
Pentecostalism in the Southern Cone Countries

Overview and Perspectives

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abstract: This article presents a picture of the historical development and the present situation of the various forms of Pentecostalism existing in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile. The article also presents a summary of the different theories about some themes: the diversity of the social actors reached by the Pentecostal message, the diversity of theologies, Neo-Pentecostalism, Pentecostalism and politics and Pentecostalism and the media.

keywords: Pentecostalism ♦ Pentecostalism and media ♦ Pentecostalism and politics ♦ Protestantism ♦ Southern Cone countries

Pentecostal expansion is the most significant religious phenomenon in Latin America today. The goal of this article is to show that, in order to understand the social and cultural importance of Pentecostalism and its impact in the religious field, we have to look into the diversity within Pentecostalism and its ability to effect cultural interventions by integrating, recodifying and promoting religious values and local practices. Although Pentecostal diversity is still very important, its churches are penetrated by a series of cultural, social and political institutions and acquire cultural density. Such density is achieved at the expense of lessening Pentecostal distance with the world. This means that more and more Pentecostals regard themselves as members of a secular society: citizens, women and youth. The politicization of Pentecostalism and its use

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of the mass media are accordingly surveyed in addition to examining the transformations of the religious field by Pentecostalism. This article provides an overview of its development in the Southern Cone countries, namely Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, emphasizing the existing diversity within Pentecostalism and its impact on the religious field. We also offer some theoretical perspectives about the relations between Pentecostalism and politics.

Pentecostalism in the Southern Cone

It is well known that Catholicism has been the hegemonic religion in Latin America since its colonization by the Portuguese and Spanish empires. It was only during the 19th century that Protestant currents from Europe (especially England, Germany and Holland) and the USA arrived in South America. Certain conditions favoured the reception of Pentecostalism. There was, on the one hand, a non-Catholic, Christian field opened by the Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist churches and, on the other hand, millenarian-messianic movements, beliefs and popular religious practices, which Freston (1994) called 'proto-Pentecostal'.

Pentecostalism in Brazil

Since the 1950s, Pentecostalism has been growing at a fast pace. In 1980, Pentecostals represented 3 percent of the population in Brazil; today they represent about 10 percent of the population (Freston, 1993; Pierucci and Prandi, 1996). The Evangelic Institutional Census, a survey conducted in 1993, showed that an average of five new churches per week were established in the area of Greater Rio de Janeiro between 1990 and 1992 and a total of 141 more new churches in 1990. The number increased to 262 in 1991 and 224 in 1992. There are some recurrent features in the Evangelic Pentecostal movement throughout Brazil: it is a choice of the poor, mainly; it is not dependent upon social elites; and it is a Brazilian religion in rapid expansion.

According to Paul Freston (1994), the introduction of Pentecostalism in Brazil occurred in three successive waves, each with its own theological, ecclesiastic, social and cultural marks. The first wave began with the arrival from the USA of the Christian Congregation (*Congregação Cristã*) in 1910 and Assembly of God (*Assembléia de Deus*) in 1911. At present, the latter is the largest Pentecostal group in Brazil. The first wave is characterized by its emphasis on glossolalia (the supernatural capability to speak in tongues) and regard of baptism by the Holy Spirit as a basic doctrinal point.

The second wave began in the 1950s and 1960s with the fragmentation of the Pentecostal church and establishment of new denominations such

as the Church of the Quadrangular Gospel (Igreja do Evangelho Quadrangular) in 1951, Brazil for Christ (Brasil para Cristo) in 1955 and God Is Love (Deus é Amor) in 1962. Coming from the USA, the Igreja do Evangelho Quadrangular began to use the media for proselytizing, showed more tolerance towards local customs and emphasized the power of the divine cure. Brasil para Cristo started to hold evangelization ceremonies in large open spaces and to pursue political involvement. The Pentecostal church Deus é Amor showed some of the strict doctrinal aspects and sectarianism of the first wave, but introduced rituals close to the popular Catholic religiosity and Afro-Brazilian cults such as Candomblé, Umbanda and Macumba.

The most important example of the third wave is the Universal Church of the Reign of God (Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus). Founded in the late 1970s, Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus experienced a strong growth during the 1980s. This church emphasizes its own distinctiveness vis-à-vis the rest of Pentecostal and Evangelical denominations, opposes Afro-Brazilian cults and stresses the Theology of Prosperity with ritual offerings in cash. In addition, Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus shows a tendency towards bureaucratization and is developing a large transnational net of churches. This combination of theological, ritual and organizational features favours the diversification and extension of its basis of recruitment. By articulating its large economic support, control of the mass media, strict organization of staff, intense political participation and diversification of its social activities, the Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus is able to keep its large constituency with a low level of demand (Freston, 1994).

Pentecostal churches of the second and third waves are also called Autonomous Pentecostal or Neo-Pentecostal as opposed to the churches of the first wave, called traditional churches (Mariano, 1995; Mariz, 1995).¹ Two important Neo-Pentecostal churches, Deus é Amor and Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus, apply an aggressive proselytism, establishing thousands of churches, not only in Brazil but also all over the world.² Brazilian Pentecostalism is defined not only by the interaction of different styles stemming from the characteristics of the three waves but also by rearticulating their relationship with other Protestant groups and society at large. Today, Pentecostalism poses a real 'challenge to the Brazilian-Catholic culture' (Sanchis, 1994), although the Catholic Church of Brazil is not just a passive witness of Pentecostal expansion (Pierucci and Prandi, 1996; Oro, 1996).³

Pentecostalism in Argentina

Bastian (1992a) and Stoll (1990) show that the Protestant population in Argentina increased from 2.1 percent in 1960 to 5 percent in 1985.

