in order to achieve lasting results,”⁵⁶ Carmen says. To maintain communication with pastors, educators, and students, Carmen makes use of social media. She visits regional education centers to strengthen relationships, invest in resources, and provide training to ministers. For Carmen, Jesus Himself modeled the way to lead others. She believes that when a leader finishes their job, the vision they planted will continue and be realized by the members of a skilled team.

Vision

If a leader has vision, he or she will be able to project his or her goals into the future. In addition, a servant leader will learn the lessons of the past, the realities of the present, and the potential consequences of a decision for the future. The Rev. Ana Ruth Diaz pastors a 3,000-member congregation in Tegucigalpa. Ana Ruth began her ministry in the 1970s as an evangelist and preacher. Ana Ruth said, “God called me. He held me... If Jesus anticipated equal treatment of women and the Holy Spirit endorses women’s ministry, then why don’t men do the same!”⁵⁷

Ana Ruth believes that she and her leaders embrace leadership of humble service to others. She indicated that the church has grown because of teamwork among leaders and not because of their personal abilities. After studying at a Bible college for four years in Puerto Rico, she returned to Honduras to pastor the church in Buenos Aires. In 1983 she planted the congregation of Barrio Abajo. Church leaders purchased land and built the Oasis of Love facility with donations from the U.S. missions department. Ana Ruth is regarded by her leaders as an approachable, affirming, and encouraging pastor. She is concerned with maintaining educational programs at all levels of the congregation. The church has 1,000 workers distributed among the three church services on Sundays.

Stewardship

Servant leaders are also responsible for good stewardship, which will result in the greater good of society. A good manager carefully and responsibly handles something entrusted to him or her. Competent management produces success in the organization. During the 1980s, Rev. Carmen Medina and her husband pastored a small traditional

⁵⁶ Interview with Carmen Corrales, July 2019.

⁵⁷ Interview with Ana Ruth Díaz, November 2016.

congregation in the La Pradera neighborhood of Tegucigalpa. After her husband's passing, Carmen continued to pastor. Under Carmen's leadership, the congregation grew significantly, and they moved to a new location. Rather than a decline in ministry as a widow, the church continues to thrive and expand its reach. The church has a feeding program for the children of the community and an elementary school. Carmen has promoted visionary leaders who work together as a team.

Delivery and Commitment

A servant leader shows commitment to the growth of people. Servant leaders believe that people have intrinsic value and are committed to the personal and professional growth of each individual in the organization. Rev. Gina Zerón is a national leader for Generation Emerging ministry. Gina believes it is crucial to provide a space where young people feel accepted and can develop their gifts and talents to serve in the church and in society. They help group members set ministry or career goals and want to see them progress at each stage. Gina and her husband are associate pastors at Family of Faith Church.

Urbanization and globalization have disrupted local cultural patterns and traditions, but servant leaders look for ways to build community. Societies have experienced a breakdown in close relationships and a sense of belonging. Although a sense of community is still prevalent in Latino culture, social forces have contributed to isolation. Rev. Brenda Guardado is involved with women's ministries at the local and regional levels. She has been able to build a community between Honduran and Central American leaders. Brenda worked alongside her husband in the country office for eight years and in the administrative leadership for Central America since 2016. Brenda organizes women's conferences that strengthen their leadership skills and promote empowerment in all areas of their lives.

Conclusion

Women's leadership has been a complicated issue in Christian churches. As Patrick Lencioni explains: "An organization does not get healthy in a linear, orderly fashion... It's a complicated process that involves doing a few things at once, and it must be maintained continuously in order to be preserved."⁵⁸

Despite the inconsistent treatment of women in ministry, the last thirty years have brought about some favorable changes for women in

⁵⁸ Patrick Lencioni, *The Advantage* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 8-10.

the IDD. Scholars have produced articles that support women's ministry from a biblical and theological perspective. Books, articles, and even social media posts.⁵⁹ They urge church leaders to liberate women so they can exercise God-given ministry. From a Pentecostal perspective, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to both men and women. The church will be most effective when limitations and restrictions on women are removed. A new interpretation of Scripture must be ushered in. On June 27, 2019, the Texas-based Pentecostal Church of God (PCG) passed a resolution allowing women to serve in all positions in the denomination.⁶⁰ My prayer is that the women of the IDD will be fully authorized and commissioned to carry out ministry by the year 2030.

The Church, as the body of Christ, has been called to grow in the fullness and stature of Christ:

...The notion of only men as leaders is unbiblical. None of us has the power to be above others and make decisions for them. None of us is empowered to make another group our assistant. However, it is sad that some men think that God's good gift, "power to serve," is somehow a male property, which they must control to the point of excluding women from certain ministry roles.⁶¹

The power of the Holy Spirit was given to both women and men, young and old (Acts 2:17-18). The gift of the Holy Spirit is available to all who seek empowerment (Acts 2:38). Authoritarian hierarchy and selfish leadership are still prevalent in religious organizations.⁶² In many faith-based organizations, servant leadership cannot be effectively implemented as long as authoritarian hierarchy and selfish pride remain unchecked. Otherwise, even Christian ministries may become irrelevant in the twenty-first century.

⁵⁹ Facebook Group Page, "Free to Serve: Men and Women Leading Together in Unity," accessed May 20, 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/145906928789787/>.

⁶⁰ Pentecostal Church of God, Facebook Page, June 27, 2019.

⁶¹ Gaebelin Gretchen, "Empowered to Serve," *Christians for Biblical Equality* (1995), accessed April 30, 2019, <https://www.cbeinternational.org/resources/article/priscilla-papers/empowered-serve>.

⁶² Paul Wong and Don Page, "Servant Leadership: An Opponent-Process Model and the Revised Servant Leadership Profile," *Servant Leadership Roundtable* (Virginia Beach, VA: Regent University, 2003).

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Hiñáru: A Christian Feminist Reflection on Honduran Garifuna Women¹

Dulce Gutierrez

Abstract

In this paper, Dulce Gutierrez unveils the reality of Afro-Honduran women's struggles to recover their dignity. She collects information that describes the history and development of the Garifuna people of Honduras. Such history shows how these people have suffered violence and discrimination that has crippled their attempts to succeed in life. Their journey through slavery was painful as they were forced out of Africa but were able to escape from the Caribbean islands where they were secluded, landing in the northern coast of Honduras. This study focuses on the new culture that the Garifuna created as they settled in Honduras.

Keywords: Garifunas, gender-based violence, Afro-Honduran, oppression of women, Garifuna culture, violence and discrimination, aggression against dignity of women

Introduction

In April 2024, the 227th anniversary of the arrival of the Garifuna people in Honduras was commemorated.² However, in their communities, the

¹ *Hiñáru* is a local nickname given by the locals to the people of African descent in Honduras. The official name is Garifunam.

² According to data recorded by the National Center for Information on the Social Sector, there are nine indigenous and Afro-Honduran peoples in Honduras: Garifuna, Lencas, Maya-Chorti, Misquitos, Nahuas, English-speaking Blacks, Pech, Tawahka, and Tolupanes. For its part, the Single Registry of Participants registers a total population of 3,437,327 of which 648,265 (19%) declare to belong to an indigenous or Afro-Honduran people. 82.5% of this population declare to be Lencas, 5.18% Maya-Chortís, 4.09%, 3.74% Garifuna, 1.73% Tolupanes and 2.73% declare to be English-speaking Blacks, Pech, Nahoas or Tawahkas. See Government of Honduras, "International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples," in National Center for

music of their drums, the color of their costumes, and the dance of their women have been overshadowed by subdued nuances. This is a result of the repression to which they have been subjected in recent years for the struggle for the dispossession of their ancestral territories. It is also impossible to ignore the poverty that predominates in their communities and affects their women, who are immersed in a history of helplessness, violence, injustice, and discrimination. All this can be inferred from reading the lines of the poetess on the inner discovery of what it means to be black:

Suddenly, voices in the street shouted at me, “Black! Black?”... “Am I black?” — I said YES! “What’s it to be black?” And I didn’t know the sad truth it hid. Black! And I felt black, black! As they used to say, “Negra! And I backed off, Black! As they wanted, Black!”³

This sad truth of conceiving what it means to be black encloses a grey panorama for the Garifuna, it is a truth that brings with it something that they cannot change and hide the color of their skin, but if we internalize it, we will realize that unfortunately, it brings with it a triple oppression, which also lays bare the perverse heart of man.⁴ Those who are far from God attack what are called the “most fragile vessels” (1 Pet. 3:7). This paper is a Christian feminist reflection on the Honduran Garifuna woman.

Social Information (2021), accessed September 2021, <https://www.ceniss.gob.hn/actualidad/diaindigena.html>.

³ Victoria Santa Cruz, “Me Gritaron Negra,” in *TV Peru Profiles on YouTube* (La Victoria, Perú: October 27, 1922 – Lima, Peru: August 30, 2014), accessed September 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTIsusTKv9I>. She was the voice of black Peruvian art, composer, choreographer, designer and researcher of African cultures. In 1968 she founded Teatro y Danzas Negras del Perú and began to travel in order to spread black culture. She became a professor at Carnegie Mellon University in the United States, one of the few Latin American and black women to have reached such a position.

⁴ John Paul II — in relation to perversity in the human being — expresses the following: “The ‘perverse mechanisms’ and ‘structures of sin’... they can only be overcome through the exercise of human and Christian solidarity, to which the Church invites and tirelessly promotes... today it is necessary for the Church in Honduras to assume the responsibility of inviting Hondurans to the exercise of human and Christian solidarity.” John Paul II, “Encyclical Letter,” *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987), 33.

Purpose of the Study

The paper intends to make an anthropological visualization of the Honduran Garifuna woman in the light of a Christian feminist reflection. I also consider biblical principles in my feminist reflection.⁵

Research often requires the demonstration of a hypothesis that becomes *ipso facto* the purpose of the study. This is no exception; the thesis for this research is that in defending their rights, Honduran Garifuna women do not need to fall into extremes of radical feminism that threaten the very nature of what it means to be a woman.⁶ Other purposes of the paper include:

1. To demonstrate that the indifference to the struggle of Garifuna women to defend their ancestral territories undermines one of their most important premises: the Garifuna people without territory are not a people.⁷ But above all, it violates the biblical principle to love others as we love ourselves (Matt. 22:39; Lev. 19:18; see also Lev. 19:9-11, 15, 17). This includes all people, even if they have a different skin color.
2. To prove that the organized struggle of Garifuna women serves as a parameter and an example to the rest of the indigenous peoples of Honduras and the population in general.

⁵ It is only through the word of God that a true balance can be brought, for only in the Sacred Scriptures do we find: “‘principles of reflection,’ ‘criteria of judgment’ and ‘guidelines of action’...” These three elements have an eminently practical orientation, that is, oriented to moral conduct. This was a quoted statement of Pope Paul VI and is in keeping with the spirit of what he will develop in this thesis. John Paul II, “Encyclical Letter,” *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987), 5.

⁶ It is a feminist current that emerged in the United States in the late 1960s that argues that the root of social inequality in all societies until now has been patriarchy and the domination of men over women. Alicia Puleu, “The Personal is Political: The Rise of Radical Feminism. Kate Millet,” *Women in Network: The Feminist Newspaper* (2011), accessed September 2021, <https://www.mujiresenred.net/spip.php?article2061>.

⁷ Miriam Miranda, “Freedom for Marianela and Jenifer Solórzano,” *OFRANEH-Garifuna Honduran Black Fraternal Organization* (March 10, 2021). https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=883194378891197. The Honduran Black Fraternal Organization (OFRANEH) was organized by the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS).

3. To establish that Latin American liberation feminist theology is a contribution of principles of hope for Honduran Garifuna women only if its foundations are biblical and contextual.

Methodology

To try to demonstrate the hypothesis of this research, we will use the Latin American theological method of the hermeneutical circle, which includes the trinomial: seeing, judging, and acting. Juan Luis Segundo explains it as follows:

the circular character of this interpretation lies in the fact that each new reality obliges us to interpret God's revelation anew, to change reality with it, and, therefore, to interpret it again... and so on... Political-economic-cultural liberation, the commitment to one's own context to change and improve the world, recovering the original word in the text for the present and the use of a liberating language and praxis.⁸

The Jesuit philosopher and theologian Segundo discusses a dynamic history that changes and forces the theologian to interpret again with the aim of changing reality. It is interpreted not only for the sake of interpretation; it is interpreted to change reality, but that new reality will require another interpretation later, and this is the process that is repeated over and over again. Hence, the name hermeneutical circle.

Sources of Knowledge

This article uses high-level sources in the field of feminist theology, history, and other social sciences. Since the Honduran Garifuna woman is the focus of our research, we have consulted as much of the available literature as possible in relation to our topic of study.

It should also be mentioned that as part of the research, we participated in a virtual discussion organized by the Institute for Policy Studies under the theme "The difficulties, struggles and actions of the

⁸ In his Latin American theology, Segundo writes about the arrival of an epistemological hour in which the method gains its place of priority over the content, and this will determine, in the future, whether this theology is liberating, that it maintains indefinitely the liberating character in its content. This method aims at proclaiming the good news of God's kingdom in concrete words and deeds. Juan Luis Segundo, *Liberation of Theology* (Buenos Aires: Cuadernos Latinoamericanos, 1975), 48.

Honduran Black Fraternal Organization.”⁹ This was done with women who are leaders of the Honduran Garifuna population. This discussion is considered a valuable source for the research.

The researcher also visited a series of virtual university libraries, both public and private. Finally, I must add the typical sources used in any research, such as reference books, specialized books, journals, official documents, and statistics, among others.

Triple Oppression of Honduran Garifuna Women

And I hated my hair and my thick lips and looked painfully at my toasted flesh. And I backed off, Black! And I backed away... Black! Black! Black! And time went by, and always bitter. I still carried my heavy burden on my back, and how heavy it was!... I straightened my hair, powdered my face, and the same word always resounded through my hair: Black! Black! Black! Black! Black! Black! Neeegra!¹⁰

The Garifuna woman is an important entity in her community, which we must see from the conception of wearing their colorful costumes.¹¹ It is necessary to understand that these are directly related to their religious practices and rituals, without neglecting the importance of preparing their foods based on coconut, fish, and shellfish to support their families. When these elements come together, they highlight the culture of the Garifuna communities. A very important aspect of the culture, highlighted, is that the Garifuna people are the only Matriarchal or Matrifocal ethnic group in Honduras.¹² Garifuna women, through their knowledge, skills, and work over the years, have promoted the transfer of their customs, the solution to the problems in their communities, as well as in the processes of organization and the defense of the

⁹ This took place on 20 September 2021. The virtual Letelier-Moffitt Awards ceremony was held virtually on Wednesday, October 13, 2021. OFRANEH was awarded the annual award.

¹⁰ Santa Cruz Gamarra Poem, “They Shouted Out to Me, Negra!” Me Gritaron Negra, in *TV Peru Profiles on YouTube* (La Victoria, Perú: October 27, 1922), accessed September 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTIsusTKv9I>.

¹¹ Nai Botello, “Garifuna Costume: Description and Features,” *Lifeder* (July 14, 2020), accessed September 2021, <https://www.lifeder.com/traje-garifuna/>. The Garifuna costume is a garment of African origin, made of a colorful fabric known as mandaguina.

¹² Regarding this issue, the author Conkey Tringha, expresses these cultures that have a social and family conception exactly opposite to the patriarchal one. Martín Cano Abreu, “Estudio de las sociedades matrilineales S.M. Nómadas,” *Revista Crítica de Ciencias Sociales y Jurídicas* 12 (2005), 12.

environment and their ancestral territories. This, however, has not freed them from being victims of a triple oppression: being women, being poor, and being black. In other words, the fires of violence have been fanned against them, and criminalization and murder, as well as discrimination, are still prevalent.

In this sense, I have divided this study as follows: the first part discusses poverty as a result of injustice and oppression. The second part evaluates physical and sexual violence as an element of aggression against Garifuna women in the defense of their rights. The third part examines discrimination as an element of violation of the dignity of women.

Poverty: The Fruit of Injustice as an Oppressive Element

The triple oppression of Garifuna women can be described as a bond that binds them tightly, impeding their growth and development. These women, who represent 52% of the Garifuna population, are bound by generalized poverty, turning them into a sector of the population of the least favored.¹³ To be more emphatic on this subject, a reference would be made to Medellín and Puebla in the face of the depressing situation of the condition. They express the following: the situation of poverty shows real faces, by which we could recognize the suffering of Christ. These suffering faces live on the Honduran coastal lands. They have gone unnoticed in terms of welfare plans throughout the history of Honduras but require immediate attention from the authorities.

