

**A MORAL IMAGINATION:
PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY—and PRAXIS—OF SOCIAL CONCERN
IN LATIN AMERICA**

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Discrimination, neglect, and economic disparity are the norm within most Latin American countries. The masses still struggle to obtain their daily bread. Globalization and authoritarian power structures have eliminated lesser groups from participation. In these hostile environments, Pentecostal groups have exploded from a not-so-long-ago "brush-arbor" handful to the most extensive network of popularly directed associations outside the Roman Catholic Church. These social networks of largely autonomous local congregations, numbering fifty million members and adherents, are not merely at the margins, but at the vanguard of a clamor for a more rewarding, secure future.

As the dust settles on this phenomenon, it is apparent, however, that for millions of people, systematic structural injustice sustains unacceptable conditions. Pentecostals are confronted with a myriad of novel and complex challenges requiring equally novel solutions that are innovative and workable. Even though this army of compassionate workers may be sufficiently motivated to remain in the trenches and reach the hurting and marginalized around them, they will need an inspired moral imagination if they wish to be effective agents of social transformation at the macro level.

The thesis of this presentation is that Pentecostals, accustomed to the supernatural and equipped with the empowering presence of the Spirit, could enhance the effectiveness of their social action programs by encouraging the development of the skills, methods, and approaches that are necessary for moral imagination and organizational creativity to flourish. A moral

imagination could help Pentecostal groups envision the future—the outcomes desired and to discern and understand their specific context from a fresh perspective, to imagine and evaluate new possibilities, and from among those possibilities select a strategy for acting in that context. A moral imagination, guided by the Spirit, would provide a platform from which Pentecostals could develop effective organizational strategies that are creative, innovative, and entrepreneurial.

I. Challenges and Opportunities

Expressions of social concerns are found in all types of Pentecostal churches. In general, however, while literature on Pentecostalism is growing, the movement's popular appeal and dynamic social processes have been probed only on the surface. Lacking has been on-the-ground scholarly investigations that could produce the empirical data to establish even a tentative basis for definitions, quantification, and description of Pentecostal social program functions and resources. However, recent field research by Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, focusing upon an expanse of Pentecostal social programs, will go a long way to fill that vacuum.¹ Over a four-year period, Miller and Yamamori visited dozens of social ministry projects and interviewed hundreds of leaders in twenty countries and four continents. Assessing social programs without imposing restrictive and inflexible categories, they accepted at face value and as normative the stories of spiritual experience and claims of the supernatural. Miller and Yamamori lay emphasis on claims that Pentecostals are not on a “social strike” and that a vibrant social dynamic plays an integral part in Pentecostal expressions.

While such studies highlight a veritable multiplication of social endeavors, it is equally clear from even a cursory review that mere involvement in social action programs does not

automatically inspire Pentecostals to make a corresponding commitment to sociological or theological reflection. Pentecostal experience is not self-interpreting and thoughtful analysis to accompany actions is often slow to develop. The task for Pentecostal groups is to establish an “essential connectedness” between their experience of spiritual transformation and the practice of social action. To respond effectively to the extreme needs that surround them, Pentecostals would do well to focus on the formulation of a social doctrine that enables them to evaluate their own actions and stimulate new thinking, a redefinition of methods, and out-of-the-box social action strategies.²

In spite of their remarkable growth, Pentecostals will need to move beyond the parameters of conventional practices, and embrace a moral imagination that creates a type of social program that is not solely dependent upon economic or political means, resources most congregations lack. In a noisy, alienated world, the marginalized--especially children and young people--are seeking identity, meaning, acceptance, relationships, and a sense of community. They yearn for more than economic assistance. Strategically located among the neediest, with an emphasis upon personal participation, supernatural experience, and divine empowerment, Pentecostals are ideally positioned to engage a moral imagination that focuses on issues of personal dignity and inter-relational skills that are not costly to develop. Indeed, a moral imagination that includes Spirit baptism as an empowering focus to do justice is the unique contribution of the Pentecostal tradition to evangelical social praxis. The exponential growth of this religious and social phenomenon has created new responsibilities, new challenges, and new opportunities.