Pentecostalism occupies an outstanding position within the Protestant growth in Argentina. From research conducted among Argentine Pentecostal priests, Saracco (1989) concluded that between 1978 and 1987 the number of Pentecostal churches tripled and attendance at Pentecostal services increased six-fold. Analyses of data from the Directory and Evangelical Census (DECE)⁴ published by Wynarczyk and Semán (1994) and Wynarczyk et al. (1995) show that the number of Protestant churches in Buenos Aires increased from 80 in 1970 to 210 in 1992. Although Pentecostalism constituted only a fifth of the total Protestant population during this period, Pentecostal churches represented 43 percent of the total and Sunday attendance counted for 63 percent of the overall Protestant population.

In Argentina Pentecostalism also arrived in different waves. Saracco (1989) shows that until 1940, Pentecostal churches were limited to the lower classes, small cities and certain groups of migrants. At that time, some groups of various national and doctrinal origins shared the basic conception of glossolalia as a sign of baptism by the Holy Spirit and different versions of ethical and behavioural strictness.

In the 1940s, some leaders began to vent their worries about the abandonment of the doctrine and the increasing number of believers looking for the immediate satisfaction of their needs and wishes through immediate divine intervention, for example, the divine cure. That was also the time when 'national' churches began to rise. During the 1950s the conflict between the Peronist regime and the Catholic Church facilitated the first mass evangelization held at a soccer stadium. The success of this campaign persuaded Pentecostal leaders of the efficiency of preaching based on the divine cure. Argentine society seemed to offer ample possibilities for their appeal and, consequently, Pentecostals reassessed their own place within the national Evangelical groups.

Saracco (1989), Soneira (1991) and Wynarczyk (1995) have studied the evolution of the Protestant communities of worship since 1960. They observed the increasing presence of Pentecostal charismatic aspects in a series of daily problems (health, personal relations and work) through the use of the media and a growing emphasis on the so-called Theology of Prosperity. Saracco (1989) and Wynarczyk and Semán (1994) argue that these new practices have altered profoundly the composition and the direction of Pentecostalism, favouring the expansion of its constituency and increasing its visibility in large cities. Religious institutions such as Ondas de Amor y Paz, led by priest Héctor Giménez, Mensaje de Salvación, led by Carlos Anacondia, and Visión de Futuro led by Omar Cabrera stand out. The success of these Neo-Pentecostal institutions affects the evolution of the traditional churches by catering to a segment of society largely neglected, the middle class and youth. Their success, in

turn, has contributed to establishing certain patterns of pastoral guidance, methods and styles of speech legitimated by their own success. Wynarczyk and Semán (1994) and Marostica (1994) argue that the impact of Neo-Pentecostal denominations in Brazil has 'balkanized' the religious field to the extent that different Protestant denominations aligned themselves as being for or against Neo-Pentecostalism.

Pentecostalism in Uruguay

The Protestant population of Uruguay is the smallest of the Southern Cone countries. A reason for this can be found in the long secular tradition of the country. According to the 1908 census, 61.2 percent of the population declared themselves to be Catholics; 37.2 percent described themselves as atheistic, agnostic or evolutionist; and only 1.6 percent considered themselves as Protestant. In the 1980 census, Catholics made up 59.5 percent of the population, Protestants 1.9 percent and Jews 1.7 percent. Thirty-five percent declared themselves not to be religious (Casas, 1988a).

Uruguayan Pentecostalism began with the arrival of missionaries from the American Church of God in 1935. The Swedish Assembly of God settled in 1938 and its homonymous organization from the USA settled in Uruguay in 1964. During the 1980s about 70 Pentecostal denominations existed and their membership surpassed the number of historical denominations (Casas, 1988b). The Uruguayan case restates on a smaller scale what has happened in other countries, that is the hegemony of Pentecostalism among Protestant groups.

Despite the scarcity of hard core data about Pentecostal hegemony, it is possible to point out some indicators, although indirect. For example, Pentecostalism has become highly visible, showing an intense presence in the news, media and the city landscape itself. Pentecostal churches are sophisticated places of worship in the capital city, Montevideo, where more than half of the population of Uruguay lives. Compared with the other Southern Cone countries, Uruguayan Pentecostalism is less strong and scholarly studies about it are still in an incipient state.

Uruguayan scholars highlight the influence of Brazilian and Argentine Pentecostal churches. According to Pi Hugarte (1991), the settlement of Brazilian churches began with the opening of the first local of Deus é Amor in Montevideo in 1986. Five years later, there were 59 temples of such denomination not only in Montevideo but also in the interior of the country (Freston, 1994). This development can be explained by the weakness of earlier Pentecostal projects, the relative strength of the traditional Protestant church and the Uruguayan 'permeability' to Brazilian influences (Pi Hugarte, 1992b). As in Brazil, Uruguayan churches wage a 'spiritual war' against Afro-Brazilian cults (Pi Hugarte, 1991; Guigou, 1993a).

Guigou (1993b) points to the intense and conflictive presence of Pentecostalism in Uruguay. The arrival of Argentine Neo-Pentecostal churches and their competition with the Brazilian ones seem to be decisive in the conflictive profile of Uruguayan Pentecostalism but, at the same time, the success of 'foreign' Pentecostal churches stimulates a native Uruguayan Pentecostal revivalism. The competition among these groups brings about a series of alliances and conflicts. As a result of this dynamic new elements such as the spectacularization of worship, mass campaigns and the presence of foreign missionaries convened by the local churches, until now absent in Uruguay, have been introduced. These developments have brought the Pentecostal phenomenon to the fore of Uruguayan society and to the scholars' attention.