The generalized poverty of which Garifuna women are victims should not surprise us because out of the 10,063,000 current population of Honduras,¹⁴ 72% live in poverty. That is to say that 7,245,369 Hondurans are poor.¹⁵

¹³ According to data from CENNIS, the distribution by sex indicates that 52% of the population are women and 48% are men. This data gives us an idea of the number of Garifuna women in the country. See Government of Honduras, CENNIS (2020), accessed September 2021, <https://ceniss.gob.hn/>.

¹⁴ According to the World Bank, Honduras is a country facing significant challenges. In rural areas, about 1 in 5 Hondurans live in extreme poverty or on less than \$1.90 a day. World Bank “Honduras: Overview,” *World Bank in Honduras* (May 28, 2021), accessed September 2021, <https://www.bancomundial.org/es/country/honduras/overview#1>.

¹⁵ World Bank “Honduras: Overview.” Analyzing these percentages in light of what is established by the World Bank, we can infer that in 1980 in Honduras

According to the human poverty index, more than half of the Honduran population have not had a long life, much less a healthy one, nor have they had access to education or a decent standard of living.¹⁶ To refer specifically to the Garifuna population and poverty rates, the National Information Center of the Social Sector indicates that:

According to the monetary poverty model, 13.62% of the indigenous and Afro-Honduran population is in conditions of relative poverty and 75.3% in extreme poverty... From the multidimensional perspective, 23% are vulnerable, 35% are in moderate poverty, 16% in severe poverty... Regarding the activity carried out, it is recorded that 33.5% of the population has a paid job, 32.8% carry out unpaid domestic activities or household chores, 27.2% are students, 6.17% declared that they do not have any activity and 0.25% were grouped as retired, pensioned, and disabled.¹⁷

Poverty is a scourge that does not discriminate by skin color, but it does increasingly oppress the most vulnerable, as in the case of Garifuna women. In addition to the above, the condition of Garifuna women worsens because, according to data from CENNIS, out of the total population of women, 93,763 (representing 27.7%) are mothers who are heads of households. Of the total number of women heads of households, 43.8% are single, 17% are in a common-law union, 13.7% have been widowed, 13.6% are married and 1% have been divorced.

The Garifuna culture is matrifocal, and a large number of Garifuna women are heads of households. The high rate of migration is one of the social facts that has surprised Honduran society.¹⁸ Caravan

27.3% of the population was in a condition of extreme poverty, taking the data as of 2020 18.8% of the population lives in poverty.

¹⁶ To be more specific, we refer to the fact that the 72% reflected represents 53.2% of Hondurans who are in poverty and 18.8% in extreme poverty or indigence. See ECLAC, *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean* (2020), accessed September 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/es>.

¹⁷ CENNIS, "International Day of the Garifuna Peoples," National Centre for Social Sector Informament (2020), accessed September 2021, <https://www.ceniss.gob.hn/actualidad/diaindigena.html>.

¹⁸ We have 72% poverty and of that number more than 30% live in destitution. This has caused, among other things, the mass migration of Hondurans to Spain and the United States. It is estimated that more than one and a half million Hondurans are living in the diaspora. See Alfonso Arrivillaga Cortés, "The Garifuna Diaspora: Between Memories and Borders," *UDEA Journals*

migration to the United States is a social fact that has never occurred before. This is an option that Garifuna men take, leaving their families, which compelled Garifuna women to assume economic responsibilities for the family.

According to a report by the Inter-American Development Bank on ethnic poverty in Honduras, the influence of black women is high in Garifuna society, as they are the heads of the household, given the high migration of men. Their financial contribution is decisive. They make bread, cassava, and other foods, in addition to other craft skills. In addition to their domestic work, the women do salaried work washing and ironing clothes and selling typical food in the streets and city markets.¹⁹ That is to say that the responsibility of the home, the upbringing of children, and the family economy falls on the Garifuna women. Unfortunately, they do not have the necessary economic resources to promote a dignified life for themselves and their families.

The condition of poverty among Garifuna women is more severe because they represent part of the population with less formal education. According to data provided by CENNIS, 69.46% of the indigenous and Afro-Honduran population declared that their highest level of education was primary education, 13.39% have no education at all, 12% have secondary education, 3.15% managed to attend only pre-basic education, and only 2.07% managed to achieve higher education, non-university higher education or postgraduate education.

The limitation of access to education and, in many cases, the upbringing with greater responsibilities in the home falls on Garifuna women, preventing their advancement and access to formal education and making them more dependent on the informal economy, leading to higher rates of poverty and suffering. In the Garifuna ancestral territories, these faces are visible, and they are increasing. The human experience that Puebla collects is that compassion is born by being able to recognize the suffering face.²⁰

(2011), accessed September 2021,

<https://revistas.udca.edu.co/index.php/boletin/article/view/7945>.

¹⁹ See Utta von Gleich and Ernesto Gálvez, “Ethnic Poverty in Honduras,” Inter-American Development Bank (1999), accessed September 2021, <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/spanish/document/Pobreza-%C3%A9tnica-en-Honduras.pdf>.

²⁰ CELAM Press. According to this article, the Church and the Honduran authorities should take a tour of what they contemptuously call “the dark-skinned ones” and see up close the reality of these suffering faces, not to make

It has become clear that Honduras is a poor country and that the people who have governed are far from generating employment to fight poverty. This might have added a very heavy burden that lies on the backs of every person born in Honduras, creating generalized poverty. A small percentage of the population that can be referred to as the oligarchy of the country that has governed in a selfish, merciless way, plunging millions of human beings into cruel poverty. This makes the Garifuna women oppressed and victims of injustice.²¹

This brings us to the next section of this paper, which is related to criminalization and murders. Attention will be given to the issue of physical and sexual violence as an element of aggression against Garifuna women.

Violence and Discrimination as Elements of Aggression Against the Dignity of Women

Gender-based violence is also one of the most repugnant evils of Honduran society. This, among other things, is a product of the inherited macho culture. Justo Fernández mentions, “When one suffers or exercises machismo, one sees the woman as an incomplete being, who lacks something, an inferior being. Sometimes, this view is resolved from the repugnant superiority of violence and subjugation and at other times from a kind of paternalism.”²² This culture of machismo, in most cases, is so evident that it puts women at a great disadvantage, triggering a wave of violence, and therefore, the rate of women murdered is

a profit but to give them hope. See CELAM Press, “An approach to the poor in the light of Puebla,” *CELAM General Secretariat* (March 29, 2019), accessed September 2021, <https://prensacelam.org/2019/03/29/un-acercarse-a-los-pobres-a-la-luz-de-puebla/>.

²¹ Emma Volonté argues that Honduras is a country at the service of its oligarchy. In Honduras, ten families make the decisions. They control industries, banks, the media, the police, the Supreme Court of Justice, the Public Prosecutor’s Office, the National Assembly and the government. See Emma Volonté, “Honduras: A Country at the Service of its Oligarchy,” *Otramérica: From South to North* (2020), accessed September 2021, <http://otramerica.com/temas/honduras-un-pais-al-servicio-de-su-oligarquia/1682>.

²² Justo Fernández, “Machismo is Inherited,” *ElDiario.es* (August 6, 2016), accessed September 2021, https://www.eldiario.es/aragon/sociedad/machismo-hereda_128_3871946.html.

scandalous.²³ According to the Observatory of Violence against Women in Honduras, from January to September 2021, there were 235 violent deaths of women.²⁴ Those numbers did not drop even in the midst of the pandemic. On the contrary, crimes against women continued to increase.²⁵

As we mentioned earlier, of the entire Garifuna population, 52% are women. In history, physical and sexual violence against black women has increased. There are many cases where they have been physically and sexually assaulted.²⁶ In recent years, the problem has been greater for Honduran Garifuna women because the violent deaths and murders have been as they have defended their human rights and their territories. In this regard, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR):

Condemns the prevalence of killings and other forms of violence against Garifuna women in Honduras, on the basis of their gender and ethnic-

²³ According to data from CDM's observatory of violence against women, they indicate that "In Honduras during 2020 we registered 278 violent deaths of women according to the media." Center for Women's Rights, "Observatory of Violence against Women" CDM (2020), accessed September 2021, <http://derechosdelamujer.org/project/monitoreo-2020/>.

²⁴ CDM, "Observatory of Violence" (2021), accessed September 2021, <https://derechosdelamujer.org/project/monitoreo/>. It is important to mention that this data is not updated, that is, unfortunately it is higher.

²⁵ For more information, I recommend visiting the website of the Gender Unit of the Violence Observatory of the University Institute on Democracy, Peace and Security (IUDPAS). By reviewing the bulletins of previous years, we can get a clearer picture of violence against women in Honduras. University Institute in Democracy, Peace and Security, "Violent Death of Women and Femicides," *IUDPAS* (2019), accessed September 2021, <https://iudpas.unah.edu.hn/observatorio-de-la-violencia/boletines-del-observatorio-2/unidad-de-genero/>.

²⁶ The nineteenth-century gynecologist, J. Marion Sims, bought black slaves and used them as guinea pigs for his surgical experiments. He performed genital surgeries without anesthesia claiming that "black women don't feel pain." Despite his inhumane trials, Sims was named "The Father of Modern Gynecology." See Natalia Guerrero, "Sadist or Savior? Who Was J. Marion Sims, the Doctor Who Performed Vaginal Surgeries Without Anesthesia on Black Slaves and Is Considered the 'Father of Modern Gynecology,'" *BBC News: Latin America*, accessed September 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-41138128>.

racial origin. The IACHR calls on the Honduran State to implement comprehensive strategies to prevent these events, protect Garifuna women at risk, and comply with its obligation of due diligence to investigate, prosecute, and punish those responsible, as well as offer comprehensive reparations to all victims.²⁷

In a press release issued in 2019 by the IACHR, the energy call to the Honduran authorities was made evident because they are responsible for preventing these unfortunate events. The State of Honduras must protect Garifuna women at risk and fulfill this obligation diligently.²⁸ It must investigate, prosecute, and punish those responsible and provide security to their families. Contrary to this and despite the request made, the criminalization and murders in 2020 and 2021 against Garifuna women have continued.

As an example of criminalization and violence against women, reference can be made to a more recent example of the murder of four Honduran Garifuna leaders. According to the press release issued by the IACHR,

Available information, so far in September 2021, four murders of Garifuna women have been reported. Mirna Teresa Suazo Martínez, president of the Board of Trustees of the Masca Community in Omoa, was murdered on September 8 by unidentified individuals; Gilma Cacho, and her daughter, Fiori Amaya, from the Garifuna municipality of Santa Rosa de Aguán in Colón, were murdered on September 6; and Nayda Reyéz Jiménez, who was murdered on September 7 in the community of Bajamar, Puerto Cortés. The Commission also noted with concern the murder of Belkis García, which occurred in January of this year. Her body was reportedly found with signs of sexual violence in the Garifuna community of Sambo Creek in La Ceiba, Atlántida.²⁹

²⁷ See “International Commission on Human Rights, IACHR Condemns the Prevalence of Murders and Other Forms of Violence against Garifuna Women in Honduras,” *OAS: LACHR Press Release* 238 (September 24, 2019), accessed September 2021,

<https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2019/238.asp>.

²⁸ “International Commission on Human Rights.” Regarding the IACHR, this Commission reiterates the need for all acts of violence against Garifuna women to be promptly and thoroughly investigated, and for victims and their families to be treated with dignity and respect during the justice process, in accordance with inter-American standards on the matter.

²⁹ “International Commission on Human Rights.”

These murders are evidence of the empire of physical and sexual violence to which Garifuna women are subjected. The worst thing is that these crimes remain unsolved, and the State of Honduras has not complied in combating violence against women, particularly those who belong to Afro-descendant, peasant, and indigenous communities, and developed roles of community leadership and defense of human rights. That is to say that in Honduras, the situation of oppression for Garifuna women leaders is aggravated because they would be victims, not of triple oppression, but of four ties that oppress them, that is, for being women, for being poor, for being black, and for being leaders. According to Commissioner Margarette May Macaulay in the IACHR Report on Women's Rights and on the Rights of People of African Descent:

Garifuna women leaders are in a situation of multiple risks due to their gender, their ethnic-racial origin and their work, indicating that they receive continuous and worrying information related to various acts of violence against them and these murders are the most extreme example of violence against women and must therefore be duly investigated and punished.³⁰

In other words, Garifuna women leaders, in ensuring the defense of territorial, environmental, and natural resource rights linked to their local communities, risk their own lives and those of their families. Thus, it could be said that as long as these brave women continue to oppose the injustice and expropriation of their territories, there will be Garifuna blood spilled if we consider that Honduras is considered the deadliest country for environmental defenders and activists.³¹ This condition of

³⁰ "International Commission on Human Rights."

³¹ According to the investigation and report published by Global Witness, we must remember the murder of Berta Cáceres, who in life was the president of COPINH (Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras) and who was murdered in March 2016. See "Case History: Berta Cáceres," Front Line Defenders (2019), accessed September 2021, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/case-history-berta-c%C3%A1ceres>. Global Witness reports chronic dangers for human rights defenders in Honduras (February 2017). This work of defending human rights brings with it a high rate of murders. A high percentage of Garifuna women leaders who speak out against the dispossession of their territories face death along the way. See Gonzalo Roza, "Global Witness Reports Chronic Dangers for Human Rights Defenders in Honduras," *Coalition for Human Rights in Development* (February 3, 2017), accessed September 2021,

violence has already been seen in Honduran territory when the leaders of the Garifuna communities have been murdered, and others have been criminalized. With regard to the criminalization that occurs within the Garifuna communities, it is important to mention one of the most recent cases of criminalization of which they have been victims, the case of the detention of Ms. Silvia Bonilla Flores, Ms. Marianela Mejía Solórzano, and Ms. Jennifer Mejía Solórzano, defenders of the territory and rights of the Garifuna people and members of the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH). They could face up to 10 years in prison if convicted.³²

These social problems mentioned so far of violence, criminalization, and injustice that occur in the Garifuna communities should not be taken with indifference by any sector of civil society in Honduras, much less by the church.

On violence, it is important to understand that the church has a lot to say, although we often see a passive church without pronouncing itself on social problems. It is necessary to understand that “Violence is never a just response... Violence is a lie because it goes against the truth of our faith, the truth of our humanity. Violence destroys what it purports to defend: the dignity, life, and freedom of the human being.”³³ Especially when the violence comes from those who have the responsibility to safeguard life, because the problem of oppression of physical and sexual violence exercised against Garifuna women can be said to emanate from the short-sightedness of the State in not taking a proactive role in the situation and not speaking out in favor of those they call black. It is forgotten that they are also people with human dignity who contribute to the development of the country. This is also a problem of the church because, with its silence, it becomes an

<https://rightsindevelopment.org/news/global-witness-reporta-peligros-cronicos-para-defensores-de-derechos-humanos-en-honduras/?lang=es>.

³² As reported by the UN, Jennifer Mejía Solórzano was arrested on March 3 of 2021 and when Marianela Mejía Solórzano went to the police station to inquire about her sister’s arrest, she was also detained. See UNHCR, “Honduras must stop criminalizing the defense of the human rights of Garifuna communities, warn UN experts,” *What are Human Rights?* (July 9, 2021), accessed September 2021,

<https://www.ohchr.org/SP/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27290&LangID=S>.

³³ John Paul II, “Pontificium Consilium de Iustitia et Pace,” in *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. No. 5 (Vatican: USCCB Publishing, 2004), 298–302.

accomplice. It should be understood that throughout the history of Honduras,³⁴ the human rights of this sector of the population have been trampled upon.³⁵ They have been victims of poverty, violence, and discrimination that attacks the very heart of what it means to be human.³⁶ In other words, the human dignity of Garifuna women has been violated. It is a sin of indifference from which all Hondurans must be called to repentance and to act accordingly since the biblical precept indicates: “Let no one seek good only for himself, but for all” (Phil. 2:4). This also calls for the need to raise our voices and seek common welfare, without excluding anyone. It is also a call for the unity of all Hondurans. Otherwise, inequality and injustice will continue to be perpetuated in Honduras.

It is important to consider what has been expressed by the UN refugee agency (UNHCR), which indicates that the social problems of this century are forced displacement, hunger, poverty, racism, conflicts, and gender violence.³⁷ They have been dispossessed of their lands and murdered for the defense of their rights, and many of their leaders have been forced to leave the country. An example is the case of the president of OFRANEH, Miriam Miranda, who is currently in exile, all for raising her voice and proclaiming herself in favor of human rights, the defense of the environment, and their ancestral territories. She had to leave Honduras to preserve her life and to have the opportunity to continue acting and denouncing the injustices against her people.³⁸ She

³⁴ See OFRANEH, “On the 80th anniversary of the massacre in the Garifuna community of Durugubuti (San Juan, Tela),” *ODHPINH Communiqué* (8 September 2014), accessed September 2021, <https://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2017/03/10/a-los-80-anos-de-la-masacre-en-la-comunidad-garifuna-de-durugubuti-san-juan-tela/>.