II. A Moral Imagination

For purposes of this essay and in reference to social concern programs, being morally imaginative means, first of all, the capacity to envision what the future should look like—the outcomes, or in business terms, the bottom line. The notion of a moral imagination is a systematic approach linking performance/outcomes with a creative problem solving process that can be entrepreneurial.³ Specifically, a moral imagination is a capacity to better discern the moral implications of situations and to develop a process that enables people to create and assess new possibilities and solutions. From those possibilities, creative and innovative social action strategies are selected. A moral imagination, then, driven by a vision of the future, links together and integrates the steps of the decision-making process with an aim to achieve the desired outcome.⁴ A moral imagination is an imaginative rationality that is insightful, critical, exploratory, and transformative.⁵

For the Pentecostal community of faith, a moral imagination saturated with spiritual discernment and supernatural empowerment becomes a powerful tool for creative thinking and action to practice all that “Jesus said or did.”

III. The Context for a Moral Imagination

Despite complaints that Pentecostals have neglected “the here and now” for the “sweet by and by,” the fact is that the explosive growth of Pentecostalism among the destitute and vulnerable has created a viable force that can address the contemporary situation facing millions of its adherents. In the midst of grinding poverty and a context dominated by a global market economy that offers prosperity to few, the majority of Latin Americans struggle for social and economic survival. More than ever before and especially given their spectacular growth, require

a moral imagination if they hope to alter, over the long-term, existing cultural, social, and economic structures.

Even though Pentecostals demonstrate a clear commitment to include social action programs as an integral part of their outreach endeavors, too often their social action strategies lack the dynamic components of a moral imagination that would empower them or the persons they serve to become active and powerful agents of social transformation. Furthermore, their effectiveness is often limited or paralyzed because they lack even modest economic resources and even the most humble traditional and/or institutional social programs are costly to operate. Local congregations may be comprised and usually are, of the very people they desire to help. If the delivery of social action strategies requires substantial monies, entire networks are effectively sidelined. Pentecostals should break out of the box of conventional thinking that tends to hold them hostage--theologically and strategically-- and resort to their strengths.

Pentecostals thrive in the chaotic and disorderly paradigm shifts within modern Latin American culture and religion. They are comfortable to operate independently of institutional, authoritative and monolithic ecclesial power, and seldom hesitate to utilize resourcefully every means of communication and technology (sometimes to the extreme). Pentecostals are inclined, when the odds seemed stacked against them, to depend upon the inspiration of the Spirit to spark creative ideas that produce methods and strategies that work. In the midst of a social and economic nightmare that is daily fare for their brothers and sisters, Latin American Pentecostals, regardless of resources or lack thereof, should do everything possible to foster a moral imagination.

It is not my intent to suggest that Pentecostals should abandon any social program or activity, but rather to encourage fresh perspectives that generate creative ideas not so dependent

on material resources. Certainly, being imaginative is nothing new for most Pentecostals. But practicing a moral imagination is more than coming up with a few inspired ideas. A moral imagination is comprised of, indeed links together, a set of distinct parts. With a starting point that takes seriously spiritual discernment, the supernatural, and divine empowerment, it is the imagining of a preferred future undergirded by social and theological reflection, a resolve to overcome emerging obstacles, the creation of new possibilities and solutions, and the selection from those options of a dynamic social action alternative. Pentecostalism-- by its democratization of religious life, promise of physical and social healing, compassion for the socially alienated, and practice of Spirit empowerment—has the ingredients for a powerful moral imagination that can address the concerns of the disinherited, frustrated, and assertive persons who in large part make up the movement.