Pentecostalism in Chile

Twentieth-century censuses indicate the expansion of the Protestant population in Chile as follows. In 1907, Protestants represented 1.1 percent of the population; in 1920, 1.44 percent; in 1930, 1.45 percent; in 1940, 2.34 percent; in 1952, 4.06 percent; in 1960, 5.58 percent; in 1970, 6.18 percent; and in 1992, 12.40 percent. Similarly to the cases discussed earlier, Pentecostalism is the largest and most dynamic body in Chilean Protestantism. From data gathered in a 1971 study, Tennekes (1985) indicated that Pentecostals represented 80 percent of the Evangelical churches. During the 1980s this percentage increased (Lagos and Chacón, 1986) and, according to Canales et al. (1991), Pentecostalism represents today close to 90 percent of the Protestant Evangelic universe. Analyses of the data from the 1992 census indicate that the Pentecostal presence is stronger in the countryside and the popular settlements in Chile's capital, Santiago. For example, Pentecostals represent 24 percent and 20.59 percent of the Evangelical population in the areas of Bio-Bio and Araucania, respectively (Herrera, 1995).

Chilean Pentecostalism differs from the cases discussed earlier for it has incorporated local components. Since 1902 the Methodist Church of Valparaiso was very active in what we call the birth of Chilean Pentecostalism. The Chilean case was part of the process of creation and development of an international network of denominations, especially the Methodist one. In 1909 the Chilean Protestant church adopted a Pentecostal identity, according to Sepulveda (1992). Within a few months, the two Methodist churches of Santiago split and Priest Hoover, until then linked to the Methodist Church of Valparaiso, became the leader of the new Methodist Pentecostal Church in 1910.

Besides the fact that this process took place in Chile with autonomy from its American peers, another factor helps to explain the autochthonous characteristics of Chilean Pentecostalism. According to D'Epina

(1970), some Chilean priests, attracted by religious liberalism, opposed the rigid foreign missionaries' mentality and showed sensitivity not only towards the supernatural aspects of the biblical accounts but also to indigenous religiosity. The new church expanded rapidly, building ten churches in 1911 and 22 in 1929 in a period characterized by several splits, the most important of which was the creation of the Pentecostal Evangelical church in 1932. Chilean Pentecostalism witnessed the foundation of ten new churches. Thus, a good part of Chilean Pentecostal churches that sprang from the Pentecostal Methodist Church have kept the autochthonous features of Chilean Pentecostalism.

Since 1930, as can be inferred from the census data, Pentecostalism began to outnumber the total population growth rate. Until 1960, the rhythm of what D'Epinay (1970) calls the 'Pentecostal explosion' varied in intensity and, especially, in its social and regional distribution. Born in the slums of large cities and marginal rural populations, Pentecostalism expanded to southern rural Chile. From there and along with later migration influx to the cities, Pentecostalism settled among urban popular groups. D'Epinay interprets the expansionist character of Pentecostalism as a form of social protest displaced to the spiritual realm; a kind of parallel and alternative response to the formation of the Socialist and Communist parties, with strong roots in the Chilean working class. Between 1960 and 1970, Pentecostal expansion slowed down. D'Epinay (1983) explains this by the rise of alternative ways of political and social mobilization. But, since Pentecostalism recovered its growth rate during the 1970s under a political regime that refused all requests for social participation, D'Epinay's explanation needs to be reconsidered.

Diversity of Pentecostalism in the Southern Cone

As discussed earlier, Pentecostalism took different paths in the Southern Cone countries from the very beginning. A series of surveys carried out in recent years show that the initial Pentecostal diversity has even multiplied. This is one of the most productive lines of enquiry to analyse Pentecostalism today.

Diversification of Social Subjects Addressed by the Pentecostal Message

There is a connection between Pentecostalism and the peasant and indigenous world in the Southern Cone region. D'Epinay's remarks about Chile have inspired in-depth research about the specificities of the emergence of Pentecostalism in the region. For example, Foester (1993) points to the continuity between Mapuche religiosity and Pentecostalism and the importance of the Pentecostal message as a discourse impeding the

emergence of an indigenous identity. The gift of revelation preached by Pentecostals keeps alive and active the role of Mapuches' forefathers and their dreams, allowing them to confront western secularism. In turn, Herrera (1995) shows that the religiosity of the southern Chilean peasantry creates a mechanism that transforms the economic exclusion they experience as a result of the expansion of capitalism into ideological integration. Similar conclusions were reached by Wright (1992) and Miller (1967) in their study about the affiliation of Toba Indians to Pentecostalism. Several tribal and peasant groups have already converted to Pentecostalism, although the number of studies about these groups is still limited.

The literature on urban Pentecostalism is more abundant, and exposes its social, cultural and institutional diversity. Its ascendance among the middle classes is incipient but systematic. Mariano (1995), Soneira (1994) and Freston (1993) attribute this trend to the upward mobility of some members of the church, social reorientation of evangelization and a more acceptable image of Pentecostalism among the middle classes. This is a relevant point because an expanding diversity of Pentecostal constituency would challenge assumptions about the growth of Pentecostalism as being restricted to low-income classes.

Recent studies also indicate Pentecostal cultural, ethnical and gender differentiation. Here research perspectives look into the evolution of different churches and make it possible to appraise new understandings of appropriation and diffusion of Pentecostal messages. A good example of this is the growing incidence of Pentecostalism among blacks, which accounts for the ethnical variability of appropriation (Contins, 1994), and the conversion of young Rastafarians, which shows the flexibility of trajectories. Pentecostal success among these groups tells, above all, about the many possibilities for the Pentecostal interpellation (Gomes da Cunha, 1993). From large denominational networks and churches to small communities, it is possible to perceive the emergence of nuclei for expansion and aggregation with different social, age, cultural composition, ritual styles and theological emphases.