³⁵ See Víctor Virgilio López García, *The Bay of Puerto del Sol and the Garifuna Massacre of San Juan* (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History, 2008).

³⁶ Amnesty International, “Discrimination” (2021), accessed September 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/es/what-we-do/discrimination/>.

³⁷ UNHCR, “Society’s current problems and their consequences,” UNHCR (May 2018), accessed September 2021, https://cacnur.org/blog/problemas-actuales-de-la-sociedad-y-sus-consecuencias-tc_alt45664n_o_pstn_o_pst/.

³⁸ See International Federation for Human Rights: “Honduras: Threats and harassment against Miriam Miranda and three other members of the Honduran Black Fraternal Organization (OFRANEH),” *FIDH Communiqué* (2017), accessed September 2021, <https://www.fidh.org/es/temas/defensores-de->

serves as an example of perseverance until she finds justice. In the life of this Garifuna woman, we must find a symbol of greatness of heart, obedience, and mercy, because she is acting in accordance with eternal precepts, “If today you listen to his voice, do not harden your hearts” (Ps. 95:7-8; Heb. 3:15; Ezek. 36:26).

The church in Honduras must act with “the same mind that was also in Christ” (Phil. 2:5), ready to serve, seek equality, and today, as always, call each one to put aside his hard heart and show mercy. For Jesus and Paul, this meant putting life itself as an offering (Phil. 2:17).

The Honduran Garifuna and Their Encounter with a Theology of Hope and Liberation

From now on I don't want to straighten my hair, I don't want to, and I'm going to laugh at those, who want to avoid — according to them — that to avoid any discomfort. They call black people of color, and what a color! BLACK and how nice it sounds! BLACK and what a rhythm it has! BLACK, BLACK, BLACK.³⁹

In this research, we are interweaving and considering fundamental aspects of the history of Garifuna women, from their commemorative arrival in Honduras and the struggles they have waged. They have had to overcome triple oppression exercised because they are poor, women, and black; this has driven them to organize for the defense of their human rights and the defense of their ancestral territories.

In this paper, we refer to particular facts of their history and why it has been different for Garifuna women, especially in the last years of their social struggle. However, far from being protected now, they are still vulnerable due to a series of factors that are:

- (1) Blacks in Honduras are not slaves but citizens belonging to their ancestral territories. That said, the inhabitants of Garifuna communities have been deprived and trampled on of their rights to equality.
- (2) We are no longer in the nineteenth century where it was believed that black women do not feel pain, but it has been a mistake of

[derechos-humanos/honduras-amenazas-y-hostigamiento-contra-miriam-miranda-y-otros-3.](#)

³⁹ Victoria Santa Cruz, “Me Gritaron Negra,” *TV Peru Profiles on YouTube* (La Victoria, Peru; October 27, 1922 – Lima, Peru; August 30, 2014), accessed September 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTIsusTKv9I>.

civil society and mostly of the church not to defend their integrity and dignity as women.

- (3) The struggle undertaken by Garifuna women is supported by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights,⁴⁰ because in a struggle that seeks social justice for their people, they should not be moved to silence or indifference, which still, unfortunately, happens.
- (4) Respect for the human dignity of the Garifuna communities and their women is a social struggle that should have been in the interest of the entire Honduran population since the principles of justice and peace are supported by the word of God.

Unfortunately, as a country, Honduras has not made the necessary progress in terms of civilization, respect for life, development, and commitment to equality for its inhabitants, regardless of the color of their skin. To this end, the study of this paper is carried out in two main parts. First is the social struggle undertaken in the last violent events of which they have been victims. This is done through the representation of their organizations, such as OFRANEH and SUNLA, to obtain the social justice so desired.

The second is to establish the link and point of contact of Garifuna women with a Latin American liberation theology that establishes a change in the history of Honduran Garifuna women individually to produce a generalized and collective hope based on their value as women.

Principle of Social Justice for the Liberation of the Garifuna

The history of Garifuna women has been marked by widespread poverty, which has created a dent in their personal and collective rights in their Garifuna communities. This is a product of the social injustice that has prevailed in Honduras over the years, being the most unequal country in the region; this and the condition of poverty and corruption

⁴⁰ International Commission on Human Rights, "IACHR Condemns the Prevalence of Murders and Other Forms of Violence against Garifuna Women in Honduras," *OAS: LACHR Press Release* 238 (September 24, 2019), accessed September 2021, https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2019/238.asp.

are scourges that should have been overcome years ago, but this has not been the case because there has been a lack of social justice.⁴¹

I will now refer to elements of the social struggles of Garifuna women that have had repercussions on social justice. This is the product of organized crime, because as we have seen, Garifuna women have been murdered and criminalized multiple times. Due to the above and in commemoration of the 224th anniversary of the arrival of the Garifuna to Honduras, the coordinator of the Honduran Black Fraternal Organization (OFRANEH),⁴² Miriam Miranda,⁴³ noted that there is a plan of genocide against that ethnic group by the State of Honduras, for which she states:

We have absolutely nothing to celebrate because this population is being persecuted, criminalized, prosecuted, and condemned to disappearance, we are fighting because we believe, and we are fully convinced, that we have the right to continue living here in Honduras and in peace.⁴⁴

⁴¹ The World Bank tells us that Honduras has an inequality rate of 52.1%, placing it in first place as the most unequal country in the Northern Triangle of Central America (TNC). GINI coefficient, data at most recent value, 2018, accessed September 2021,

<https://www.bancomundial.org/es/country/honduras/overview>.

⁴² According to the IPS, it has been an organization of the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH) since 1978, accessed September 2021, <https://ips-dc.org/ips-anuncia-45-edicion-de-los-premios-letelier-moffit-de-derechos-humanos/>.

⁴³ Miriam Miranda was born in Santa Fe, in the municipality of Trujillo, Colón. She received the “Carlos Escaleras” environmental award in 2016. For more than 32 years she has defended the environment and land of the Garifuna. She is a leader of the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH) and her main struggles are focused on the defense of Garifuna territories. In Berlin, she received the 2019 Human Rights Award from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in recognition of her struggle. “Miriam Miranda,” accessed September 2021,

<https://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/en/contexto/item/2138-miriam-miranda-un-legado-de-lucha-y-sacrifice-by-the-Garifuna-people>.

⁴⁴ Agreement on Information and Documentation on Africa with the Complutense University of Madrid (CIDAF-UCM). Th 224th anniversary of the arrival of the Garifuna people in Honduras. Nothing to celebrate. CIDAF (April 14, 2021), accessed September 2021, <https://cidafucm.es/224-aniversario-de-la-llegada-del-pueblo-garifuna-a-honduras-nada-que-celebrar>.

These strong statements by Miranda arise because the Garifuna community has been denouncing, in recent years, the persecution by the authorities as well as the destruction and expulsion from their territories, and the forced disappearance of Garifuna leaders.⁴⁵

It is important to make it clear that social injustice has led to the persecution of Garifuna communities and has put at risk Garifuna women who speak out in favor of human rights and the defense of their territories. This constant struggle of Garifuna women in favor of and in search of social justice has had positive advances at the international level in accordance with the IACHR's ruling:

In 2015, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights recognized the violation of the human rights of the Garifuna communities and established a series of reparations, including the State's obligation to title, delimit, and demarcate the traditional territories of the Garifuna communities of Punta Piedra and Triunfo de la Cruz. Honduras has not yet complied with these measures.⁴⁶

Although there was a resolution at the international level in favor of the Garifuna communities to grant them legality and respect for their ancestral territories, six years have passed, and the State of Honduras has not complied. On the contrary, "for the Garifuna, terror, intimidation, and violence continue and once again mourning reaches their ancestral territories. Proof of this is the disappearance of the Garifuna leaders of the Triunfo de La Cruz."⁴⁷

⁴⁵ As an example of this, we can mention the case of the four Garifuna men who disappeared from the Triumph of the Cross, and in which the Garifuna women leaders of OFRANEH have played an arduous role, accessed accessed September 2021, <https://im-defensoras.org/etiqueta/sunla/>.

⁴⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Honduras must stop criminalizing the defense of the rights of Garifuna communities," *UNHCR Report* (2019), accessed September 2021, <https://www.ohchr.org/SP/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27290&LangID=S>.

⁴⁷ In a letter endorsed by OFRANEH and 200 human rights organizations, they reported on this unfortunate event where "Alberth Sneider Centeno, who is the President of the Board of Trustees of Triunfo de la Cruz, Milton Joel Martínez Álvarez, Suami Aparicio Mejía García and Gerardo Misael Trochez Calix. These young Garifuna have been victims of enforced disappearance since July 18, 2020, when a group of armed men from the Police Investigation Directorate (DPI) entered the community and took them away. This is a clear violation of their rights and intimidation." Reported by OFRANEH, IM-

This unfortunate event demands social justice, as well as the clarification of the facts. The families mourning the forced disappearance of their loved ones bring despair to the community in general, a product of opposing the expropriation of their ancestral territories and the promotion of forced displacement. This is an act of administrative blindness and social injustice to dispossess the Garifuna of their lands.⁴⁸ The expropriation of land from the poor in Honduras has occurred throughout its history, as evidenced by the banana and mining concessions that were granted as a result of the liberal reform.

It is unfortunate and sad that the blood of the Garifuna will most likely continue to flow. Now, a new problem arises that endangers their ancestral territories: the implementation of the Employment and Economic Development Zone (ZEDE),⁴⁹ also popularly called model cities.⁵⁰ This new proposal intends to develop in the territories of Bay Islands, La Ceiba, Choloma, and some other places.⁵¹

The above comes to life when we understand a little about what is happening in Honduras, with the ZEDES:

In the recent past there were warnings and at this point, many analysts and lawyers believe that not even the creators of this law, who encourage the project, have realized the serious damage they are doing

Defensoras SUNLA, accessed September 2021, <https://im-defensoras.org/etiqueta/sunla/>.

⁴⁸ To better understand land dispossession: “Extractivism is the process used by the powerful to extract resources from indigenous peoples through economic and human capital.” This is as expressed by the Key Actors in Betulia Community of Guadeloupe (January 2017).

⁴⁹ The Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH), the Honduran Black Fraternal Organization (OFRANEH), the Jubilee South Americas, and the Transnational Institute, “Extractivism and Community Resistance in Honduras” (June 2019), accessed September 2021, https://www.tni.org/files/publication-downloads/extractivismo_y_resistencia_comunitaria_en_honduras_0.pdf.

⁵⁰ Fernando García Rodríguez, “Bubble Cities: Employment Zones and Economic Development ZEDE in Honduras,” *Political Legal Analysis and the Legislation of the ZEDE Honduras* (2019), accessed September 2021, <http://observatoriodescentralizacion.org/>.

⁵¹ Xiomara Orellana, “The half-truths behind the promotion of ZEDES,” CESPAD (June 2021), accessed September 2021, <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/06/23/las-verdades-a-medias-detras-de-la-promocion-de-las-zedes/>.

to Honduras. But the deputies of the National Congress of Honduras, in their eagerness to respond to various interests, approved a constitutional reform to give life to the ZEDES, and did the following: they gave legal personality and a territory, as a subject, to the ZEDES. They gave it a body that has a legislative character and is called the Committee on Best Practices. They have a body that will act as the Executive Power, through the figure of the Secretary of the ZEDES. They have a Court for the Protection of Individual Rights, which will act as the Supreme Court of Justice. It is practically a form of government and is structured in the ZEDES, which implies a renunciation by the people of Honduras of their right to exercise the power of the Sovereign over these territories.⁵²

The following questions arise: how long will evil and injustice prevail, and why has there been no respect for the dignity of the Garifuna communities? Why is there no talk of the impact on the territories, the promotion of extractivism, and the new strategies of land dispossession that will impact the lives of communities and their inhabitants? Will the dispossession of their territories to be granted to the tourism sector and ZEDES industry bring true development? Why think of developing a small portion of territory within a territorially small country when you can build a large nation? As Avendaño puts it: “if development includes dispossession of the lands of our Garifuna, of our peasants, this cannot be development.”⁵³

Ideally, this development project would include all Hondurans equally, but if what it contemplates is to benefit a privileged sector, we lose the concept of public good once again. It is important to ask why the State intends to mercilessly dispossess the Garifuna communities of their only territories when they have many others that they could develop. It is for these types of acts and many others that prophetic denunciation on the part of the church is required; the triple oppression of which Garifuna women are victims must be issues of national interest that cannot be ignored, as well as the deaths of environmentalists, the mobile hospitals, the looting of the Social Security Administration, and the destruction of the social security system. Among other cases of corruption that have passed year after year, regardless of the color of the government in power.

It is necessary to bring enlightenment to the blind with the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ and the justice of the kingdom of God like a

⁵² Orellana, “The half-truths behind the promotion of ZEDES.”

⁵³ R. Avendaño, R. y L. Navas, *Extractivismos, Conflictos y Resistencias* (Bogotá: Censat Agua Viva–Amigos de la Tierra Colombia, 2014), 35.

rising sun shining on the horizon of the sea that touches the Garifuna ancestral territory. The church must react and urgently denounce criminalization, violence, and expropriation, promote the ancestral guarantee of the land, develop without discrimination, and freely demand that the State of Honduras comply with social justice. “For the Lord loves justice” (Ps. 37:28).

In the same way the church must call to repentance the men and women who, yielding to the deceitful desires of their hearts, are imprisoned by covetousness, avarice, and the love of money, which is “the root of all kinds of evils” (1 Tim. 6:10). It is the love of money which allows the germ of corruption to spring up in people’s hearts and minds and contributes in a vile way to the undermining, harming, and murdering of the Garifuna in Honduras. For all other Hondurans, it is necessary to keep in mind: “Do not stop doing good for anything in this world; Turn away from wickedness!” (Pro. 4:27). No one else, even when the opportunity arises, should lend themselves to stop doing good and to act against vulnerable populations. The next section will give attention to Latin American feminist liberation theology. This theology focuses on the process of an encounter with the hope of liberation for the Honduran Garifuna women.

Latin American Feminist Theology of Liberation as a Contribution of Principles of Hope

In Honduras, 52% of the Garifuna population is made up of women, who have been subjected to so many situations of captivity and enslavement. They walk as though they are dead. They live in despair and need an act of liberation from the oppression to which they have been subjected. As Father James Francis Carney noted, we need to contextualize the words of Luke’s Gospel to ensure liberation for all.⁵⁴ Jesus himself came to transform this world into the Kingdom of God to take away the sins of the world, which include injustice, poverty, ignorance, institutionalized violence, and economic neocolonialism. This is the prophetic mission of the church.⁵⁵ It is the preaching of the

⁵⁴ Better known as Father Guadalupe a Jesuit priest of American origin, upon his ordination, he arrived in Honduras to work among the peasants of Yoro and Colón in 1962. He was captured, tortured, and eventually killed by the Honduran army in El Aguacate, Olancho, on September 16, 1983. “Jim Guadalupe Carney,” accessed September 2021, https://www.ecured.cu/Jim_Guadalupe_Carney.

⁵⁵ Guadalupe Carney, *Sólo Dígame Lupe* (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Editorial Guaymurás, 2004), 296.

liberating gospel as principles of hope. It is the anointed word that initiates the liberating practice that is urgently needed in the reality of Honduran Garifuna women, a word that contextualizes from their theological place, that is, their ancestral territory, and above all, their own bodies. Their skin is black.