IV. The Content of a Moral Imagination

When engaging a moral imagination, Pentecostals draw on a rich tradition of evangelical scholarship; i.e. that theological reflection must begin with an understanding of God's self-revelatory nature and character; that Israel's socio-ethical actions were to demonstrate this theocentric nature and character; that the concept of the Kingdom of God, implicit in the Old Testament and explicit in the person and teachings of Jesus in the New Testament, is the unifying theme that provides a description of what life would look like under God's redemptive reign; and that life in the Kingdom of God is characterized by the ethics of justice, mercy, love, and peace as its principle moral features. This ethical construct served as the moral foundation of the primitive Christian church. In the Acts account, for example, gender distinctions of male and female were challenged by the empowerment of the Spirit. Economic distinctions between rich

and poor and cultural distinctions between Jew and Gentile were leveled out by the power of the Spirit.

The coming of the Spirit at Pentecost and its contemporary application through the experience of Spirit baptism integrate the ethical character of God's reign into a Pentecostal moral imagination. If the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism is basically one for empowerment, then, the task of a Pentecostal theology is to demonstrate the centrality of the experience as a key pattern to open the way to discuss how these ethical demands are actualized and become operative in the power of the Spirit. The aspect of a moral imagination that makes it Pentecostal is the work of Spirit baptism. The actualization of this empowerment in the experience of contemporary Latin American Pentecostals provides an integral contextual framework for the practice of a moral imagination that is uniquely Pentecostal.

A Moral Imagination and Latin American Pentecostals

When Latin American Pentecostals read the Bible (a common reading), there is an inherent consistency in the interplay of linking their Pentecostal worldview (pre-understanding) and the reality of daily circumstances with their subsequent biblical interpretation and application.⁶ They have at their core a supernatural worldview perspective that is both overtly expressed and instilled in teachings and sermons. This worldview is codified through religious symbols and practices such as *glossolalia* and healings, supernatural interventions, participative worship, and expressions in music. They approach the Scriptures with a pre-understanding that they are participants in God's unfolding drama. The biblical narratives of sorrow and pain, or of power and praise, are interpreted theologically into the concrete realities of their daily spiritual, social, or physical contexts. Their interaction with the text is sharpened further by a personal sense that,

in spite of their circumstances, the Holy Spirit has bestowed upon them an “endowment of power.” They are God’s instruments even if their contextual reality systematically may deny them access to basic human rights, marginalize them to huge slums and shantytowns, or refuse them access to political and social opportunity.

Unconsciously or not, Pentecostals read and interpret the biblical text through the lens of their own contextual realities. Reading the Bible by moving back and forth interpretively between the world of the biblical text and the realities of the world where they live, they interpret the “meaning or significance of the text” that emerges from this process into a practical application to their actual life context and for the local community of faith. This praxis theology--reflecting, adapting, and appropriating the Scripture into new and refreshing perspectives that are framed by their historical context and empowered by the Spirit--provides a dynamic hermeneutic that enables Pentecostals to practice a dynamic moral imagination, “do[ing] theology from the bottom up.”

Some western conservative theologians may be haunted by a style of postmodern theological thought that pursues questions of regional fragmentation, shifting contextual purpose, and subjective meaning. But can creative and dynamic theological reflection concerning problems like poverty, sickness, oppression, and marginalization be forthcoming, if rules and procedures about what is permissible hold the theological process hostage? Certainly, as Latin American Pentecostals seek programs of social concern and justice, it is vital that they maintain a healthy tension--an essential connectedness--between their Pentecostal pre-understanding of the common reading of the biblical text and their social action strategies. When critical theological reflection is informed by Pentecostal worldview, however, and done from within the cultural

contexts where the movement is flourishing, new possibilities emerge that could be socially transformative.

Theologians throughout history, including paradigm pioneers like St. Augustine or Martin Luther as well as more recent figures such as Karl Barth, rose to the challenges of their times in a variety of complex and sophisticated ways. They were able to “think outside the box” - seeking a basis for biblical understandings and applications in common human needs, in feelings, in reason, and in the notion of transcendence. Their theological contributions remain influential today and are still the subject of current debates. For that reason alone, the process discussed in this essay is worth the risk to anyone who is serious about hearing “theology in a new key” to borrow McAfee Brown’s phrase.