Pentecostals have developed specific Evangelic strategies targeting women. Tarducci (1994a, 1994b) has studied such specificity and the linkage of woman-church. Her study shows that, despite the church's androcentric discourse, the adoption of Pentecostal beliefs and group work lessen, to some extent, the perverse effects of patriarchy. Mariz and Machado (1994) show that Pentecostal women gain, on the one hand, autonomy vis-a-vis their husbands and families and, on the other hand, they perceive themselves as being responsible for the salvation of their partners and families as well as for their prosperity.

Semán (1994) has explained the success of Pentecostalism among the

youth in Buenos Aires by its capacity to open and re-elaborate the urban cultural codes. Similarly, Mariano (1995) has studied the cultural changes of Pentecostal churches emerging from the 1970s in São Paulo.

Diversification also encompasses different ways of institutionalizing the believers' Pentecostal identity. Several authors have analysed various institutional endeavours in which Pentecostal churches join efforts among themselves and with other Protestant denominations, resulting in new forms of Evangelical interpellation for cultural and social undertakings. From entrepreneurs' meetings like ADHONEP (Associação de Homens de Negócios do Evangelho Pleno) to rock bands that bring the young generation together (Mariano, 1995), there is a wide spectrum of organizations articulating the Evangelical culture about which very little is known. In his analysis of the 'Atletas de Cristo', Jungblut (1994) analyses the process of identity formation and shows the efficacy of a strategic diversification that generates alternative groupings.

Pentecostalism, thus, appears as a diverse and vital phenomenon. This quality stems from its active adaptation to the most different cultural climates without being weakened or voided by them. Women, youth, businessmen and soccer players can be identified as believers and Evangelical. The relationship between Pentecostalism and the world has changed in two important aspects: Pentecostalism is becoming more secular and the fragmented and secular diversity assumes a Pentecostal identity.

Theological Diversity

Current research conducted in the Southern Cone points out three theological innovations that affect Pentecostal and Evangelical churches in many levels and forms. They are the doctrine of the Spiritual War, the Theology of Prosperity and the proximity of some churches to the sphere of action of the World Council of Churches.

The doctrine of Spiritual War, created by Peter Wagner, emphasizes, exacerbates and systematizes the Pentecostal belief about the activity of satanic powers and puts it on equal footing with the baptism by the Holy Spirit. The logic of these forces, Satan and the Holy Spirit, is projected on to the development of human history and the *Parousia*, transforming it into a Final Struggle against the devil. The influence of this theology can be observed at four levels. First, the transformation of the rituals into acts of exorcism preceded by episodes of demoniac possession. Second, the release of the devil as a sacramental prerequisite to receiving the 'cure' or 'divine prosperity'. Third, the changing roles of religious agents who become exorcists. Finally, the devising of Evangelical campaigns geared towards the recognition of local demonology.

Transnational Evangelical, Pentecostal and Baptist organizations declared the doctrine of Spiritual War in the beginning of the 1980s.

Wynarczyk (1995) and Mariano (1995) argue that the theology of Spiritual War is prevalent in Pentecostal churches in Argentina and Brazil. According to these authors, such a theology succeeds in representing current religiosity as a satanic manifestation, specific to certain social, cultural or national groups. Thus, Spiritual War may turn into a war against Afro-Brazilian cults, Spiritualism, New Age cults or Catholic devotions. Pentecostal hostility towards other religious persuasions exacerbates the existing tensions and conflicts that reverberate in the religious realm and public opinion. By doing so, Pentecostals both acknowledge popular religiosity (although negatively) and enhance its own power of interpellation by anchoring its message in local religious logics.

The second innovation, the Theology of Prosperity, has been developed in the Evangelic world by North American priests since the late 1950s. According to Saracco (1989) and Mariano (1996), this process began in Argentina and Brazil in the 1960s and was carried out by Argentine and Brazilian Neo-Pentecostal leaders. Theology of Prosperity includes the doctrine of Positive Confession that sanctions the power of the word and replaces petition and supplication for requests, and interprets the scripture as a promise of well-being. The believer must take possession of the blessings received; failing to do so is considered an action of satanical powers (Jardilino, 1993; Corten, 1995; Mariano, 1996). Theology of Prosperity and Theology of Spiritual War feed each other at this crossroads. Furthermore, according to the Theology of Prosperity, God's blessings include material possessions. The act of giving is considered to be a sign of subjection to God and a necessary part of the process of liberation that enables a person to receive the blessing. This feature legitimizes Pentecostal requests for cash contributions, although it does not create them.

The adoption of this theology with its ritual and ecclesiastic corollaries is not restricted to Pentecostal churches, but practised by several denominations. Yet, it is a dividing component and a source of internal conflict among the Evangelical groups. Some Pentecostal churches and missionary and historical Protestant groups have made the Theology of Prosperity their target of criticism.

The Theology of Prosperity is said to reduce the church's distance to 'the world' by including people with a certain level of consumption and people whose religious search is related to their economic destitution. Such closeness to the 'world' weakens the Puritan traits that had been present in some churches since the 1950s according to Freston (1993) for the Brazilian case and Saracco (1989) for the Argentine case. On the other hand, cash contributions requested 'fit' the followers' expectations and beliefs, and are functional to the strategy of resource accumulation for the church's expansion. Needless to say, that wealth carries consequences for the type of public targeted by the churches. The appreciation for

material/secular blessings presupposes a change in the church's axiologic scale that is compatible with extensive evangelization, for it helps to identify the church as an attractive institution. But, at the same time, the centrality of money contributions raises suspicion and becomes a burden in the conflicts not just among the different Evangelical factions, but also with other religions and civil society at large.