For Garifuna women, the hope of liberation can come through Latin American liberation theology, as long as it can be contextualized and made understandable to them, considering that, just as not all women's reflection is feminist, neither is all theological reflection in Latin America liberating. According to feminist theologian Maria Pilar Aquino, in one of her articles on this subject:

There are "theologies" that can be used as an instrument of control and exclusion, not only of women, but also of the poor, of indigenous peoples, of Afro-Amerindian peoples, and of nature. When this article refers to the term "liberation," it designates the multiple, associated and interrelated forms of oppression that derives from the Ibero-Portuguese colonial heritage, the patriarchal macho system, and the current structure of imperialist machismo, dragging it into a dynamic of inhuman subordination, racist subjugation, growing impoverishment, and systematic exclusion for being a woman. It is from these realities that Latin American women live that theology wants to liberate, not only women, but every being that is the object of oppression, exclusion, domination, and exploitation.⁵⁶

Accordingly, we understand the range of possibilities that can arise from the conceptualization of this feminist theology, which is like a channel of hope for Garifuna women in Honduras since their Afro-descendant heritage marked by slavery, machismo, and violence, fits perfectly into their context. One aspect to consider is that on repeated occasions, the Garifuna women leaders pronounce that their defense is not only by and for their people but for all Hondurans who require freedom and who have been victims of exclusion and exploitation, so the theology of liberation for Garifuna women is a theology of hope. It is important to bring up what the theologian Marilú Rojas said:

The task of Latin American feminist liberation theology is to contribute to integral liberation and to the construction of new forms of egalitarian relationship between human beings and with the other beings with whom they coexist. It is not only a libertarian movement of women, but

⁵⁶ María Pilar Aquino, *Our Cry for Life: Latin American Theology from a Woman's Perspective* (San José, Costa Rica: DEI, 1992), 20.

of all human beings who, because of race, sex, status, or creed, are excluded.⁵⁷

In other words, Garifuna women require a complete and genuine, integral transformation to be able to opt for the egalitarian relationship to which they have longed so much, because the transformation must be in all society and in all hearts. Only a change within Hondurans will promote a relationship where none are excluded, marginalized, or violated. When we talk about a complete and genuine transformation, however ironic it may seem or difficult to accept, it even refers to forgiving the atrocious acts committed against Honduran Garifuna women, their communities, and their loved ones. It is important to mention that this feminist theology is loaded with love. To better understand this concept that seems alien to their reality, it is necessary to understand what the theologian Pamela Dickey Young points out:

The liberating character of Latin American feminist theology lies in the Gospel message as a message of liberation. This message of liberation tells women that God's love wants them to exercise their full potential as full human beings, which in the 20th century means recognizing that there are structures that have prevented them from doing so.⁵⁸

To put it differently, what must be understood is that only through the fullness that is produced by the love of God can Garifuna women be truly free, recognizing that everything that has made their impossibilities are produced by power structures of hatred, violence, poverty, and discrimination that have worked against them and that have prevented them from reaching their fullness. To point out and clarify this aspect, it is important to understand the statements of the theologian Ivone Gebara, when she writes: "What we do is, instead of relating the magical aspect often proper to religion, which has its value, the mythical aspect, we reinterpret in the light of ethical relations."⁵⁹

What is needed, therefore, is to abandon this magical and mythical aspect of religions, which often undermines the understanding of the

⁵⁷ Marilú Rojas, "Equidad y Género: Una Deuda Histórica," *Revista de la Universidad Iberoamericana* 7 (August-September 2015), 30–34.

⁵⁸ Pamela Dickey Young, *Feminist Theology — Christian Theology: In Search of a Method* (Mexico City: Documentation and Women's Studies, 1993), 89.

⁵⁹ Ivone Gebara, "We Need to Review the Struggle for the Secular State and the Role of Religions," *Politics of the Body* (2019), accessed September 2021, <https://www.revistabravas.org/ivone-gebara-esp>.

gospel, and to build a true ethical relationship in which the option for the poor is its fundamental category, even if not exactly the same as the gospel.⁶⁰ Marilú Rojas Salazar also demands an option for the women, who constitute the majority of the poor. As argued by Rojas Salazar, this theology is not to the liking of current politics, nor of religions marked by patriarchalism.⁶¹

Rojas Salazar also states that even when there is opposition it is important to build ethical relationships and solidarity with Honduran Garifuna women.⁶² “For God shows no partiality” (Rom. 2:11). If one acts in accordance with the sacred precept, the power exercised by men over men, men over women, powers of races would succumb and be annulled before the new legislature of ethical relations.

For everything would be based on the eternal precepts of equality that indicate: “But if you give more importance to some people, and treat them better than others, you are sinning and disobeying the law of God” (Jam. 2:9). This is the true greatness of the encounter of hope for liberation that Honduran Garifuna women must have, a legislature that emphasizes equal treatment and condemns acting with favoritism on all those who through acts of injustice and greed threaten the dignity, security, prosperity, and well-being of Honduran Garifuna women who are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27).

The women in Honduras need to increasingly organize themselves, even if there are some organizations in the country that currently represent and defend women’s rights.⁶³ We can say that the Honduran Garifuna are a source of inspiration for women’s movements across the country. They are also a true example of the conquest and perseverance in the struggle for their rights over the years.

To conclude, Honduran Garifuna women have had their encounter with the gospel, and it has knocked on their doors and has revealed itself

⁶⁰ Gebara, “We Need to Review the Struggle for the Secular State and the Role of Religions.”

⁶¹ Marilú Rojas Salazar, “Algunos Aportes de la Teología Ecofeminista Latinoamericana a la Experiencia Práctica de la Realidad Teológica,” *Journal of the European Society of Women in Theological Research* 20 (2012), 191–202.

⁶² Rojas Salazar, “Algunos Aportes de la Teología Ecofeminista Latinoamericana a la Experiencia Práctica de la Realidad Teológica,” 191–202.

⁶³ Rojas Salazar, “Algunos Aportes de la Teología Ecofeminista Latinoamericana a la Experiencia Práctica de la Realidad Teológica,” 191–202.

with the feminist theology of Latin America.⁶⁴ It has provided principles of hope, since it is a theology that is intimately related to daily life. The principle of justice for the oppressed calls for action on behalf of Garifuna women. They should run their own destiny. The entire Garifuna community of Honduras is in the focus of God's mission for their liberation of oppression.

Conclusion

While it is true that throughout this research, we have talked about how Garifuna women suffer from a triple oppression, we must not forget that all Hondurans suffer from the oppression of sin. This prevents them from having a relationship with God and therefore limits them to being at peace with their neighbors. Due to the above, we can say that the history written about Honduran Garifuna women has been written largely by people who do not fear God. Their acts represent selfishness, greed, revenge, or hatred. They have determined that it is a stained history, with poverty, blood, and discrimination.

This research revolves around Honduran Garifuna women and tries to make a Christian feminist reflection, understanding that it is only through the genuine approach of Garifuna women to God, as well as the authorities and their entire population, that in Honduras their condition can be changed and will begin to flourish. This can be done through love, generosity, solidarity, and justice. But it is also a call for the church to react and urgently denounce criminalization, violence, expropriation, and discrimination. The church should speak on issues concerning ancestral guarantee of land, development without discrimination, and demand that the State of Honduras comply with justice for Garifuna women and their descendants.

Garifuna women are oppressed by poverty, as a result of the widespread poverty that prevails in Honduras, but also by the poverty that Garifuna communities have experienced throughout history, as a result of the few opportunities for development and life plans that the Honduran State should have provided them.

⁶⁴ At the Linaje Santo Church in the city of La Ceiba, they have a women's Garifuna dance ministry, where women from their culture and their bodies proclaim the freedom that Jesus brought into their lives. See Holy Lineage Ministry, "We Are a Church of Impact," *Holy Lineage Apostolic and Prophetic Ministry* (2019), accessed September 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/linajesantolaceiba>.

Honduran Garifuna women have had no alternative but to take care of their families, organize, speak out in defense of their rights and their ancestral territories even when this implies sacrificing their own lives. This connection can be due to the matrifocal culture of the Garifuna people, the migration of men or their nature as mothers and in connection with mother earth and the maternal side of God.

While it is true that the Garifuna have their ancestral origin as slaves, in the twenty-first century, no human being should live under any type of slavery, whether physical, moral, mental, or spiritual. Therefore, Garifuna women should not be oppressed by poverty, violence, and discrimination.

The principle of social justice will be an element of liberation for Honduran Garifuna women, when it is understood that what is required is a change in the nature of the Honduran people, as shown by the acts carried out by Garifuna women leaders who seek the well-being of their fellow human beings and of their communities. That internal change is what will truly move a previously violent and unjust community to a future of peace and social justice.

Starting from Latin American theological reflection and contextualized to the theological place of their communities, struggles and despairs is that Garifuna women will be able to have that encounter with the living and effective word that will bring hope and liberation. Only there will they find their fullness and the true reason for their identity that drives their struggle, solidarity, justice, peace, and affirmation that comes from God, their creator.

Honduran Garifuna women must understand that, just as their language, dance, and music were proclaimed by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, they are a special culture for Honduras even when in their own country they are being violated, discriminated against, and dispossessed of their lands and their sea. They should remember that no one can take away their jet-black color and with this they have everything necessary for them to obtain the victory. God created them in his image and likeness; this should not be forgotten: Black they are!

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Priests, Healers, and Visionaries: A Comparative Study of Peruvian Shamanism and Pentecostalism on Worship and Healing Rites

Bernardo Campos

Abstract

This study deals with shamanism as a surviving sacril practice in today's Peruvian society beyond its millenary origin, prior to Catholic, Protestant, or Pentecostal Christianity. It looks at the function and significance of these practices at Ayabaca and Huancabamba, the Sierra de Piura, in Peru. The author takes a comparative approach regarding shamanism and Pentecostalism based on worship and healing rites. He argues that on a structural level, they are legitimately comparable — at least in the healing practices — even if theologically, they appeal to antagonistic spiritual forces. Shamanism is viewed as a symbolic organizer of the cultural *ethos*, an organizer of social consciousness, and a mediator between the world of spirits and the powers of this world.¹ The article concludes by noting that shamanism — understood anthropologically — is both the core of Andean lived religiosity and shares some similarities to certain aspects of Pentecostal healing rituals as observed in the Peruvian Andes.

Keywords: aboriginal religiosity, shamanism, Peruvian religions, neo-shamanism, popular sacredness, religious syncretism.

Function and Meaning of Nor-Andean Shamanism in Peruvian Society

How does the shaman understand his role in society? The shaman's systematic reflection on himself is a late phenomenon in the development of this type of practice. At its core, shamanism is driven by an innate desire to help others, rooted in instinct rather than reflective thinking. Along with this, a progressive accumulated experience will give the shaman a sense of wisdom and the roles to be developed. Life itself and its difficulties contribute to the shaman not giving himself too much

¹ José María Poveda, *The Way of Shaman: A Guide to Power and Healing* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1978), 37.

absolute importance, although he may have it in a relative way. It is unimportant because his strength in the face of nature is relative, and he knows it. At the same time, he is able to know things that others do not know and whose application in times of crisis may be very necessary.

If we affirm that a person's size can be measured by the size of the things that confront him or her, the shaman is a great man because he can confront the spirits, the forces of nature. Knowledge and a helping relationship can allow the shaman to believe that they are superior or proud. However, not giving themselves importance will allow them to act more efficiently and impeccably. In this sense, a woman's definition of herself and her work can be understood from the perspective of neo-shamanism:

I'm not a healer. I don't heal anyone. My concept of myself is that of a steppingstone on the path of self-discovery. I create a space where people can learn how incredibly wonderful, they are, teaching them to love themselves.²

Encounters with their own and others' adversity are a stimulus and educate their sensitivity. Thus, for the shaman, to heal is to be cured. In this sense, the essence of shaman healing is the ability to make or facilitate the healing of others. The shaman considers himself a mediator or catalyst (a term used in chemistry to define the substance that facilitates the production of transformation reactions, without whose presence would be more difficult or slower).

The confrontation with the extreme and profound, with illness, with fear and death, with torment and ecstasy are capable of making the shaman a brave being, at the same time that they help him to lose his self-importance in order to give himself to the health of his people. Narcissism is a bad ally of people of knowledge as it represents not being able to see reality with the eyes and feelings of others. A sense of humor is sometimes a good thermometer to see if someone is beyond themselves. Pride, fear, power, and death are natural enemies of the shaman. And at the same time, they are challenges that he has to overcome until his last dance with death.

More recently, urban consumerism and materialism bordering on utilitarianism tempt the shaman to slide from vocation to salaried professionalism, from feeling all with the community to individualism that looks at itself and sells its knowledge to the highest bidder.

² José María Poveda, *Shuar: Pueblo de las Cascadas Sagradas* (Quito, Ecuador: Mundo Shuar, 1998), 7.

Transaction and Opposition of Shamanism in the Peruvian Religious Field

Having described shamanism, there is the need to interpret it in light of the set of religious actors in the broader Peruvian society. The question is whether a particular way of attaching oneself to the sacred can fulfill not only religious demands or interests and provide symbolic goods of salvation but also effectively address the social needs and interests of the population. This includes responding to the genuine needs of the popular sectors.

It is not only a matter of verifying the forms, directions, or ambiguities of the sacral response to certain social problems, such as facilitating or impeding social change. It is important to determine whether the sacred religious system being studied contains any elements in its doctrines, practices, organization, ethical norms, or worldview that enable it to be aligned toward liberation in a particular social context. Or that they allow, at least, to discern when and under what religious-cultural, economic, and political conditions popular sacredness must exercise a statist, rebellious, or protestant function and not be left to chance from its ambiguity or socio-political indefiniteness as is traditionally recognized to the religious function and more specifically to millenarianisms.³

The religious response to social problems must probably be of different kinds and of different degrees of effectiveness, depending on whether it has succeeded in representing or channeling the religious sentiment of the people. This, in my opinion, will possibly depend on three basic factors: 1) The external social conditions that favor it because sacredness is not totally autonomous in society or culture.⁴ 2) The identity and function that the religious community assumes in the complex spectrum of the religious field of which it is a member and in which it plays a certain self-assigned or conferred role. 3) The position and capacity to intervene in the religious field in the current state of a hegemonic configuration (Gramsci), such as that promoted by Roman Catholicism in Peru and Latin America during the colony and in contemporary times.

³ Henri Desroche, "Genèse et Structure du Nouveau Christianisme Saint-Simonien," *Archives de Sociologie des Religions* (July 1968), 27–54; Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 216.

⁴ Otto Maduro, "Apuntes Epistemológico-Políticos para Una Historia de la Teología en América Latina," in Pablo Richard, ed., *Historia de la Teología en América Latina* (Lima, Perú, CEHILA, 1980), 19–38.

A quick overview of the configuration of the Peruvian Religious Field will be useful here. One of the first things to determine is whether shamanism is an independent religion or quasi-religious practice or if it is part of popular religiosity or some religious system, such as cultural Catholicism to use an anthropological category of Manuel Marzal, or if it is a religiosity such as the Andean one.⁵ To do this, it is necessary to first locate shamanism among the various social actors that make up the Peruvian religious field, observe the type of relationships between them, and then ask about its functionality in the current religious economy and also about its significance for the Peruvian cultural complex.

Composition of the Peruvian Religious Field

In my opinion, the Peruvian religious field is made up of, broadly speaking, the following streams:

Roman Catholicism in three aspects: the Catholicism of Christianity (traditional and cultural) established since the colony, the Catholicism of New Christianity in its modernizing and social promotion aspects after the crisis of representation in the eighteenth century; and popular Catholicism, which is promoted in the Peruvian highlands as a peculiar way of living the faith.

Historical Protestantism is weakly linked in Peru to the tradition of the official and European Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century; Protestantism mostly developed in the countries of southern Latin America, especially in the Río de la Plata, Brazil and southern Chile. We are referring here to Calvinism, Lutheranism, and Anglicans, which are non-existent as far as I know in the area of Huancabamba and Ayabaca, which are the Piuran highlands of Peru.

Denominational or Mission Protestantism, in direct organizational and ideological relationship with the missionary agencies of pietist tradition, fundamentally of North American origin, although their origins are European. They were Baptists, Presbyterians, Evangelical Churches, Wesleyans, and Nazarenes. Although the Wesleyans and Nazarenes settled mainly in the north of Peru, their radius of expansion has not reached the deeper areas of Ayabaca and Huancabamba, which is our field of study.

Pentecostalism with four basic tendencies: Pentecostalism of international expansion, with strong influence of North American fundamentalism; Pentecostalism of national roots, in open

⁵ Manuel María Marzal, *Tierra Encantada: Tratado de Antropología Religiosa de América Latina* (Lima, Perú: Editorial Trotta, S.A, 2002), 315–39.

differentiation with American fundamentalism, in most cases of the Assemblies of God; neo-Pentecostalism, closer to Catholicism than to evangelical Protestantism, mainly proponents of an ideology of economic prosperity and vocation to the business class; and the Divine Healing Movements which I have called “iso-Pentecostalism” because they are in tune with Pentecostalism, but which seem to have a different nature.⁶ This popular Pentecostalism, however, is the one that has become in tune with ancestral religious forms and the one that, perhaps, has managed to establish a relationship of harmony with the Andean cosmivision of the universe, very similar to that achieved by the Evangelical Association of the Israelite Mission of the New Universal Covenant, with its strong social composition of peasant migrants among its members. Or the one that the Adventists have achieved in other latitudes (such as in Puno, of southern Peru).

The so-called New Religious Movements (NRMs) refer to groups that have emerged on the religious scene, which can be categorized into three aspects:

- 1) Mediumistic religions, such as spiritualism, and certain magical-religious practices more akin to aboriginal shamanism.
- 2) Messianic religions, between which it is necessary to differentiate between those with a religious face and those with a more political face (such as that of certain groups that have taken up arms or subversives).
- 3) The esoteric religions of a rather scholastic and philosophical nature of Eastern and Western origin entered Latin America with force from the 1970s onwards.

Aboriginal Religiosity That Survives Under Christian and Indigenous Forms

On the one hand, the aboriginal syncretism (mixture of Christianity with native religion), which is usually called Catholicism or cultural church without the result of a creative synthesis resulting from centuries of evangelization and religious survival strategies.