Latin American Pentecostals, whose experiences and contexts parallel the accounts in the Acts of the Apostles, when practicing a moral imagination open the door of possibility for a dynamic equivalent experience similar to those in the early church. A moral imagination--a fresh "praxis of faith"--freed from the traditionally articulated scientific/theological ideas of an academic bound theological system, could produce an exciting new paradigm for the community of faith everywhere. Indeed, it is the sound of an evangelical/Pentecostal moral theology with a Latin accent!

V. Practicing a Moral Imagination

Social action programs and strategies that demonstrate a moral imagination should, at least, as a first step imagine an outcome where participants are empowered “to act efficaciously” and with capacity to create and influence social relationships within the existing structures of civil society. As a second step, social action programs should imagine an outcome where the agency,

participants, or their networks are empowered to influence, impact, or appropriate allocations of power (or the dynamic equivalence).

While the discussion of the concept of empowerment theory and practice—individually and corporately—is an important debate, in this paper, without entering the discussion, I define empowerment on the first level as the acquisition of personal and interpersonal skills that equip a person to function effectively and have capacity to access available resources (and entitlements) in civil society. In short, people are personally empowered when what they have learned leads to action. On the second and more corporate level, when addressing unjust social and structural dimensions, agencies, participants, or networks are empowered not only when they are able to take advantage of existing structures (or resources), but also when they demonstrate the capacity to change or transform those structures or create new alternatives to them. The final section of this essay presents two examples of a Pentecostal moral imagination at work.

The first case outlines a creative strategy for personal empowerment. The second case describes what happens when Pentecostal networks (collective groups) activate their moral imagination in pursuit of creative solutions to what appears to be an impossible challenge—to reduce discrepancies in power relationships in social and political structures.

Creating a Social Strategy for Personal Empowerment

Not generally available to unaffiliated Latin Americans, Pentecostals create a community that provides not only social recognition and but also offers members a platform of opportunities for individual empowerment and leadership.⁷

If a new convert's experience is, on the one hand, intensely personal, spiritual, mystical, and eternal; on the other hand, it is corporate and practical permeated with opportunities that

empower them to function effectively in the here and now. The local church provides a safe place where people can find security, acceptance, wholeness, recognition, and even the rights and privileges of membership. Personal discipline, acceptable conduct, and accountability provide basic rules of pedagogic importance. New converts typically find themselves involved in a great deal of structured activity. They must accept individual responsibility for their actions and exhibit willingness to contribute or sacrifice for the common good of the community.

An informal apprenticeship program encourages leadership at all levels. Responsibility for the cleaning of the *templo*, leading the song service and street and personal evangelism are tasks that are understood to be carried out by all. Recognition of one's leadership, and other contributions to the survival and growth of the congregation, become circular as members are encouraged to invest increasingly in the "work," (*la obra*) assuming still greater responsibility for its development. The apprenticeship system which begins with fulfilling the daily needs of the local congregation quickly expands, especially for those who demonstrate gifts, into teaching a Sunday School class, preaching during the weeknight services, and for the most apt the opportunity to "pastor" a *campo blanco* (home Bible study). Bible school training, informally given by the pastor or presented through the local Bible institute, quickly follows as an equipping complement for the new worker. Communication and organizational skills are cultivated and the development of leadership gifts is encouraged. The emerging leader produced by this informal system is "contextual and indigenous" with the capacities to negotiate the structures of civil society and access the resources that are available.⁸

Regardless of age, ethnicity, social status or gender, everyone is offered opportunities. For example, women, often marginalized within traditional society and seldom given opportunity to develop the skills required to negotiate civil society, are admitted to leadership ranks at almost

every level within the local church, including in many countries the right to occupy the office of pastor. Some observers have tended to see Pentecostal churches as essentially a protest mounted by women in what could be considered a response to social class or ethnic disqualification. As David Martin notes, “Women are among the ‘voiceless’ given a new tongue in the circle of Pentecostal communication.”⁹ For many Pentecostal women, their decision to convert has resulted in a sense of self-esteem and equality that has permitted them to gain control of their domestic affairs.¹⁰ The husband’s moral deviations no longer are seen as the inevitable foibles of *machismo*.¹¹ Instead of being dependent upon his desires, a wife senses a divine confidence and authority to speak to her husband when his behavior is contrary to God’s laws.¹² Interpersonal skills learned in the context of congregational responsibilities transfer to familial relationships in the home and to leadership options and social functions within the community.