Although some authors have shown that Pentecostals upholding Theology of Prosperity have enhanced their market possibilities, there is no sufficient support for such a claim. The Theology of Prosperity with its ritual practices and appropriations is far from the ascetic practices and salvationist preoccupations of the Protestant spirit that were decisive in the development of capitalism. Conversely, Corten's interpretation of Theology of Prosperity as the way in which middle-class Pentecostals build their Evangelical identity appears to be more plausible (Corten, 1995). Another aspect of diversification, studied by Saracco (1989) and Sepulveda (1992), uncovers new horizons for enquiry. Protestant theological liberalism, which upholds a social approach to the Scriptures, prevails in Chilean and Argentine institutions linked to the World Churches Council. Also in these countries there is increasing adherence of Pentecostal churches to the Latin American Churches Council (CLAI; Conselho Latinoamericano de Igrejas) which represents the World Council of Churches in Latin America.

The Emergence of Neo-Pentecostalism

Because Pentecostalism has undergone such an intense process of change in recent years, a few scholars have proposed to refer to two currents, historical Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism. According to Oro (1996) the main characteristics of Neo-Pentecostalism are the following. Neo-Pentecostal leaders have strong personalities (sometimes charismatic). Neo-Pentecostalism stimulates emotional expressiveness, pursues exclusive affiliation and makes intense use of the media. Divine cure and exorcism as well as request for money donations are pivotal rituals (Oro, 1996). To this list, Mariano (1996) adds a certain degree of liberalization of customs and changing criteria of holiness in the Pentecostal tradition.⁵

Argentine and Brazilian Neo-Pentecostalism are the channels through which Theology of Prosperity and Spiritual War penetrate into the Evangelical churches, although this is by no means a process of mechanical reception. These theologies are recreated and filtered through the views of local agents. Argentine and Brazilian Neo-Pentecostal churches have developed their own projects of transnational expansion. We have pointed out earlier that both churches have influenced the development of Neo-Pentecostalism in Uruguay. As mentioned before, Brazilian churches such as Deus é Amor and the Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus have

established temples in Europe, Africa and almost all of South America. In turn, Argentine churches have been expanding to Paraguay, Bolivia and Venezuela. In its initial expansion during the 19th century, Pentecostalism was a foreign religion arriving from Europe and North America; currently, it is a foreign religion coming from Brazil and/or Argentina. Thus, Neo-Pentecostalism appears to be the fragment of Pentecostalism most exposed to transnational dynamics, not only a sensitive receptor but also an active producer.

What has been referred to as 'liberalization of customs' or the lowering of ecclesiastic demands is a characteristic that can be discussed vis-à-vis previous phenomena. Neo-Pentecostal churches strive to establish themselves as the religious mediations that legitimate and advance secular goals attuned to other tendencies of modern culture. In turn, this endeavour – framed by the Spiritual War – energizes local religious cultures. Therefore, antagonism between the secular and the sacred lies at the core of Neo-Pentecostalism. By transposing holiness – the distance between the world and divine affiliation – into a sort of guarantee of protection and success, Neo-Pentecostalism makes inroads in various societies. Overcoming successive splits in its own history, Neo-Pentecostalism makes itself available to Brazilian, Argentine, Chilean and Uruguayan peoples and becomes part of their cultures.

As mentioned before, Neo-Pentecostalism makes very effective and extensive use of the media. Because of this, authors like Brandão (1986) affirm the existence of an Evangelical cultural industry that accompanies the believer in his or her home and amplifies the message transmitted by the churches. This cultural industry expands through its capacity to tune into the believers' cultures and we can assume that this industry articulates Evangelic identity. Neo-Pentecostalism has undergone its own process of bureaucratization and management organization, as well. In fact, the agility to set up new temples and standardize the worship styles are the most visible aspects of an institutional practice able to regulate people's lives. All these considerations demonstrate the current importance of Neo-Pentecostalism within the Evangelical context in South America. However, it is important to keep in mind that Pentecostal expansion rests, largely, upon the fact that its social bases reject and admit only a part of the Pentecostal tenets.

Politicization of Pentecostalism

Studies on Pentecostalism in the Southern Cone countries have not ignored its involvement in politics. It is fair to say that the conceptualization of Pentecostal involvement, as suggested by Freston (1993) and Mariz (1995), has been combined with the preoccupations of the observers and analysts themselves. Pentecostalism has been accused of political

immobility as well as of affinity to imperialist interests and conservative powers. In the countries where Pentecostalism has expanded the most (Brazil, Argentina and Chile) it has been portrayed as a threat to democracy and cultural pluralism. Politicization constitutes a steady tendency in Pentecostalism, and encompasses a variety of elements and styles that make it difficult to accept uncomplicated answers.

In his study about Chile, D'Epinay (1970) points to the existing tension between political mobilization and the Pentecostal message of indifference towards the world. Pentecostal rejection of society, its extreme dualistic theology and the type of organization of its churches make the material and ideological politicization of its followers difficult. However, D'Epinay observes some tendencies that could lead to Pentecostalist political involvement in the long run. The main tendency is the articulation of clientelistic networks that place Pentecostal leaders as mediators between the state or political parties and their followers. Their quest for religious respectability as well as material and institutional benefits stimulates political activity on the part of the church leaders. This corporative tendency towards political involvement and the context of social conflict prevailing in Chile in the early 1970s contributed to shape Pentecostalism as a conservative force.