On the other hand, the autonomous aboriginal religions with the desire to separate from Christianity. What we have here are, as the Argentine historian, theologian, and philosopher Enrique Dussel said, *chiaroscuro* in the midst of polychromy, where some sectors express greater influence or dependence on the liturgical forms of Christianity and other sectors, with greater autonomy, that reflects less influence of

⁶ Bernardo Campos, *De la Reforma Protestante a la Pentecostalidad de la Iglesia: Debate sobre el Pentecostalismo en América Latina* (Quito, Ecuador: CLAI, 1997), 14–28.

those forms.⁷ Aboriginal religions recreate or revive ancient and surviving pre-Hispanic religious practices. As their awareness of the past grows, they assert themselves in their own identity, trying to reconstruct it from ancestral religious practices.

This is, with its nuances, more or less the picture we have today. As we have seen, shamanic practices still preserve very ancient healing customs and, together with other beliefs, practices and styles of organization, maybe the threads that lead us to a greater knowledge of our present.

In the space of Peruvian social formation, it is necessary to ask, among other things, as Pierre Bourdieu suggests: Who are the laity in the complex religious field?⁸ How is the supply and demand of symbolic goods of salvation encoded in concrete terms, and in what political direction are priests, prophets, and sorcerers situated vis-à-vis the laity in relation to social processes?⁹ These are all questions that underlie the analysis of the identity and function of popular religions and typically religious practices such as shamanic ones, read in the light of Pierre Bourdieu's scheme of analysis.¹⁰

Supply and Demand of Symbolic Goods of Salvation

Pierre Bourdieu's Theory

According to Pierre Bourdieu, the religious field is the space in which all religious actors and institutions produce, reproduce, and distribute symbolic goods of salvation. Moreover, the dynamics of the religious field are due to the objective demand for symbolic goods of salvation, by which the clerics, have been dispossessed of the production and control of those goods.¹¹

In this sense, the demand and the corresponding supply always respond to the class interests of the laity, interests that are expressed in the religious sphere by demands for legitimation, compensation, and symbolic protest. According to François Houtart, the religious field can

⁷ See Enrique Dussel, "Origen de la Filosofía Política Moderna: Las Casas, Vitoria y Suárez (1514-1617)," *Caribbean Studies* 33:2 (July-December 2005), 35–80.

⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 99–112.

⁹ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 102.

¹⁰ Campos, *De la Reforma Protestante a la Pentecostalidad de la Iglesia*, 27–29.

¹¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *¿Qué Significa Hablar? ¿Economía de los Intercambios Lingüísticos?* (Madrid, España: Ediciones AKAL, 1985), 105.

be seen simply as “the portion of the social space constituted by the set of interacting religious institutions and actors.”¹²

The relations established there can be of two types: relations of transaction and relations of opposition in the supply and demand of symbolic goods of salvation. To a large extent, it can be said that religions in general, offer a symbolic good according to a specific demand of the religious population that consumes goods. The success or otherwise of a religion or a religious practice will depend on the degree of satisfaction of the religious demand of the population to which it refers. The demand for health or healing is decisive in the popular sectors that are exiled or neglected of the benefits of health protected by the State.

Competencies and Alliances

Between the different religious actors, a competition is established for the best supply of some symbolic goods demanded by the population. Here, opposition relations and even unfair competition are often generated between the different actors in the religious field. Attacks or wars of religions sometimes compromise the rule of law and the government to achieve their ends. Thus, for example, religions previously established in a given social space arrogate to themselves the right to evict new religions, claiming to be the legitimate defenders of truth and national identity, as is often the case with the Catholic Church in Latin America or Lutheranism in Germany.

New, or newcomer, religions, on the other hand, argue that established religions maintain alliances with the state by compromising morals and not necessarily responding to the primary spiritual needs of the population. They accuse the established religions of having strayed from sacred principles and of having relaxed by making concessions to the modern secularized and rationalized society.

The offer of the new religions is then based on symbolic goods that the established religions do not offer, such as physical and spiritual healing, a return to the fundamental religious precepts expressed in the literal meaning of the Holy Scriptures, the recovery of the old morality (ethical rigorism: not drinking, not dancing, dressing decorously, etc.) more typical of traditional societies. Among their offerings include, for example, intercession for the liberation of diabolical powers (sorcery,

¹² François Houtart, *Religión y Modos de Producción Pre-Capitalistas* (Madrid, España: Editorial IEPALA, 1989), 5–9.

demonic possession, infidelities, etc.) that the official church or other established religious groups have forgotten or for which they show ineffectiveness.

Belonging, Adhesion, and Strategic Enemies

A religious field is usually occupied by different religious actors who are, at the same time, social actors who represent different sectors of the population according to religious demand. That is to say, social differences can be established according to belief, necessarily being involved in the class condition that conditions religious practice. In Peru, there is a hegemony of the Catholic population vs. the Protestant and atheist population that professes other types of symbolic belongings or adhesions.

It is often the case that when a religious actor is too strong, the disadvantaged actors make tactical alliances against the strategic enemy. It is a question of transactional relations between the different religious opponents for the conquest of the power of the religious or the sacred. Probably, once the goal is achieved, alliances will fade or cease to make sense.

According to Bourdieu, these relations are usually established between the laity, whom he recognizes as prophets and sorcerers, against the priests who hold religious power.¹³ It is an affinity at the level of ritual practices, even though the corresponding beliefs are absolutely opposite.

This relationship can be seen, for example, between popular Catholicism and Pentecostalism or between Pentecostalism and shamanism in the healing aspect. Each with a radically opposed body of doctrine or belief system, but with an appeal very similar to the old morality (or traditional morality). There is, therefore, a singular affinity between shamanism and ancestral religions, as well as between the different Pentecostalisms in terms of religious freedom and equality that the Catholic Church tries to prevent in complicity with the State. The Peruvian Constitution itself favors the Catholic Church *de facto* and *de jure* to the detriment of other religious groups with equal rights.¹⁴ We see it now in reference to the various religious actors.

¹³ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 108–12.

¹⁴ Laura Valdiviezo, “Political Discourse and School Practice in Multilingual Peru,” *The Education of Indigenous Citizens in Latin America* 6:1 (2014), 187–209.

Opposition and Compromise in the Peruvian Religious Field

I am going to propose the hypothesis, or perhaps I should propose a suggestion more modestly instead, since my knowledge and the possibility of accessing the historical sources to prove it are scarce and would also overcome the self-imposed limitations for this article, that in the Peruvian religious field, such a correlation of forces has been established between various religious practices whose ideological or doctrinal affinity would be unthinkable, but which, in the face of a common antagonist—and nourished by the need for subsistence—would have tolerated symbiosis and syncretism in the religious and cultural spheres. A field of heterogeneous relationships would have been produced in the population, as well as a network of cosmo visional affinities that are apparently expressed in more or less homogeneous liturgical structures, such as shamanic and religious ecstasy or the divinatory (dreams and visions) and therapeutic (healings) and thaumaturgical (exorcisms and ritual purifications) practices of the Pentecostals. I will suggest in this case, too, that the relations would be of two kinds: relations of opposition and relations of transaction.

The relations of opposition would have occurred in the Peruvian social process, for more than 500 years to the present day, between official Catholicism and shamanism, between shamanism and historical Protestantism, and between shamanism and modern culture in the struggle for the affirmation of political power externally marked in the power of the religious.

On the other hand, and despite the discursive or ideological distances, relations of transaction would have been generated between shamanism and popular Catholic religiosity (cultural Catholicism), between shamanism and evangelical religion (of the Pentecostal type). Although perhaps more difficult to prove, there would be transactional relations between healers and thugs to confront the opponents of the people, symbolically marked in the struggle between spirits of good and forces of evil, a struggle of Andean deities and heroes against the heroes of capitalist modernity expressed in their ability (or inability) to restore health and ensure or direct the well-being (salvation) of the people.

Relations of Opposition to Hegemonic Power: Shamanism vs. Shamanism Catholicism

It would be vain to document here a well-known fact: Roman Catholicism's painful process of extirpating idolatries against aboriginal religiosity. With such an attitude, the Catholic Church placed itself in open opposition to Peruvian culture based on its religious ideology

(evangelization), however noble and sincere it was, and its political commitments servile to the Spanish crown.

Although the campaigns to eradicate idolatries lasted about 50 intensive years, the late Spanish anthropologist Manuel Marzal states that around 1660, the campaigns to eradicate idolatries were completed in several dioceses (Lima, for example), but the struggle against Andean religious beliefs continued, and to this day is a reason for inculturation and evangelization.¹⁵ The re-evangelization campaigns of the Catholic Church itself (CELAM, Medellín) are a testimony to this reality. Catholicism's own persecution of Protestantism in the eighteenth century, after the processes of independence and during the formation of national states, bears witness to the same fact. Even now, persecution is being waged against the sects, among which are the popular Pentecostals. All of these lend credence to this thesis. Even though Catholicism has taken steps in its favor by approaching popular religiosity and the charismatic phenomenon in a different way, in order not to lose ground, it nevertheless maintains a paganizing vision of aboriginal customs.¹⁶

I must clarify that I am referring to the Catholic attitude of fighting against popular beliefs under the accusation of superstitions or dehumanizing ideologies. Moreover, I do not believe that official Catholic opinion approves of shamanic practices as an acceptable element of popular religiosity and even less as a component of popular Catholicism. I presume that they see Pentecostalism itself as a kind of shamanism camouflaged in forms of ancestral religiosity but shown with a modernizing face.

Shamanism vs. Protestantism: Paganization of Shamanism

Reformed Protestantism is so hard as official Catholicism to accept customs that they would quickly identify as paganism or animism. Past texts on Protestant evangelization in Latin America bear witness to this

¹⁵ Antonio Acosta Rodríguez, "Los Doctrineros y la Extirpación de la Religión Indígena en el Arzobispado de Lima, 1600-1620," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 19:1 (1982), 69–109.

¹⁶ Salvador Gallego Aranda, "Modernidad y Cultura Artística en Tiempos de los Reyes Católicos," in Juan Manuel Martín García, ed., *Cuadernos de Arte de la Universidad de Granada* (Granada, España: Universidad de Granada, 2014), 198–201.

understanding.¹⁷ In general, the vast majority of Protestants have been reluctant to admit any presence of God (seeds of the verb) in shamanic practices, or not to ask for the impossible, to minimally accept the legitimacy of such Andean expressions as a religious system with its own identity.

The antagonism of Catholicism and Protestantism against shamanism is stark so that no moderately informed leader, whether Protestant or Catholic, would deny it. There is a negative pre-understanding of aboriginal religiosity since it is considered a state of ignorance (lying or deceit) that makes it worthy of evangelizing actions (catechization or proselytism, as the case may be). I do not question the goodwill and good desire of both religious actors to share that what they believe is revealed truth, tacitly denying any possibility of prior divine revelation among the indigenous people, which constitutes the great missiological discussion today.

Shamanism vs. Modernity — Acculturation

Here we change levels. We move from the subjects to the conditioning factors, to the project that is behind or next to the evangelizing or civilizing project. It is an opposition on a symbolic level. In fact, both Catholicism and the Pentecostalism established in our lands, that is, colonial Christianity and historical Protestantism, represent modernizing or civilizing projects for the indigenous people.

It is the proposal or imposition of a radically different symbolic universe, which only succeeds in imposing itself by way of force or seduction, and which fails to be in tune with the perceiving symbolic universe. The Christian attitude in general, Protestant or Catholic, entails a project of freedom from bondage. It is a slavery that they see as necessarily linked to the culture of the indigenous as a neglected culture. Evangelization is carried out in the theoretical field as the overcoming of myth by logos or the departure from orality into the world of writing.

They seek to lead the Indians from backwardness to the illusion of progress or from barbarism to civilization. The whole project of evangelization, with its nuances in some well-intentioned missionaries, has, in the end, meant, as evidenced by the cultural forms adopted by the majority of the population in the entrance to a new world, that of

¹⁷Notice for example, the evangelizing motives of the largest Protestant congresses from Edinburgh 1910 and Panama 1916 to the Latin American Congresses of Evangelization CLADE I-IV, led by *Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana*. Jeffrey L. Klaiber, *La Iglesia en el Perú: Su Historia Social desde la Independencia* (Lima, Perú: Fondo Editorial PUCP, 1996), 151–62.

Western civilization, to a new religion such as Christianity, and to a new system of social and economic relations such as dependent capitalism. Paradoxically, and in spite of these modernizing efforts, in some regions, barter is still preserved, and the system of relations and reciprocity is partially based on it. Thus, a meeting of disparate meanings is established, a utilitarian coexistence between different, not to say parallel, symbolic universes between qualitatively different religious practices, such as shamanism and Christianity.

Transaction Relations at the Level of Social Construction

Shamanism as the Core of the Andean Religion per Living

Shamanic practices themselves represent a continuity of ancestral religious practices, so that it is almost a tautology to affirm a possible transactional relationship. However, shamanism cannot be said to be in itself a religious community or church, even in its technical sense (Greek *ekklesia*) with adherents or affiliates, although it involves a wide variety of religious elements. Shamanism, it must be said, is one component among others of a larger religious system and perhaps its most important element, so it constitutes the most important nucleus within the aboriginal religious system, historically prior to Christianity.

I think that to characterize it by one of its functions, such as healing (in terms of witch doctors), is to do little justice to a structure of meaning that, as a whole, goes far beyond the simple ritual of healing to become the central element of the Andean religious system. Around it, Andean symbolic universes, forms of cultural language (myths and rituals) are cohesive, as well as balances and compensations among the members of the community that today, despite the existence of other forms of social organization, maintain systems of relationship encoded in spiritual schemes of representation.

Shamanism and Pentecostalism — Transactional Relationships at the Level of Ecstatic Ritual

Perhaps the most unfortunate case of compromise that I would like to illustrate in this relationship is that of Pentecostalism and shamanism. There is a relationship of transaction between them at the level of their fundamental ritual: the cult for Pentecostalism and the shamanic session for shamanism. Both share the structure of ecstasy as a field of action. To establish a point of comparison between shamanism and Pentecostalism, it will be necessary to succinctly describe a typical or ideal Pentecostal cult because it involves elements in its structure that are comparable to the shamanic

session, bridging the motivational and doctrinal differences of both groups.¹⁸

Pentecostal Worship: Three Moments

Pentecostalism has manifested, through its cults, a special interest in reproducing in each meeting the original event of the feast of Pentecost celebrated since the beginning of the Christian church in the first century of our era.¹⁹ Its remote referent, by contrast, is the mythical event of Babel and the latter of Eden, in which communication with God was fluid. However, the significant reference par excellence is Sinai because, in the Old Testament, Sinai received the covenant or covenant of God, while at Pentecost, the seal of the new covenant was received with the presence of the risen Jesus.

In traditional Pentecostalism, there is room for the emergence and ministry of what we might call mystical prophets to differentiate them from the historical prophets of Hebrew prophetism.²⁰ The prophetism I describe here I recognize as the ecstatic mystic for two reasons:

In the first place, it is a prophetism that is paradigmatically nourished by biblical prophetism, especially inspired by early prophetism, which is more related to divination than to the historical interpretation of late prophetism. However, it is not necessary to exaggerate because the Pentecostal mystical prophet always speaks on behalf of God to his community with a sense aimed at shaping the daily conduct of the faithful. He repeats verbatim the expression of the historical prophets, thus saith the Lord.

In the second place, I call it mystical, not without warning of the risk of its equivocal meaning, because it emphasizes the affirmation of transcendence by opposition or negation of the material immanent to this earthly life, referring to the social and merely human. It is mystical because it seeks to relate to heaven beyond the pure metaphorical sense,

¹⁸ Agustina Altman, “Entrar y Salir: Moralidad y Evangelio entre los Mocoví del Chaco Argentino,” *Etnografías Contemporáneas* 2:2 (2016), 1–2.

¹⁹ Campos, *De la Reforma Protestante*, 1–12.

²⁰ The term mystic is a category that points to its presence in religious experience as characteristic of the divine and is characterized by saying: “God himself is present here.” The mystical phenomenon is, according to Tillich, “an attempt to transcend all realms of finite being in order to unite finite being with infinity.” See Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 115–17.

to sink into mystery in its terrible and fascinating aspects, as Rudolf Otto used to say: “These, like shamans, act within a sacred space and time.”²¹

The Temple Cult is the time and place par excellence when and where the mystical prophet is born, instructed, and ministers. Although a single mystical prophet does not always have the four capacities of the shaman mentioned by Mircea Eliade (healer, psychopomp, mystic and visionary), these are distributed among the body of prophets (sometimes called vessels of the Lord) and each one, in turn, will make use of his or her own during worship. The most developed faculties or gifts in a typical Pentecostal cult are glossolalia accompanied by prophecies (in cryptic language or strange tongues), visions, and mystical ecstasy.