By developing self-esteem, by providing hope and equipping participants with skills applicable to the social system, the local church enables people to take part in the larger social and economic struggles for a better life and more secure future. By engaging in a moral imagination that generates social action programs and strategies that empower people to “act efficaciously,” Pentecostalism acquires a revolutionary potential to be significant agents of spiritual and social change.

Creating a Social Alternatives in Civil Society

The emergence of Pentecostals as a popular social movement—exhibiting horizontal networks, fellowship, and reciprocity--positions the movement to move beyond concerns of personal empowerment.¹³ Pentecostals have acquired the institutional strength to address corporately the human needs of the societies in which they live. Pentecostals should imagine a future of “what

ought to be.” United by a shared worldview that expects God to be involved in everything they do, and working collectively through their networks to explore possibilities of what life should be like, Pentecostals can be agents of social transformation by offering creative and innovative solutions that contribute to the resolution of difficulties for large numbers of Latin Americans.

Pentecostals--their social capital and networks--represent the most independent, self-initiated popular movement to be found in Latin America today.”¹⁴ Their networks possess features and functions similar to a popular social movement.¹⁵ It is helpful here to view this emerging popular social movement through the lens of Robert Putnam’s theory of “social capital.” Putnam defines social capital as “trust, norms, and networks that improves the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions.”¹⁶ The central premise of social capital theory is that the “value” of social networks, if focused can lead to the formation of an empowered civic society able to bring about structural change. The civic virtue that results from these horizontal linkages is at its best when networks are tightly knit together by mutual obligation and shared concerns.

A moral imagination requires an honest and fresh assessment of “what is.” Conference papers, journal articles, and books abound, critiquing Latin American Pentecostals for their neglect and lack of political involvement. The pleas from scholars, including myself in the past, to encourage Pentecostals to break out of their "substitute societies" and take an active public role by addressing directly the political sphere are mostly theoretical and likely unreasonable. Social capital arguments should not be idealized, and cannot be analyzed in isolation or independent from the hard realities of the broader socio-economic institutional context in which they are imbedded. The reason that a more public and in-depth display of political participation is not evidenced by the Pentecostal movement (aside from members casting their vote at the

ballot box), may be that in many Latin American contexts social capital is simply not enough to gain access to national levels of decision-making.

It is a necessary process in order for us to assess realistically the breadth and depth of the obstacles encountered by Pentecostals to find their place at the political table. Presently, authentic democracy in most Latin America countries is fundamentally flawed. The complex political realities of emerging democracies are fraught with problems, and the political agenda has not moved much beyond “the minimum rules of the democratic game” (the voter gets to cast a ballot). There is neither coherent accountability nor consistent avenues for representation.

If hopes for bona fide democracy are viewed from a popular Pentecostal perspective—the urban poor, peasants, women, Indians and ethnic minorities—then there is more “bad news than good news.” Employing the “good news, bad news” approach, in an ideal world the “good news” of these incipient democracies would produce an empowered citizenry with substantive access to democratic participation, able to both scrutinize and hold accountable public and private institutions. Citizen oversight and involvement would provide transparency and responsiveness on the part of the government’s political apparatus. Political culture argues that it is the “social capital” make-up of civil society that provides fertile soil for democratic development.¹⁷