Both D'Epinay (1970) and Tenekes (1985) argued for increased flexibility of Pentecostalism's conservative passivity during the Chilean Socialist government (1970-3). In fact, Pentecostals were initially less conservative than non-Pentecostals from the same social class, but not different in terms of their sympathy for the Popular Unit. This proclivity disappeared with the military takeover. As the Catholic church sought to distance itself from the government, the military committee sought Pentecostals out as religious interlocutors. The military discourse, admonishing the anarchy stirred up by Marxism and advocating a Christian renewal, won over the leaders of the main Pentecostal denominations. In turn, they showed their appreciation for the regime and their conservatism was reactivated.

Among the studies about political involvement of Brazilian Pentecostals between the 1960s and the beginning of the 1980s, Sandra Stoll's (1983) stands out. She recognized two tendencies. First, Pentecostals' political choices varied, although right-wing leaning was more common. Second, the articulation of reciprocity networks among religious and political leaders was particularist and corporative. During the 1980s and 1990s, however, Evangelists' participation in electoral politics increased, leading to the formation of an Evangelical committee composed of 34 members, including 18 Pentecostals, in the National Assembly, which was in charge of writing a new constitution in 1987.

Pierucci's (1989) analysis of Pentecostal political behaviour in crucial

elections highlights Pentecostals' conservative alignment in cultural, politico-institutional, social and economic matters. He also observes that when Pentecostalism turns to politics, it opens up an unforeseen channel for political participation to the lower classes. Finally, he points out the Pentecostal adaptation to the existing rules of the game as well as its capacity for exploiting the positions acquired through ecclesiastical expansion and cultural influence, mainly through a better access to the mass media. Mariano and Pierucci (1992) argue that the political behaviour of Pentecostal churches during the presidential campaign of 1989 supports this claim. Their initial sympathy for the conservative candidate, Fernando Collor de Mello, turned into intense and expansive activism managed by the most important Pentecostal churches in Brazil during the second electoral round. Pentecostals reacted to a rumour according to which the opposition, associated with the Catholic church, would persecute Pentecostals and close their temples. Mariano and Pierucci (1992) pointed out, however, that despite its frailty, the very existence of an Evangelical left should prevent us from generalizing about Pentecostal homogeneity.

For this reason recent studies insist on the need of contextualizing and relativizing different perspectives. According to Freston (1993), social scientists have had trouble in comprehending the specificity of the Pentecostal political sensibility, which incorporates overtures from right and left, according to its own culture. He showed that the Pentecostal bloc at the Constituent Assembly was no more inclined to the conservatives than the average National Constituent Assembly, and emphasized that the leaning of the Pentecostal electorate towards Collor de Mello was not inevitable: the opposition could have changed the situation, or even won the Pentecostal ballots. What was at stake was not the univocal conservative disposition on the part of the Pentecostals but the successful interpellation of their political sensibility by the conservatives. In this sense, the data by Pierucci and Prandi (1996) confirm those of Freston (1994). They showed a variable Pentecostal vote amounting to the denial of any 'conservative nature' in their electoral behaviour. Corten (1995) described that the relation of Pentecostals with politics in Brazil is not established by their electoral options but by their antipolitical views (neither apolitical nor against the political system) that place the solutions for the world problems in a 'metasocial' order. With respect to democratic politics, Pentecostalism constitutes an exteriority that can only penetrate it by changing itself. For a democratic order, Pentecostalism represents a challenge rather than a threat. So far, there has been no significant political presence of Pentecostals in Argentina (Marostica, 1994).

A general balance of the political participation of Pentecostals in the Southern Cone countries indicates that their political behaviour varies. Although conservatism prevails, it is more the consequence of particular

historical situations than a fossilized essence of the Pentecostal message. Individuals do not always regulate their political behaviour according to their religious beliefs and even their beliefs may influence their political behaviour in different ways. The political behaviour of Pentecostal leaders appears to be very concrete. They are sought after by political parties and/or governments, especially authoritarian regimes in conflict with the Catholic church, trying to increase or diversify their bases of support and legitimacy. Pentecostals are very aware of such political calculations and exert their own political leverage, although their political action is not univocal. The churches' reaction to political pleas varies in content and degrees of institutionalization.

It varies in content because Pentecostalism is open to different, even opposite political calls. Regarding their degree of institutionalization, Pentecostal political actions range from acceptance of cooptation by different political parties to the formation of autonomous organizations for political and social mobilization, to exhortation to vote for a particular candidate. The corporate and material interests of the church can be instrumentalized either through clientelistic practices or by stressing equality and citizenship. Conservatives manage to create a common theme with the Pentecostal electorate by making religious values such as the family an important part of the political agenda. The conservative instrumentalization of what is presented as the traditional mandate of 'respect for authority' shows, paradoxically, that apoliticism can be broken, even by a call from the left. Although we do not speculate about the relationship between the leaders' political decisions and followers' political behaviour (assuming that a direct link between them exists), we can affirm that the historical predominance of conservative currents is based more upon the conservatives' ability to find better cues into the political subjectivity promoted by Pentecostalism rather than upon the existence of a Pentecostal 'essence'. It is the relationships between established political actors and the Pentecostals which determines the more or less conservative character of their politicization as well as the more or less conservative orientation adopted in their political actions.