Pentecostal Worship: A Space for Ecstasy

From the beginning to the end of worship, there is a gradual and ascending process, always aimed at achieving contact with heaven through ecstasy. Thus, a typical Pentecostal cult is the space where mystical ecstasy is generated and comprises the following moments: chants, opening prayer, closure of profane time, stages of mystical progression, closing prayer, and mission or extension of sacred time over profane time. Although in Pentecostal worship, the affirmation of transcendence, of the holy, of the unspeakable, is made in opposition to the temporal human, by affirmation of the profoundly sinful of society, or by archetypal reproduction of a gestural language in glosso-speaking worship, it is not an evasion of earthly realities (escapism or alienation) nor is it a reproduction of the Gnostic dualism that opposes good and evil. It is, in any case, the modern reproduction and representation in primitive forms of the experience of the sacred. A cultural way of recreating the cosmic order in which the rite prevails over the concept, the dance over the thesis, and the gesture over the verb, without necessarily opposing the theoretical discourse.²² We'll look at each of them in relative detail.

Songs to close profane time: A medley of chants or a chain of short choruses that are repeated until they almost incorporate the chants' generative meaning to prepare the spiritual environment before the official opening of the cult. All chants are subject to fashions, trends, and cadences, as well as to styles and ritual gestures specific to a time or place of origin. In recent years, a strong Central American influence has

²¹ Quoted by Owen Ware, “Rudolph Otto's Idea of the Holy: A Reappraisal,” *The Heythrop Journal* 48:1 (2007), 48-60.

²² Ana Isabel Jiménez San Cristóbal, *Rituales Órficos* (Madrid, España: Universidad Complutense Servicio de Publicaciones, 2004), 18–26.

been felt in the liturgy. Usually, this chain of choruses or short chants follows one after the other on the basis of the same musical chord (many choruses in A-flat). This chain of choruses is fundamentally a chain of meaning that is in semantic harmony with the type of worship being performed. If it is evangelistic, choirs prepare believers and non-believers for conversion. Thus, all participants harmonized in a spiritual harmony until they reached the objectives consciously or unconsciously proposed. As my friend, the Chilean anthropologist Rodrigo Moulian, would say, there is a *somatosemiosis* in which the body is summoned to let itself be carried away by the enaction of the Spirit.²³

Prayer for the opening of the cult as the official establishment of divine power: the official beginning of prayer worship is usually given by the pastor of the congregation. The opening prayer is known as an invocation. It has a double purpose: to consecrate all worship to God and bind the demons so they do not act freely within the sacred space. It is the moment when a spiritual war takes place, a conflict between the forces of good and the forces of evil, and for this very reason, it is decisive for the rest of the cult. It is the establishment of the divine power represented by the shepherd who consecrates the worship of God and binds demons. Participants generally confess to feeling liberation from bondage and an unusual disposition in mood improvement and psychological readiness for worship.

The binding of demons is not always a guarantee that the worship will be peaceful. Sometimes, it is necessary again to bind the demons within the same cult. It is a moment in which the cult is interrupted to fight with the demon until he is defeated. For the parishioners, this does not represent a lack of power but, on the contrary, an occasion for the glory of God to be manifested and to show that good overcomes evil. If I understand correctly, the triumph is Jesus', and God's power manifests in wonders and marvelous signs. Because of its importance and meaning, this prayer should be given by an officer who is spiritually prepared and spiritually authoritative.

Closure of profane time: the unofficial, quasi-profane cultic preamble is often in charge of the laity who put themselves forward as leaders. It is a kind of warm-up whose purpose is, among other things, to close profane time (to forget or put on standby the worries of the everyday), to enter the realm of the sacred by way of the concentration of interest in the divine and through the repeated chant of adoration to seek a consecration to God.

²³ Rodrigo Moulian Tesmer, "Somatosemiosis e Identidad Carismática Pentecostal," *Revista Cultura y Religión* 3:2 (2009), 188-89.

This time of singing is also a space where those with the gift of singing exercise their ministry, where leaders in preparation learn to lead the services, and where they are empowered if glorious or apotheosis worship is performed.

Stages of mystical progression in cultic time. From the beginning to the end of the cult, there is a gradual and ascending process tending to achieve ecstasy. Everyone deliberately seeks a direct experience with God. Mystical ecstasy is for Pentecostal worship, the center or summit of its development. Through ecstasy, contact with heaven is achieved with decisive consequences for the subsequent behavior of the participants. This is why Pentecostals consciously or unconsciously pray, trying to feel God's presence as a restorative presence of their lives, healer of their ills, and strengthening of morality that will manifest in daily life during the week until the next service.

Cultic Moments at a Suppose Speeches for God

It is the central moment of worship and can occur at the beginning of the service, in the middle, or near the end. In the cultic moment of God's speech, the mystical prophet usually utters his message in strange tongues (1 Cor. 13:12). This phenomenon is known as glossolalia. It is a language that the person praying does not understand, but it makes sense to him. It's not necessarily a language, but it could be, too. The most important thing about glossolalia is not its interpretation but its significance as a sense in the midst of a cult, a sense that breaks with the everyday, direct, simple, and human language, as if it were connoted that one is in another realm of reality: the reality of the sacred, which are immediately interpreted by himself, or else he awaits the interpretation of some prophet.²⁴

The fact that it is in foreign tongues is important above all to connote that it is not a human message or from this earth. Sometimes, the message is corroborated by the vision of another mystical prophet who sees in images the configuration of the message verbalized by the previous one. The congregation burns (weeps, rejoices, or answers with its hermeneutical silence, and thereby approves or disapproves of it) and accompanies the communicative event in silent and reverent prayer, whispering in its own language or in equally strange tongues, amens, and alleluias that reiterate or confirm the prophecy.

²⁴ See Virginia H. Hine, "Pentecostal Glossolalia: Toward a Functional Interpretation," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 8:1 (1969), 211–26.

The ecstatic cult as a whole can go through several moments that we will call mystical progression, and its centrality will be in what we have called the moment of God's speech. They are not always the same, but they follow a more or less regular or constant structure. It is worth remembering that Pentecostal cults are very varied in intensity, form, and content and that the one described here is more or less a typical cult, experienced by the author as an insider for forty years in different Pentecostal or charismatic congregations.

The stages or moments of worship described below will help us to situate and explain the generation, experience, and continuity of the mystical Pentecostal ecstasy. A gradual and ascending search for mystical experiences: through special hymns and short, allusive songs that constantly seek to break the routine of everyday life in order to resume direct communication with God through prolonged prayer, prayer in strange tongues or glossolalia, which, it is hoped, should pour out like a river at any moment of worship.

SPECIFIC MOMENT OF GOD'S SPEECH

This can occur indistinctly by a prophecy that is interpreted from a speech in foreign tongues (glossolalia) or by dramatic and tautological preaching where the preacher repeats, that is, literally intones the biblical text read, updating for the listeners a new meaning or message. At other times, God's speech is given by free expression through significant acts or gestures within worship or through fresh personal testimonies or lived during the week. Testimonies told as having occurred a long time ago have, in Pentecostal circles, a bad reputation. It is a sign that the parishioner is not in permanent communion with God and only lives on memories. The ancient testimony is permitted only for the fundamental conversion of the believer.

It is important to note here that God's Speech does not distinguish sex, race, or age. Many times, it is rather women who prophesy or bring the word of God from their seats. They do not need to stand behind the pulpit for their word to be heard with authority, for that authority is not democratically delegated but charismatically assumed by the very fact of prophesying in the name of God. Then, men, women, and children listen intently to the word of God as they continue to pray mentally or quietly. They only interrupt the prophet or prophetess, preacher or visionary, saying amen or hallelujahs, thanking each word of God uttered by the prophet.

MOMENT OF PROPHETIC ECSTASY

It can happen at any time, but it usually happens within the time of God's speech. Rather, God's speech is given precisely through the mediation of prophetic ecstasy, through which, as practitioners understand, God speaks directly or audibly to his people. No food or intake (hallucinogen) is necessary to cause ecstasy, as is the case in shamanism.

MOMENT OF SACRIFICE

It is represented by the giving of tithes and offerings, consecration to the ministry, the dedication or presentation of children to God, water baptism, giving or promise of goods, a celebration of holy communion (eucharist).

SPACE FOR THE RESTORATION OF HEALTH

Intercession for the healing of the sick takes place immediately after preaching. Here we pray for the sick present and absent. Those present, if they are few, can go to the foot of the altar (considered a holy place), where they will be anointed, symbolically with oil by the minister who has the gift of healing. Participants receive through the laying on of hands a restoration of their physical, spiritual, psychological, etc. health. If there are many who seek healing, the preacher suggests that they stay in their own seats and lay their hands on the affected region and that through prayer, led by the minister, they attain their healing.

Those who have been healed or have been the object of a miracle come forward and tell with emotion of the benefit received from God. In an ecstatic Pentecostal cult, many lame are healed, dumb speak, blind see, people given up by doctors receive restoration of their health, the afflicted or demoniac are set free, and unbelievers receive faith to believe. It is a state where the congregation places itself before God as prostrate or sick and where God appears as the restorer of the full harmony that existed *in Illo Tempore*. Occasionally, prayers are said for absent persons.

According to ancient custom, relatives bring a piece of clothing from the sick person to the church and pray over it. This is a non-Christian custom since the Christian custom already mentioned in the biblical book of Acts of the Apostles indicated, on the contrary—to wear a shepherd's garment to the sick person so that the virtue of the anointed of God restores the health of the sick (Acts 19:11-12). It is the man of holiness who radiates virtue. This is the case with the healing of the

woman with an issue of blood who touched Jesus' garment, mentioned in the Gospel of Mark (5:21-42).

MOMENT OF SYMBOLIC RETURN TO PARADISE OR EDEN

Immediately after this creational drama, visitors receive a call to conversion, that is, to a return to God. After the message and prayer, believers who had drifted away from the church were called to re-establish their communion with God. Converted parishioners are invited to consecrate their lives totally to God by taking a vow of fidelity or by dedicating themselves to the ministry of preaching. It is here that potential leaders receive the anointing to officially exercise their ministry or where former members renew their vows before the congregation that respectfully observes them. Such an action is like returning to paradise, lost and now regained.

A closing prayer is done by the pastor or official director of worship. If there was a Visiting Pastor, he closes the worship of God with a farewell prayer, in which he emphasizes: "Lord, we bid farewell to this holy place, but not to your presence, and help us to remain faithful during the week."

TIME OF DEPARTURE

It is given through final songs of worship to God or simply through an exhortation from the worship director or pastor to remain faithful to the Lord from then on. It recalls the ethical demands of the Christian and the imperative need to evangelize others, that is, to fulfill the mission for which God has placed them on this earth. It is also a return to profane time but from the perspective of the sacred. That is to say, the sacred must now invade profane time and space in order to transform it during the week.

Comparative Approach

Seen in this way, we find a relationship of similarity between the shamanic session and the Pentecostal cult, especially with the production of altered states of consciousness in ecstasy.

Whereas in Shamanism, altered state of consciousness are caused by the ingestion of hallucinogens, in Pentecostalism, they are motivated by repetitive chanting and the search for a mystical union with divinity through deep prayer (*de profundis*), confession of sins, and purification of the spirit that is usually felt as a fire that burns away all moral filth.

Analysts of religious cults and liturgies conclude that the repetition of choruses or refrains in songs, technically or musically called canon, can produce altered state of consciousness through mechanisms of social

psychology, the exacerbation of emotions mixed with states of anguish, need, desperation or obsession of the practitioners.

However, there may be some other similarities and differences. The Pentecostal sacred space is fundamentally, though not exclusively, encoded in the temple as a special place of consecration, not necessarily lagoons or *wakas* of different kinds. However, baptism should be carried out almost by tradition, preferably in a moderately flowing river, since this will symbolically carry the sinful life of the believer to the sea, to be forgotten, since he is now a new creature. Although worship generally revolves around the temple as a community center of worship, a room or any space in the practitioner's home is sometimes consecrated to God (as a place of prayer) and can, with use, become a sacred place. The utensils used for the sacrament are sacred. The pews of the temple are sacred. Musical instruments are consecrated to God by a prayer of dedication and may henceforth have no other use.

Pentecostals, like shamans, also have high places. Moreover, it must be remembered that the primeval Pentecost began in an upper room. In the countryside, Pentecostals often seek secluded places in the heights to devote themselves to prayer. Still, in some young towns with a strong presence of Andean Pentecostals, some Pentecostal congregations build basements as places of prayer, perhaps so as not to disturb the neighbors. Their temples have generally been initially dwelling houses in urban areas, bought or invaded expressly to build churches there since the spaces reserved by municipal law for churches are occupied only by Roman Catholicism as if it were the only church in Peru.

Evil entities or forces are conjured up at any time during worship whenever the Pentecostal leader deems it necessary if he perceives an alien presence. Pentecostalism, like shamanism, also fights a battle with the forces of evil, including sorcerers or sorcerers as antagonists. In both cases, this struggle usually has therapeutic purposes.

In Pentecostal theogony, demons appear in many forms, including animal forms. Some Pentecostal seers claim to have seen, by the vision of the spirit, black dogs, spiders, bulls mooing fiercely, birds, etc., which are rebuked in the spirit with a formula used almost in a magical sense. With great exclamation and firmness—as if giving himself breath—the person who perceives these evil spirits cries out: the blood of Christ has power! “I rebuke you, dirty demon, and command you to get out of here immediately and don't come back through this place anymore.” Or this one: “You filthy demon, I command you by the power that Jesus Christ has given me to let this man [or woman] go free because he does not

belong to you. Christ has overcome you on the cross of Calvary. Let go, let go, let go, I command you in Jesus' name.”

In faith healings, the officiant (pastor or some brother with a gift of healing) first conjures the demon that has possessed a person and asks, “Demon, I adjure you in the name of Jesus Christ to tell me what your name is.” He does this in the very ancient understanding that to know the name is to assume power over the evil entity and can be overcome with the power that comes from above.

There are many cases in which the entity manifests itself through the lips of the possessed, with screams or shrill moans that generally emulate animals considered unclean (pigs) and in a deep voice, they respond to the incantation by saying how their names (Lucifer, Beelzebub, legion, cube, incubus, death, lust, debauchery, lasciviousness, etc.). Naturally, in this, as in many other aspects, the recognition of sacred entities is mediated by the culture of the person and, more often than not, by the popular imagination consensually constructed by the community of which he is a part and in accordance with ancestral traditions.

Then the pastor or the minister who has the gift of deliverance of demoniacs casts out the devil in the name of Jesus. The person who is the object of exorcism, when he is freed, falls to the ground exhausted and manifests in his features a liberation from such bondage. His face changes and no longer has harsh or contracted expressions, nor does he curse God, nor utter cries, nor shakes himself with convulsions. His state can be described as one of deep peace, and he even changes the tone of his voice to a peaceful or soft haven.

The expression used in Pentecostalism for these cases is deliverance of demoniacs and never exorcism. Also, in the Pentecostal conception, illnesses can also have different origins and reasons:

- Man-made diseases (Witchcraft, sorcery, or harm),
- God-permitted illnesses (God's tests for the believer's spiritual growth. Typical case here is that of Job from the Bible by which his faithfulness to God was proved).
- Illnesses permitted by God (reserved for the glory of God to be revealed, as in the case of the man born blind who was miraculously healed by Jesus, for Jesus said of him “he did not sin nor his parents, but was born so that the glory of God might be manifested” in due course).
- Sickness due to parental sin or disobedience to God's law. There is an idea that the consequences of sin are passed down through generations, and therefore, children inherit it up to the fourth

generation. These are considered generational curses and will deserve a different treatment than a headache, or stomachache.

- Sickness because of sin that is a punishment from God to teach the congregation a lesson. This is how diseases that lead irreversibly to death (cancer, ill-cured tuberculosis, AIDS) and sudden deaths, terrible accidents, or morally censored diseases (such as venereal diseases and drugs) are explained above all.
- Diseases due to natural causes, i.e. due to advanced age or ageing.
- Illnesses due to spiritual causes such as insanity or insanity due to excessive fasting without prior consecration. Also, the search for spiritual gifts for materialistic purposes: Case of Simon the magician, sadly famous for the use of his name for the so-called simony and for wanting to buy the gifts of the Spirit with money.
- Sickness from taking the sacrament in sin. Many illnesses are attributed to this attitude, interpreting the words of St. Paul: for this cause many have fallen asleep, alluding to those who eat bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily.
- Sickness as a means used by God to bring people to the limit of life until they come to accept Christ, that is, to be converted to the gospel.