The reality for the overwhelming numbers of Pentecostals is the “bad news” of the immobilization of essential democratic evolutionary processes. Existing but flawed historical structures, coupled with a commitment to a paralyzing ideology that perceives the economic markets and “economic consumption” to be the new panacea, impedes the democratic process. The dark side of globalization and technological diversification, concentrated in the hands of the most powerful, erodes state legitimacy and excludes the poorest sectors of society, shaping new “absolutist” entities that are seldom responsive or accountable to the citizenry. Further, the

entrenchment of premodern but ubiquitous. Too often forgotten or lost within the euphoria of the mere existence of the newly established democracies in Latin America is the appalling lack of the basic accouterments of civil society. It is exactly here, for example, where the traditional "social capital" argument runs afoul. It is a mistake to identify levels of participation within social networks as the successful variable instead of recognizing the resiliency of institutional antecedents that still have the power to give life to civil entities or withhold it.¹⁸

In these environments, is it reasonable to propose that there are popular social movements of any stripe powerful enough to insist on their right at the table of inclusion? While a popular social movement (Pentecostalism) has the ability to link itself horizontally, the institutional "rules of the game" are written and administered with little input coming from the popular members of civil society and certainly not Pentecostals! Declarations given to Pentecostals of "must do," "should do," and "may do," are easy to draft, but virtually impossible to implement, at least now. Clearly it is essential to engage a moral imagination.

Pentecostal alternative associations are plausible, practical, and rightful expressions of significant participation in civil society. Indeed, active membership involvement in Pentecostal groups may present an experience rich enough to render not only a critical sense of identity and personal empowerment, but also to produce "value" for civic society. Over the long run, this model of social movement, already reflecting other benefits, may hold out legitimate and evolving possibilities for Pentecostals to effect future change in the very same clientelistic relationships that impede high-level participation in the "here and now."

Community-based evangelical/Pentecostal associations can create their own alternative institutions. These alternatives offer spiritual assistance to be sure, but they also function as instruments of social empowerment. The process of institution-building, community leadership,

and the active involvement of its followers may enable these associations to break the spell cast over western political theory that generally equates valid social expressions automatically with political action. As alternative institutional organizations committed over the long term to be effective transforming agents in civil society, Pentecostals have the capacity to attract and hold a following that government entities must soon acknowledge.¹⁹

There are numerous cases demonstrating how institution building on the community level has been utilized effectively by evangelical/Pentecostals to bring about structural change. To cite a specific example, FUNDACION PIEDAD (PIEDAD) is representative of the creation of an expanding evangelical educational infrastructure designed to alter existing social structures in local communities. Following the widespread conviction of sociologists and political analysts, that the positive condition of children—education, nutrition, medical care, and ethical formation—is essential for any kind of democratic expression, PIEDAD has established a unified network of 300 schools in 22 nations providing education for 100,000 children.²⁰

FUNDACION PIEDAD not only provides education and healthcare, but as a result of its local influence, the association has been instrumental in bringing basic amenities including electricity, water wells and/or running water that impact the entire community. PIEDAD is a prime example of local evangelical/Pentecostal groups, while not intrinsically politically oriented, creating institutional structures capable of performing various educational, community development, social service, or even local political functions.

Institution building and involvement in community associations, and many other forms of civilian participation such as PIEDAD, may serve as an initial entry point providing indispensable political experience on a much smaller and more familiar scale. By joining social

or religious community movements, the participants invariably develop a lucid political vocation at the local level, preparing them for future direct involvement in national political life.

Conclusion

By developing self-esteem within the impoverished, by providing hope and by arming them with skills applicable to the larger social system, Pentecostal social action programs enable participants to take part in the achievement of the larger social struggles for a better life and a more secure future.

That Latin American Pentecostals have a role to play on the stage of civic society, in contrast to their collective social marginalization of but a few years past, is a stunning paradigm shift. Over time, and with much persistence, community-based evangelical/Pentecostal associations comprised of millions of grassroots participants, can little by little chisel away the obstinate colonial institutional remnants. By creating alternative institutions (social capital and social networks), that by their nature provide critical leadership and political skills, and work out from there, that gargantuan transitional leap from citizenry associations to national political involvement may not be such a quixotic ideal after all.