Pentecostalism and the Media

Many Pentecostal churches, especially Neo-Pentecostal ones, utilize mass media, chiefly radio and television. But, they can be called 'electronic churches' only by drawing analogies with North American Evangelical churches (Assmann, 1986). Historic Protestant churches such as Lutherans, Baptists, Presbyterians and Methodists have made use of the media, too, especially the press. What is special about Latin American Pentecostalism today is the great emphasis placed on mass media. Most denominations distribute also their own newspapers or magazines.

Data about Brazil illustrate the use of the electronic media by the Pentecostals. The church Assembléia de Deus broadcasts about 2000 religious programmes on private radio stations everyday. Through its project 'Jesus-Sat', Assembléia de Deus distributes religious television programmes via satellite from Amazonia to the rest of the country. Evangelho Quadrangular airs about 600 religious programmes on the radio every day. Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus owns 30 radio stations and Rede Record de Televisão (Record TV Station), the third largest Brazilian television network, owns 14 broadcasting stations. Deus é Amor owns five radio stations and broadcasts daily *A voz da libertação* (The Voice of Liberation), a programme aired simultaneously throughout Brazil and to some Latin American countries. The presence of Pentecostalism and historic Protestantism on the media shows that there is, in fact, a 'cultural Evangelical industry' and Brazil is the second ranked world producer of Evangelical television programmes (Freston, 1995).

Oro discloses how Brazilian Pentecostal churches convey multiple meanings to their followers and preachers via the media. He develops some of those meanings: for example, economic (request of donations to defray the expenses of radio and television programmes); proselytizing (television and radio programmes aim to attract people to the temples and convert them); and legitimating meaning (the use of the media confers legitimacy on Pentecostal churches and even the reputation of being modern, adaptive and more suited to the present time).

Pentecostalism and the Transformations in the Religious Field

From the studies by Wynarczyk and Semán (1994) on Argentina, Mariano (1995) on Brazil, Guigou (1993a, 1993b) on Uruguay and Sepulveda (1992) on Chile, one can conclude that the Pentecostal rise effects changes in the relations among the Protestant groups. The fact that in the last decades Pentecostalism has become the largest Evangelical denomination indicates a kind of 'Pentecostalization' of Protestant historical institutions. One can confirm that Pentecostal charismatic and proselytizing practices are reproduced by some fractions of missionary and historic Protestantism. Another symptom of this is the emergence of new dividing lines among the Evangelical blocs. Theology of Prosperity, styles and meanings of politicization have promoted the creation of 'inter-denominational' alliances in Brazil that compete among themselves to gain hegemony and representation within the Evangelical field. Denominational identity continues to be a relative matter in these fractions; it is possible to find Pentecostals, missionary and historic Protestants in the various groupings.

These opposite currents coalesce in a steady tendency observed in all

the cases. Increasingly, Pentecostals define themselves and are perceived as Evangelicals and a portion of the Evangelicals become more 'Pentecostalized'. Unlike its beginnings when it was a group marginalized from the established Evangelical denominations, in the last decades Pentecostalism has experienced a momentous ascent and is in the spotlight of Evangelical tensions.

Another relevant aspect of the changes effected in the religious field by Pentecostalism is its breach in the hegemony and, more important, the representation of hegemony attributed historically to the Catholic church. Catholic publishing companies began to issue 'clarifying literature' about 'sects'. As mentioned before, the Catholic church in Brazil uses devotional and charismatic practices aiming to halt believers' withdrawal from Catholicism. Concomitantly, this situation has produced changes within the Catholic church. For example, Pentecostal expansion has contributed to questioning Catholic progressive groups.

Pentecostal presence has altered also the system of relations with other forms of religiosity. If we take into account the tolerance towards Afro-Brazilian cults shown by the Catholic church historically, we can see an escalating tension in those countries where Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus has settled. In this particular conflict one can observe a specific economy: the expansion of some Neo-Pentecostal churches is based upon their battle against Afro-Brazilian cults. Conversely, in Chile Pentecostalism has established a positive *vinculum* with pre-existing local (Mapuche) spirituality.

Pentecostal expansion prompts changes in the relations among different religiosities. In general terms, it is possible to contend that Pentecostalism introduces a different logic into the economy of the religious field. Pentecostalism presses for exclusive and proselytizing membership, but in the four countries we have studied, a plurality of religious loyalties of the traditional kind still prevails.

Freston (1993) has framed this phenomenon in the context of transition from a religious syncretic and hierarchical market where multiple references are organized after the acceptance of Catholic hegemony, to another market where the claim of religious exclusiveness draws followers from other religions. Several studies have shown the specific content of this journey. Mariz and Machado (1994) regarded the Pentecostalism anti-syncretic stand as related to a process of rationalization by those who come from a magic universe. According to Sanchis (1994), Pentecostalism exacerbates the demand for a universal religion. Baptism by the Holy Spirit redirects the identity process centripetally (inwardly), resignifying and overpowering the pre-existent concept of the sacred in the lower classes. Pentecostalism rewrites the magic world of popular religiosity based on ethical categories, which, in fact, counter its own standing. Pentecostalism

coexists with the magic world but subordinates it to a concept of exclusiveness, which, in turn, nurtures its antagonism with popular religiosity.

Pentecostalism in the Southern Cone Countries: Some Theoretical Perspectives and Conclusions

A good deal of the best theoretical work on Latin American Pentecostalism has been written in the Southern Cone. Among the 'classics', Willems, D'Epinay and Rolim deserve especial notice, not only because they have written the early scholarship on the subject, but also because their hypotheses and conclusions continue to be fundamental to construct Pentecostalism as a sociological problem.