An interesting aspect that can express forms of transaction with shamanism is the double therapeutic practice on the part of the members and also of those who pray for the healing of the sick. I am referring to the Pentecostal communities of suburban and rural areas where the practice of shamanic healing and evangelical prayer is tacitly accepted at the same time for the restoration of health. The same person who asks to be prayed for healing either went to the healer first or goes to him after the service without any remorse as if they were complementary or non-antagonistic practices.

In recent years a symbolic battle has been waged between those who accept traditional medicine or herbalism and faith healing. Moreover, some evangelical brothers and sisters have ventured into the herbal business, associating the evangelical faith with knowledge of traditional medicine. Among the best known in the Peruvian case are the naturist house, *La Reina* and the ANGISA Laboratories of Peru; the latter process and sell through a widely disseminated evangelical radio program as *Radio del Pacífico*, the oldest and most far-reaching evangelical radio station in the country. The same can be said of natural medicines

such as those that come from companies such as Herbalife, Omnilife, or any other.

One aspect in which similarities between Pentecostalism and shamanism appear is in the function of the visionary, at the level of dreams and visions of the spirit or the spiritual discernment of malefic or demonic powers.

There is more than one instance in which Pentecostal leaders have claimed to have been called to pastoral ministry through dreams. In the dream experience, they claim to have traveled. That an angel or that God Himself led them through the air and led them to know heaven and also hell. They even say that they have conversed with God and asked Him about the meaning of their visions. When they woke up, they understood that they were called to ministry, radically changing their lives. The same vocation is born in the shaman when he is saved from death or a fatal accident. They enter as if into another dimension and it opens up for them in a previously unknown world.

In Pentecostalism, this experience is so real that, without further delay, they leave their secular labors to devote themselves to theological studies as a prerequisite for the exercise of the ministerial function. Others simply begin to exercise the ministerial function with new gifts of the spirit, which are capacities for healing, clairvoyance (gift of discernment in Pentecostalism) and power of speech or preaching, with boldness and courage.

Meaning of Nor-Andean Shamanism for the Peruvian Society

Without pretending to draw definitive conclusions about shamanism in northern Peru, we will address three questions aimed at elucidating the meaning of shamanism for Peruvian society. Perhaps, rather than definitive answers, the most convenient thing to do will be to raise some questions and test some hypotheses in the cultural, social and economic-political order.

Symbolic Organizer of the Cultural Ethos of the People: Cultural Alternative

In short, shamanism has become a symbolic organizer of the cultural ethos of the people or community that revolves around it. Cultural units are built with the healer as the axis of relations in his capacity as a popular priest and his medical profession. The shaman is the sage of the community, the specialist of the sacred, and the link between the sacred entities (deities or *wakas*) and the inhabitants of the community.

In shamanic practice, with its rituals and myths, the symbolic universe of the community is articulated; the dimension of sacred space-time is affirmed. Future history (which is based on the past) acquires

possibilities of unfoldment, and the past (which is already being lived now in the present) is reconstructed and affirmed in shamanic ecstasy.

Shamanism, in its most autochthonous forms, represents for the community that suffers the onslaught of modernity and capitalism an alternative of cultural affirmation, identity and tradition, of the continuity of ethnicity, of the return of wakas, of the return of deities, of the affirmation of the cosmos in the face of the chaos and labyrinth of the city. And even if you don't go to him, his advice (the sayings) will always be present in people's memories, guiding their daily practices.

The variations in the rituals and ceremonial elements of the shamanic table can shed light on the movement of culture in the region, on the capacity for syncretism that they are possible, that is, on their ability to absorb the elements foreign to their own culture and, therefore, on the appropriation of their powers that are believed to be impregnated (consubstantiated) in cultural artefacts or objects.

Organizer of the Social Conscience of the People: Social Alternative

To the extent that religion is the basis of social organization and shamanism is one of its primary components, it will fulfill the function of the organizing axis of social consciousness for the people.

Shamanic practice thus becomes the integrating or cohesive factor of the community. On the other hand, the witch doctor becomes a destructing factor of the coexisting system, although not of the community. Whether he likes it or not, he must manage the negative forces in order to make a balance of forces. As Mario Polia puts it:

Healers and sorcerers are the two specialists in the management of antagonistic powers, complementing each other. The healer works with the positive sacred power of the Incas and the sacred lagoons, while the witchdoctor is compacted with the dark forces of the original chaos residing in the subsoil: the pre-flood of gentiles.²⁵

In shamanistic practices, it is necessary to see how forms of social relationship and status are deployed, whether among the type of clients who come to the modern shaman, usually people with money – politicians, artists, and businessmen – and also the impoverished individuals of the city or hamlet, the status of the shaman himself in his community, and of the shaman's assistants. A study of the clientele of shamans can be illustrative to decipher the degree of power accumulated by the shaman – marked by the prestige acquired – and also of

²⁵ Mario Polia Meconi, *Las Lagunas de los Encantos: Medicina Tradicional Andina del Perú Septentrional* (Lima, Perú: CEPESER, 1996), 174.

shamanism as a social institution. It is also possible to decipher the axis of its gravitation in a certain social formation, such as the Andean north (Ayabaca and Huancabamba) in front of the capital (neo-colonial axis of power) and the south of the country. In symbolic and geopolitical terms, between the enchanted North and the empowered South, the center and axis of the ancient rule of the Incas.

We must also ask ourselves about the type of social relations that could exist between the different Andean communities (the four cities on the northern axis: Chalaco, Laguna, La Villa, and Alto de la Paloma). They exist between the communities of Ayabaca and Huancabamba and the departments of Cajamarca, as well as among the descendants of the jíbaros of Ecuador who even cross the border to take over the Huaringas.

One aspect, as far as I know, still needs to be explored is that of the continuity, change and mobility of the axes and structures of power at the level of the ancient ceremonial centers represented in the current centers of religious power, behind which political and economic conflicts are generally hidden.

Being consistent with this train of thought, it would be necessary to project this dream into a comparative analysis between the great metropolises of antiquity, as suggested, for example, at another level of analysis by Manuel Marzal's study on Ibero-American syncretism, which is a study comparative between the Quechuas of Cusco-Peru, the Mayans in Chiapas-Mexico and the Africans of Bahia-Brazil. A comparative study of shamanisms in the various regions of the country or the continent would be useful to get out of the scheme proposed by the research fashion on northern shamans. What has been said leads us to the next rather political consideration, that of shamanism as a mediation of political powers.

Shamanism as a Mediator Between the Spirit World and the Powers of this World: Economic-Political Alternative

In the shamanic session, the spirits of good fight the spirits of evil, and the healer fights the evildoer. It is about the struggle of the charms to free the chained souls from the bonds of the system of life.

The question here is whether it is only a spiritual struggle on the religious terrain or whether this struggle is encoded in a symbolic struggle on the political level. Given the centrality of the function of the master healer in indigenous society, we believe that, at the level of symbolic representations, a political struggle is waged against opposing powers encoded in terms of the spiritual powers of evil or negative deities.

At the same time, it is no coincidence that the healer assumes in the compact a relationship of transaction with the Andean sacred heroes, *the mamacocha* (goddess of the waters), or some particular *Inca*. But the richness does not lie in this fact that is already known, but in finding out why a certain shaman chooses this or that *Inca* or as being chosen by him in his vocational dream experience, in order to be able to decode the type of power in dispute represented in the heroes alluded to or invoked in the shamanic session.

The gods are still alive in shamanic ritual practice, and a larger dispute between the central power of the *Inca* and the power of the *Vicus* or *Tallanes* may still be going on. Why has shamanism persisted in northern Peru, above or below the transformations of culture? Could it be that the rebellious and indomitable ethos of the northerners of antiquity is still standing? These questions will naturally have to be resolved after an analysis of the discourse of shamanic sessions and a comparative study of power structures, as we have suggested, which we have not been able to do here because of our limitations in the handling of semiotics. That is a task that promises interesting results and that researchers of shamanism should complete.

Conclusions

After observing the shamanic practices in the northern highlands of Peru and intuiting, after the indirect search for a given meaning in these practices, the social implications of their significance, we can conclude by saying the following.

Shamanism as the Lifeblood of the North Andean Worldview

Shamanism constitutes a symbolic universe and, as such, is a significant totality for the communities of the northern highlands of Peru, more specifically of Ayabaca and Huancabamba. In this sense, it represents a texture or a fabric of collective and symbolic relations whose deeper fabric has not yet been revealed since the anxieties of modern life, as well as the Western logic of our instruments of observation and our schemes of analysis, do not allow us to understand it fully.

Undoubtedly, shamanism is a key and determining aspect to understanding culture since, in it, the North Andean worldview is produced and reproduced through the permanent memory (anamnesis) of the myths and rites of origin, giving meaning to the people who turn to shamanism in the search, often unconscious, to maintain the balance between themselves and nature, between them and the challenges of the

new society, between them and the ancestral gods or forces that remain alive.

Through shamanism, Westerners can know a different logic of how the world works, a different rationality to explain reality and give meaning to the vicissitudes of life, such as illness, the scarcity of money and the always misunderstood games of love. Health, money, and love – those three components of daily life that seem to determine our existence – have a practical response in shamanism, without mediations or empty rationalities that could lead us to frustration, nihilism, or the loss of meaning (existential emptiness), which is worse than Dante Alighieri's death or hell.

Shamanism and Public Health: Beyond Curanderismo (Witchcraft)

When presenting this research, I asked myself how to explain the recurrence of the healer and visionary work of shamanism, especially in a context where public health is almost inaccessible to the majority of Peruvians, where psychosocial security margins are increasingly shrinking and where the vision of the future is uncertain even for those who try to run the country. The answer is obvious, and research into *curanderismo* has been conclusive in this regard. It is not only financial reasons or the scarcity of resources that lead people to turn to shamans, even though this could eventually be an acceptable motivation, given the crisis of wealth distribution in our country. There seems to be more to it than just the functional reason for the scarcity of money. Shamanism is attractive to the diversity of clients to the extent that it gives meaning to their lives and allows them to probe into the regions of the unknown, the occult and the mysterious, for there they can affirm their lost identities and find a balance with nature.

It is a re-enchantment of life since industrialization, modernization, secularism, urbanization, modern rationality, and all the other modern conquests and achievements of Western civilization have produced an existential void that only religion or ancestral religiosity, in our case, can fill.

To be healthy is therefore synonymous with being saved. Contemporary people need salvation from sin in the pious sense of the term and from the spiritual structures of evil, from the economic and political system that oppresses us, from our own social rules that squeeze us; in short, to be saved from ourselves. We need to liberate or redeem our world and its ecological systems.

Shamanism: The Core of the Subsisting Andean Religiosity

From the significant structure, the system of beliefs (myths) that it deploys, the syncretic rituals, the mixture of ancient knowledge and Christian influences, the forms of community organization to which shamanism alludes, as well as an implicit ethics functional to the Andean pantheon to which it must be promoted, we can conclude that shamanism still today constitutes the fundamental nucleus of the subsisting Andean religiosity and is even the basis of popular religiosities.

However, we will go too far if we affirm that shamanism is a religion. It is, I believe, a ritual, a collective feeling and drama, which is to say, a profound religiosity that evokes an ancestral religious system but whose outlines are not yet possible to define exactly, given the influence of Westernism.

Shamanism: Beyond Tradition and Modernity

The syncretism expressed in the shamanic trousseau and in its prayers, among other signs, shows shamanism halfway between a very long-standing tradition (the Andean) and the modernity introduced in our lands since the arrival of the Spanish regime and the Christian faith.

However, neither the shaman nor the clients or patients see this situation as a worrisome dilemma. They simply assume that life changes faster than the social theories that explain them can change. They provide a pragmatic and intuitive response to the changes of modern life. They don't seem to make any fuss; they don't care what exactly they are, let alone discuss the issue of identity. To be modern, pre-modern, or post-modern, in the material or pragmatic sense of these concepts, is a problem alien to shamanic logic. Rather, it is a question of being able to explain the world in a way that makes sense, of overcoming or mastering the terrors of nature, of being at peace with the gods, of being able to live in an egalitarian society, that is, in common unity with all.

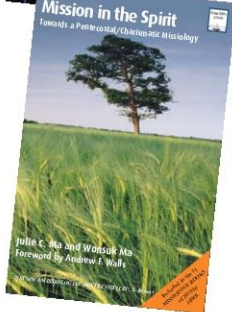
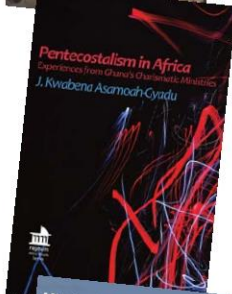
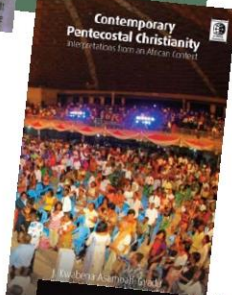
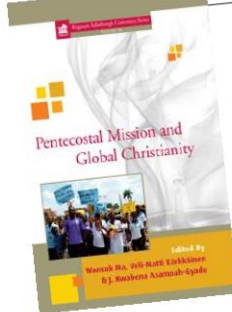
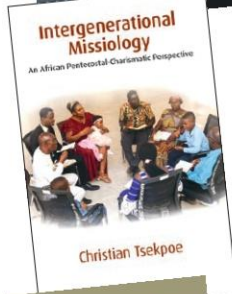
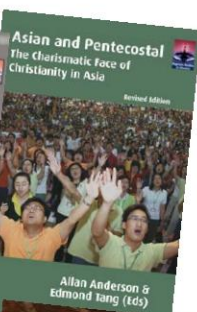
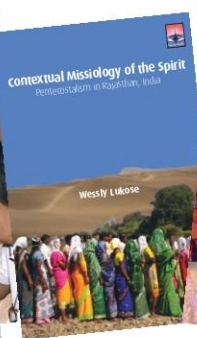
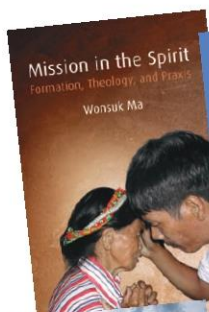
Shamanism: A Different Logic

Thus, we can finally conclude that Peruvian shamanism, and in particular the shamanism practiced in the Sierra de Piura (Ayabaca and Huancabamba), is an alternative offer of religious leadership, spiritual direction, restitution of health; a symbolic organizer of Piura's cultural *ethos* and, eventually, a mediation for social organization, in which many Peruvians find an answer to certain demands not satisfied by the State, political leadership, and the country's official religions.

By virtue of this, it fulfills the function of reordering culture and constitutes an articulating axis of social organization for traditional societies that maintain relations of transaction and opposition (conflict) based on religion in the modern Hispanic world.

In this sense, shamanism, like other religious practices, is a religious actor that operates in the Peruvian religious field as a cultural counterpower, a kind of alternative priesthood that affirms, maintains, and expresses forms of religious dissidence in a context of permanent and accelerated social transformation.

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Reviews

Wonsuk Ma. *Mission in the Spirit: Formation, Theology, and Praxis*. Regnum Studies in Mission. Oxford: Regnum, 2023. xv + 205 pages. \$24.00.

Wonsuk Ma serves as the Executive Director of Oral Roberts University's (ORU) Center for Spirit-Empowered Research, as well as the Distinguished Professor of Global Christianity at ORU. He has engaged in extensive academic and ministerial work during his time residing in Korea, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

In chapter one, Ma defines terms and outlines the book, which consists of many of his prior articles, essays, and presentations revised into this full work. Ma begins the work by providing his own story of formation in chapters two and three. Chapter three proves particularly insightful, as it suggests that mission formation happens informally and subtly, such that self-reflection is required to identify missiological mentors (23). Thus, missiological formation becomes a grassroots effort that is reflective of the current state of Christianity in the world. The global Christian shift is acknowledged in chapter four, where Ma advocates the democratization of theologization (35). Grassroots theology is contextual and incorporates mission more holistically, thus ameliorating the missiological reductionism of Christendom (37). All contexts, whether rich or poor, are called to both send and receive mission efforts (38). Historically, Christendom's missiology understood rich, developed, powerful, predominantly Christian nations as being the only ones who could undertake missions, while early Christianity and the new global Christian context call instead for the weak and powerless to be involved in missiological formation and in mission itself (40–45).

Chapter five focuses on the impact of Pentecostal pneumatology on missiology. Pentecostalism forms its missionaries through personal experiences of the divine in conversion, in the miraculous, and in a sense of calling and empowerment (48–52). Pentecostal missionary praxis emphasizes evangelism, quick church planting (via the democratization of ministry), facilitating supernatural experiences, and “reproducing” Spirit empowerment (52–56). Chapter six expands upon Pentecostal pneumatology's democratization of ministry to show how

Pentecostalism “fires up” the poor, the primary subjects of Pentecostalism, for service to others (60, 68–69). Chapter seven posits the need for an evolution in theological education for the sake of the post-Christendom world, so that a proper emphasis on the world, mission, and the life, or this-worldly, concerns of individuals can be regained (86–88).