Clearly Pentecostals find little difficulty reading their Bibles and interpreting the guidance of the Spirit in such a way that moves them to ask for a better life for themselves and for their community. They readily show concern for other people's material and spiritual needs. Having demonstrated theological reflective evaluation of their individual action as it relates to personal morality and holiness, now Pentecostals must recognize the need for a more imaginative ethic where the message of the biblical text and the compulsion of the Spirit will direct them to address creative responses to the context of the evil about them. It is possible that Pentecostals,

committed to a God who breaks into human history and gets involved with his people and utterly dependent upon the Spirit for empowerment can engage in a moral imagination that envisions a desired future, keeps theological reflection linked to the meaning of Scripture and to concrete human experience, and creates innovative social action programs that make a difference in the lives of people, the community, and the Latin American continent.

¹ Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Pentecostalism and Social Transformation: A Global Analysis* (University of California Press, 2006 (forthcoming)).

² Murray W. Dempster has done the most comprehensive work at connecting a Pentecostal social ethic to Spirit baptism. See “The Structure of Christian Ethic Informed by Pentecostal Experience: Soundings in the Moral Significance of Glossolalia, in *The Spirit and Spirituality*, Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies, eds. (New York: T & T International, 2004).

³ P. F. Drucker, *Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Practice and Principles* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), p.19.

⁴ Here I borrow this framework from Patricia H. Werhane from her book, *Moral Imagination and Management Decision Making* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁵ Mark Johnson, *Moral Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 202.

⁶ The distinction between a Latin American evangelical and Pentecostal is almost indiscernible, especially in their supernatural worldview. Evangelicals, while differing on certain nuances of Spirit baptism, share more common than uncommon ground with Pentecostals. Undoubtedly, there would be disagreements from either perspective, but we can hardly tell the difference. It is important to note that Pentecostals in Latin America are seldom referred to, or refer to themselves, as Pentecostals, but rather as “*evangélicos*.”

⁷ This section follows an earlier chapter I wrote in *Not By Might, Nor By Power* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1996), pp. 121-145.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ David Martin, *Tongues of Fire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), p.180.

¹⁰ John Burdick, “Rethinking the Study of Social Movements,” in *The Making of Social Movements in Latin America*, Arturo Escobar and Sonia Alvarez, eds. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 177.

¹¹ Cornelia Butler Flora, “Pentecostal Women in Colombia,” in *The Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 17 (November 1975): 412-413.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ I define a popular social movement as a group with high levels of popular participation, working together in religious or socio-economic contexts, usually resistant to the status quo, and determined by their actions to alter existing situations and create for themselves free social space. The best book on Pentecostals and *machismo* is

Elizabeth Brusco's, *The Reformation of Machismo* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995). Also, see several contributions regarding Pentecostalism and women by Cornelia Butler Flora and Carol Drogus.

¹⁴ Edward L. Cleary and Hannah Stewart-Gambino, eds., *Power, Pentecostals, and Politics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 231.

¹⁵ It is not so long ago when Pentecostals referred to themselves as “*los cuatro gatos*,” the Spanish equivalent to “a baker’s dozen.”

¹⁶ Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 167.

¹⁷ Putman, 167. For example, see also the writings of Francis Fukuyama, Samuel Huntington and Larry Diamond.

¹⁸ Harry E. Vanden and Gary Prevost, *Politics of Latin America: The Power Game* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹⁹ The beginning of this capacity can be seen in certain contexts. The 15th anniversary celebration of FUNDACION PIEDAD in Nicaragua was held at the National Stadium in Managua on June 30, 2001. The President, Arnoldo Alemán, and numerous government officials attended. Three local television networks transmitted the event.

²⁰ The North American version of FUNDACION PIEDAD is Latin America ChildCare (LACC). Doug Petersen Sr. served as International Coordinator and President of LACC from its founding in 1976 until December, 2000.