Willems (1967) argued that Pentecostalism grants rationality, identity and protection to its followers, easing their insertion in the urban modern world. D'Epinay (1970) builds upon the relation Pentecostalism-modernization and suggested that Pentecostalism creates a double movement of rejection and substitution of modern society by restoring the relationships and hierarchies of the rural community. This movement blesses isolation from the urban world within an ethics that turns rejection into social passivity and political conformity. Although these two hypotheses highlight the role of Pentecostal churches vis-a-vis the anomic condition of modernization, it is important to make distinctions among them. While Willems stresses the individual aspects and 'symbolic protest', D'Epinay holds onto the classical version of deterioration of a prescriptive nucleus common to a social group. In turn, Rolim (1985, 1987) appraised the reintegrative force of Pentecostalism, but subordinated it to the analysis of social composition and the process of social formation of Brazil. From his Marxist structuralist point of view, he stressed the presence of Pentecostalism among the dominated classes, although not specifically the working class, by arguing that Pentecostal ideology fosters capitalist social relations.

Rejection or adjustment to modernity? Is Latin America subscribing to Protestantism or merely keeping up with the religious and cultural styles of the region? These questions spring from the classic works and continue to direct current research. During the 1980s, scholarly works were very ethnographic, and researchers strove to operationalize the fundamental hypotheses and compared diverse social and religious groups. These studies coincide in stressing the emergence of a new situation: Pentecostalism itself has changed and effected change in the religious field of those cultures where it had settled.

Recent studies point out the inherent tensions in the religious field by comparing D'Epinay's and Willems's propositions. Mariz (1990, 1994) showed that the values promoted by Pentecostalism (individualism,

rationality and sense of integrity) constitute a key factor to the survival of the popular groups. Corten (1995), in turn, discussed how Pentecostal emotionality allows for the assertion of a place and a social dynamics different from the modern world and democratic politics.

Tensions, contradictions and disagreements are steady features in the literature on Pentecostalism. Droogers (1991) says that it can be explained by the very paradoxical nature of Pentecostalism itself. Bastian (1992b) and Oro (1994) pointed out the Janus-like character of Pentecostalism, both rejecting and adopting modernity. Bastian considered this to be linked to the dualistic character of Latin American societies.

Regarding the question about continuity or rupture with previous religious traditions, Oro (1994) argued that Pentecostalism provides an institutional frame in which Latin American popular sensibility and religiosity can be expressed and allows for processes of identity formation. Bastian (1992b) pointed out that Pentecostalism is a renewal of, and an adaptation to, the practices and values of popular religiosity, rather than a process internal to popular Catholicism or Protestantism. Pentecostalism is a renewal that goes beyond blending different cults and, actually, assembles a new and original religious profile.

In the counterpoint between the world and the sacred, Pentecostalism intervenes in the religious and cultural fields beyond bringing traditions together. Pentecostalism creates a specific cultural atmosphere with its own values and sensibilities as a consequence of its own ability to elaborate original synthesis attuned to diverse audiences. With its innovative practices, use and adaptation of modern means of organization and communication, Pentecostalism is not occupying a space left empty by Catholicism. On the contrary, Pentecostalism generates a religious and cultural project that creates its own demands and proves capable of disarticulating existing constituencies deemed as captive.

Finally, Pentecostalism is a phenomenon at the crossroads of the national and the global, not because cultural specificities are in the process of dissolving, but because the dialectic between the local and the global affects the constitution of the Pentecostal culture.

Notes

1. We develop the concept of Neo-Pentecostalism later.
2. In 1994, there were 636 God Is Love churches spread all over Brazil as well as over another 25 countries distributed as follows: in South America: Argentina, 51 churches; Bolivia, 10; Chile, 6; Colombia, 2; Ecuador, 5; Paraguay, 66; Peru, 51; Uruguay, 75; Venezuela, 13; in Central America: Costa Rica, 1; El Salvador, 1; Guatemala, 3; Honduras, 5; Panama, 4; in North America: USA, 5; in Europe: Portugal, 1; in Africa: Angola, 1; Cape Verde, 5; Guinea Bissau, 1; Mozambique, 1; Nigeria, 1; and in Asia: India, 1. Universal Church exists in 32 countries

besides Brazil with 2000 churches and a constituency of 3 million. Its distribution abroad is as follows: in Latin America: Chile, 5 churches; Uruguay, 4; Paraguay, 9; Bolivia, 3; Colombia, 7; Argentina, 22; Venezuela, 4; in Central America: Puerto Rico, 3; Dominican Republic, 1; El Salvador, 2; Honduras, 2; Haiti, 2; Mexico, 11; in North America: Canada, 7 churches; USA, 17; in Europe: Portugal, 52 churches; Holland, 2; Switzerland, 4; Italy, 4; France, 1; in Africa: Cape Verde, 4; Senegal, 3; Bissau Guinea, 3; Angola, 5; South Africa, 17; Uganda, 2; Kenya, 4; Malawi, 3; Mozambique, 7; Swaziland, 2; Botswana, 2; and in Asia: the Philippines, 7.

3. According to Oro the Catholic Church's reaction is no longer condemnation of sects, but reconsideration of its own pastoral, reappraisal of devotional acts, a growing and improved use of the mass media and support of the *Renovação Carismática Católica* (Oro, 1996).
4. The Directory and Evangelical Census (DECE) is the census of the Evangelical churches of the city of Buenos Aires, carried out in 1983.
5. Frigerio (1994) agrees with Oro, in general, but points out differences between the Argentine and Brazilian cases. The ritual and ideological centrality of money is less in Argentina than in Brazil and the demand for exclusiveness is moderate because the Evangelical field is more integrated and combating Afro-Brazilian cults is of less importance.

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