Chapter eight defines the elements of Pentecostal theology which have led to rapid growth. These include literalistic biblical hermeneutics, the desire for a restoration of the apostolic faith, the participatory, communal, and democratic nature of worship, the emphasis on experience, and cognizance of spiritual forces (92–96). The distinctive doctrines of Pentecostalism also led to explosive growth, as Spirit baptism and tongues provided a meaningful experience, the prophethood of all believers encouraged all Christians to be active in ministry, and premillennial eschatology led to radical urgency (97–100). Chapter nine focuses on Pentecostal eschatology and its missiological relevance in early Pentecostalism, calling for a revision of today’s Pentecostal eschatology to regain early Pentecostalism’s urgency (115–116). Chapter ten examines Pentecostalism’s unique strengths in evangelism and church planting. Ma notes the strengths of everyday evangelists, even in poor areas, the sustained growth of Pentecostalism over one hundred years, the willingness to plant many churches via the democratization of ministry, the usage of megachurches and mass evangelistic campaigns, and the emphasis on empowered believers empowering others without external missionary prodding (122–127). However, sustained evangelistic success in the global Christian context will require discarding Christendom missiology, encouraging everyday evangelism from marginalized individuals, and learning to balance toleration with Christianity’s evangelistic imperative in interreligious contexts (128–132).

Chapter eleven critiques the worst aspects of the prosperity gospel while affirming the legitimacy of a revised theology of blessing to provide hope to those in need of a God who provides (133–151). Chapter twelve examines the demonology of classical Pentecostalism and the Third Wave, positing that Third Wave demonology can help Pentecostals theologically, missiologically, and pastorally while warning of problematic theological assumptions and practices. Chapter thirteen shifts to a case study of a Korean church in Hawaii that shows Pentecostalism’s missional shift toward social justice while maintaining an evangelistic focus (167). In chapter fourteen, Ma concludes the book by expressing hope for unity. Pentecostalism’s numerical strength,

exemplary growth, and renewal of worship lead to “spontaneous ecumenism,” and care for the poor strengthen the global church (182–191). Ma acknowledges that this attempt at unity is currently spontaneous and grassroots, but expresses hope for future success at institutional unity as Christians pursue this organic ecumenism and “experience life, worship, service, and studying together” (191–192).

Ma’s experience as a scholar and practitioner of missions makes this book significant for understanding Pentecostal missiology. His emphasis on the shift to the Global South makes this book significant for the new global Christian context of World Christianity rather than merely being tied to outdated Western top-down theologization. Thus, this book should prove helpful to Pentecostal scholars, missiologists, World Christianity scholars, and scholars of Asian Christianity. Perhaps most significantly, Ma provides a plethora of avenues for future study, acknowledging the areas not covered in various places, which call for further academic work (45; 72–73; 87; 115; 131; 165). Thus, Ma produces a unique contribution to the field while also opening possibilities for other scholars.

Ma’s work shines in several areas, with few weaknesses. First, he wisely positions himself within his context of Asian Pentecostalism (cf. 154). Thus, Ma avoids falling into excessive generalities and provides a unique perspective that allows him to critique harmful elements within the Pentecostal tradition while uplifting beneficial theologies and practices. This strength is most apparent in his helpful (and damning) critique of the prosperity gospel, while still asserting the importance of a theology of blessing (133–151). Second, Ma’s work in and familiarity with Western theology helps bring the best of it to bear as he attempts to elucidate a grassroots theology. For instance, the pastoral considerations of an Asian Pentecostal theology of healing are potentially resolved by Ma’s adept inclusion of a statement on the ideas of “healing” and “cure” from the World Council of Churches (165). Finally, several chapters flowed together rather well, as in the shift from chapter five’s broad outline of Pentecostal pneumatology’s missiological benefits to chapter six’s expansion of the recurrent theme of the democratization of ministry. However, at times, the book’s flow felt abrupt, as in the final four chapters’ shifts from the prosperity gospel to demonology to social justice ministries to ecumenicism. The acknowledgment that most of the chapters of the work were revised from prior works made this more understandable (xiii–xiv). The sheer number of topics discussed also calls for more work to be done, especially in eschatology and demonology. However, Ma freely admits,

as noted above, the need for further study. This work is commended for its many strengths and contributions to the field.

Ma provides a useful contribution to understanding Pentecostal missiology in its contextual mission formation and theological and practical strengths. Scholars and Pentecostal practitioners alike should read this book. Scholars will benefit from Ma's practical and global missiological understanding, and practitioners will be empowered to reflect upon their mission formation, identifying their own theological strengths and weaknesses in fulfilling the Christian mission.

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William K. Kay and Ewen H. Butler. *Pentecostal and Charismatic Education: Renewalist Education Wherever It Is Found*. London: Lexington Books, 2023. 176 pp.

William K. Kay is the founding director of the Centre for Pentecostal Studies at Bangor University, UK, a senior lecturer in the Department of Education and Professional Studies at King's College London, and was senior editor of the *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* for ten years. The Society of Pentecostal Studies gave him a Lifetime Achievement award in 2019. Ewen H. Butler is an experienced educator, teaching junior and senior high school, and is currently is a professor at Regent University, Virginia. Butler has held multiple roles, including presbyter, hospital chaplain, and leader of the local ministerial network. In *Pentecostal and Charismatic Education*, the authors expound upon a concept of education they refer to as "Renewalist education." This type of education corresponds with the educational output of the many kinds of institutions, inside and outside the church, that understand their role from the perspective of the Pentecostal and Charismatic belief of the work of the Spirit in the world. (2).

This book contains nine chapters. Chapter one provides the aims, ethics, and means of Renewal education. According to the authors, Renewal education should occur at home, church, and school, and must prepare people to contribute productively to the church and the wider society (13). Chapter two presents the history of education from ancient Greece to the present day, particularly emphasizing the emergence of the scientific method and the role of the Bible and theology in the method's development. This chapter emphasizes that science is

compatible and conducive to Renewal education's aims and objectives. Chapter three explores the Renewalist philosophy of education, particularly discussing how there are many "paradigms" of Christian thought. The authors contend that Renewalist theology is one such paradigm and that Renewalist education is an educational philosophy or tool that helps facilitate the Renewalist paradigm.

Chapter four summarizes Jean Piaget's model of childhood development. The authors contend that Piaget's framework is beneficial in Renewalist education because it recognizes the developmental changes in intellectual functions up to around fifteen years of age. Subsequently, Kay and Butler state that Renewalist education must match the educational capacity of the child with teaching methods matching the subject being taught (60). Chapter five interacts with primary education in both public schools and schools where the church has influence over education. The authors contend that primary education should develop its curriculum around an understanding that each child is a "whole child" comprising mental, physical, social, and spiritual aspects who functions within a nexus of familial and social relationships, including a relationship with God (77). Chapter six focuses on secondary education and follows in the same vein as the previous chapter, arguing that secondary education must strike a correct balance between the "head" and the "heart." (79).

Chapter seven discusses higher education. Kay and Butler argue that Renewalist higher education should be interdisciplinary, involve the best use of technology, and facilitate student development in a way that recognizes the Spirit's activity in the process and the image of God in each student. Chapter eight explores parachurch education. The authors define parachurch education as those organizations that are non-congregational and support churches. The authors appear to use the term "parachurch" as a catch-all to categorize all the other educational institutions that do not fit neatly into the categories of primary, secondary, and higher education. Chapter nine looks at church education and its role in spiritual formation, a notion that the authors claim contemporary churches sometimes lose sight of (137). Through Word and sacrament, and with the Spirit's help, the authors argue that church education must cater to the spiritual development of all age groups and not sidestep the tough issues church members face in society (141). The tenth chapter concludes by categorizing Renewalist education according to consumers and producers. The differentiating factor between them both is that consumers grow in response to God's

presence in creation, while producers help facilitate this process with the Spirit's help.

Kay's and Butler's vast experience as educators is evident in this work. The fact they integrate their experience with Renewal theology is admirable and will provide refreshing insight to readers wishing to understand the aims, methods, and contexts of learning within the Renewalist community. The authors cast a wide net, examining education across various settings, including formal schools, churches, homes, and parachurch organizations. This holistic approach provides a valuable understanding of the multifaceted nature of Renewalist education. The book is also well balanced. It tries to avoid simplistic characterizations and acknowledges the theological and denominational diversity within the movement while highlighting shared values and approaches to learning based on the role of the Spirit in learning, and the relationship between faith and intellectual development. *Pentecostal and Charismatic Education* will probably resonate with anyone interested in education and religion, regardless whether they identify as Renewalist or not. Potential readers should note, however, that while the book presents complex ideas in a clear and engaging manner, it could benefit from deeper exploration of specific challenges or controversies within Pentecostal and Charismatic education, such as issues of gender, social justice, or academic rigor. Because of its breath, the book might be a good introductory classroom text for those teaching education, but those looking for practical guidance and help in the classroom or Sunday school should look elsewhere.

Overall, *Pentecostal and Charismatic Education* is a valuable contribution to the understanding of education within this growing religious movement. The book's comprehensive scope, balanced perspective, and engaging writing style make it a valuable resource for educators, scholars, and anyone interested in the intersection of faith and education. The insights and questions raised make this text a worthwhile read.

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Christian Tsekpoe. *Intergenerational Missiology: An African Pentecostal-Charismatic Perspective*. Oxford: Regnum Books, 2022. xxii + 213 pp. ISBN: 9781914454400.

Christian Tsekpoe's *Intergenerational Missiology* joins the teeming number of books in the Regnum Studies in Mission series. Significantly, owing to the movement of the Christian heartland to the southern hemisphere, with Africa playing a key role, and the widespread Pentecostalism on the continent, contextual missiology in an African Pentecostal context continues to earn the attention of scholars. The author is the director of postgraduate studies and research at Pentecost University, Ghana. For his research, generally, he is focused on the areas of Pentecostal and intergenerational missiology and African spirituality with a specialization in witchcraft and demonology. In this book, Tsekpoe presents a brilliant discussion that considers contextualization outside geographical confines. As an essential tool in theology today, many researchers have used contextualization to make theology relevant to different contexts. This sets this book up as an effort towards placing the Christian faith in relatable forms per pervading cultures. Following the list of abbreviations, maps, forewords, and preface, the book is made up of eight chapters, appendices, a bibliography, and an index.

From the outset, the book is placed in context the subject of missiology by pointing out the locus from which the argument emanates. It focuses the discussion on the Church of Pentecost (CoP) with reference to the mission models of its founder and first superintendent, Rev. James McKeown. The author endeavors to present a mission portrait of him and assess the contributory factors to his mission philosophy. The CoP has been identified as a denomination that has carved an influential niche for itself within the general Pentecostal movement in Ghana. Becoming a widespread Christian denomination in Ghana, the church's ministerial ethos and structures come out in the book as facilitating its growth and impact. McKeown's methods employed in establishing and running the CoP have thus earned a special place in the minds and hearts of the CoP populace, especially the older generation since the impact of the CoP has been essentially attributed to the efficacy of these methods. Tsekpoe recognizes that despite efforts to keep pace with modernity to enable the new generation to accommodate the praxis of the CoP, an obvious conflict has created a rift between the generations. The controlling idea of the book blames this gap on attempts to impose old "mission models to succeeding generations" (6) and suggests a rethinking of theology for different generations.

What the book intends to achieve comes to light in the second chapter after Tsekpoe did a thorough evaluation of existing models of mission as the pedestal on which closing the gap in contextual missiology springs per McKeown's models of mission and that of the CoP today. Tsekpoe has recognized the essence of existing mission models in his discussion of how such models emerged within Christian history. The dichotomy he recognizes following his analysis of various models of mission made him synthesize intergenerational missiology from contextual theology and the concept of intergeneration. The theology and spirituality that underlie McKeown's mission, which invites a critical appraisal, engaged the attention of the author in-depth in chapters three and four. He finds McKeown's disposition towards expressing his missionary work in indigenous categories and his personal mentorship important to the accepting of his leadership. It further did not alienate the indigenous people from the CoP in terms of commitment and self-theologizing. His emphasis on the Holy Spirit and his operations in the church, what he calls "reflective pneumatology" (81) and considers African spirituality, was presented as relevant to Pentecostal pneumatology in general. The Spirit-empowered community can draw a lot of treasures from Tsekpoe's presentation of this concept of pneumatology.

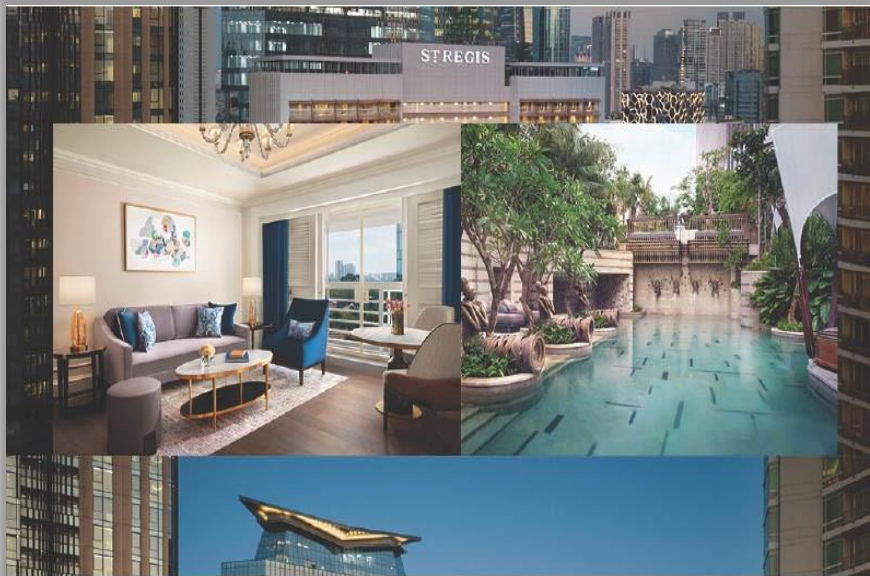
Chapter five furthered McKeown's missionary orientation. The author appreciates McKeown's quest to build an indigenous church that depends on its own resources, both human and material. His mission principle employed in the making of the CoP has been noted to have led to a church that is contextually relevant to the Ghanaian people. Whilst Tsekpoe links the indigenous ethos to the widely cited "Three-self" principle, he went ahead to expose efforts to enable the development of indigenous theological forms, made possible through the leeway McKeown gives Ghanaians to express the Christian faith in local contexts. McKeown's adaptability, his critique of indigenous culture, and his synthesis of diverse contexts have come to be laudable mission models. The concern has been whether this model should be upheld as the standard for the new generation. Tsekpoe pursues this matter further in chapters six and seven. The trepidation of the old generation of losing the presumably potent models of McKeown has been called into reconsideration. Tsekpoe avows that connecting and disconnecting with the past are all relevant in the preservation of the trusted mission models of the CoP. He proposes a flexible model that meets the desires of both generations. This intergenerational mission model emerged as integral considering the impact of globalization, which calls for the adoption of

modern mission models. He considers this approach to the mission as that which would permit a network between diverse generations. This intergeneration approach was discussed in relation to globalization, culture, ecclesiological dynamics, and pneumatology. It was found to be a model that would promote community between the old and new generations. Tsekpoe concludes in chapter eight by rehearsing the fact that contextualization must be done by taking into consideration the differences in generational cultures.

Undoubtedly, Christian Tsekpoe has achieved the goal he sets in this book. The work indeed responds to an issue that has been breaking churches apart. The realization that within a peculiar geographical location, diverse cultures could emerge and impact heavily on the reception of the Christian Gospel and church life has come as a wake-up call to missiologists not to be limited by geography in the study of cultures and their vital impact upon the Gospel. The discussion of the findings in this book has been done in a friendly language and style that not only scholars but lay practitioners of the Christian mission would find helpful. The book would thus reach a wider audience. Considering the great presence of Christianity in Africa and other parts of the southern hemisphere, the discussion herein would facilitate this Christian vitality. What is more, I believe that this book would also contribute to research concerning the second-generation African Pentecostals in the Diaspora and how they could aid the “reverse mission” in the places outside Africa by use of mission models that are identical to their worldview and to a significant extent relevant also to Western cultures.

Typically, Charismatics do not suffer the rift between different generations as may pertain in classical Pentecostalism like the CoP, which situation Tsekpoe sought to address by advocating for a mission approach that is intergenerational. Labeling the viewpoint of this book as “Pentecostal-Charismatic” may not entirely be the case per the problem the book attempts to address. It could be that Tsekpoe did this due to the growing tendency to consider contemporary classical Pentecostalism and charismatic movement together. However, this book would be an excellent read for scholars and practitioners of mission within the Spirit-empowered community of Africa and those outside Africa who are sympathetic to the dynamics of Pentecostalism on the continent.

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