

Religious Change and Economic Development in Latin America

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The paper (which is in large part a dialogue with authors such as Norris and Inglehart, Scott Thomas and David Martin) begins with some general observations on the place of religion in debates on development. It then looks at ideas of ‘cultural zones’ and the viability of talking about ‘Latin America’. The dramatic religious changes in Latin America are then discussed, as well as their import for debates on models of religion and modernity. Pentecostalism is then examined in detail, as comprising the key component of that change, not only because of its numerical boom but also because of its effect in ‘pentecostalising’ much of the Latin American religious field. The paper then surveys the state of play in works on pentecostalism and economic development in the region. Finally, these discussions are evaluated in the light of newly-produced or little-considered survey evidence. The conclusion then cautiously attempts to discern exactly what can be said with any confidence regarding the relationship between pentecostalism and development.

Religion and Development

Marginalized by modernization theory (not to mention by its main rival until recently, Marxism), religion has traditionally been ‘ambiguous and peripheral’ in the development arena (Selinger 2004). Even the most famous discussion of all regarding religion and development, Max Weber’s thesis on the historical role of the ‘Protestant ethic’ and his explorations of the ‘economic ethic’ of the other world religions, does not claim any lasting or contemporary role for religion in general or even for Protestant Christianity in particular. Little wonder, then, that the ‘secular missionaries’ of the development NGOs, if they regard religion as anything more than part of the problem, have reduced religious traditions to ‘thin’ practices appealed to in terms of Enlightenment rationality, supporting a narrow range of local NGOs that fit secular utilitarian concepts and the ‘interest-group model’ of civil society, or at most accept the collaboration of faith-based organizations as long as they do not proselytize or try to influence the *content* of ‘development’ (Thomas 2005).

But talk of ‘modernization’ has been in large part replaced by ‘globalization’, which (as Beyer 2005 explains) cannot blithely be used as a successor term with impunity, since the old concept of a unitary modernity has been (implicitly, at least) dethroned either by Eisenstadt’s concept of ‘multiple modernities’ or by Huntington’s ‘clash of civilizations’. As Casanova says (2006), Eisenstadt’s concept rejects both the idea of a radical break and that of essential continuity with tradition; all civilizations are radically transformed but have the possibility of shaping modern traits. The developed West’s trajectory with regard to religion and development may, therefore, not be normative. Religion and modernity may come to be related in unsuspected ways.

These ways should not be imagined purely in terms of a possible role for religion in developing countries as an ‘authentic’ alternative to the modernization paradigm (Selinger 2004), as a ‘revolt against the West’ in which ‘authenticity’ rivals ‘development’ for primacy in political aspirations (Thomas 2005). Much of this, of course, is relevant to Africa and Asia, where decolonization and high hopes for development were followed a generation later by a religious resurgence in public life. But Latin America is outside this framework, since it was decolonized nearly a century and a half earlier with westernized elites remaining largely in control (even in the few countries where indigenous peoples formed a majority of the population). There was not, therefore, the same crisis of the secular modernizing state as such. Yet, there is still the need, as Thomas puts it, to take religious pluralism seriously, and not in the manner of a postmodern

celebration of diversity and difference which argues that any normative truth claims are to be censured as divisive and intolerant. And also to take into account not only religiously-based values undergirding social change, but also the moral content that gives rise to ‘communities of character’ (Thomas 2005).¹

Cultural Zones and Latin America

In talking about religion and development in Latin America, it is important to ask, as do Inglehart and Carballo (1997) whether there are coherent cultural regions with distinctive values and worldviews and, if so, to what extent they reflect level of economic development or other factors such as language, religion and history. This is especially relevant in the case of Latin America, a large region with a considerable diversity of peoples (ranging from Guatemala with its 60% or more of indigenous Mayans, to Argentina with its largely white population of varied European origins, to the melting-pot of Brazil with the second-largest population of African descent in the world) for which the common label of ‘Latin’ does not do justice.

On the basis of the World Values Survey, Inglehart and Carballo conclude that societies do have highly constrained and distinctive worldviews. Thus, a Latin American cultural cluster does exist, based on the authors’ charting of the WVS responses along two axes (from ‘traditional’ to ‘secular-rational’ orientations, and from ‘survival values’ to ‘wellbeing values’). Based both on the relative positioning of societies around the globe, and on their shifting positions over time, the authors claim that the largest single factor in variance in values is economic development. There are certain cultural and political changes which are logically linked with modernization (though in a non-linear way due to the influence of postmodern values). But about half the variance is due to non-economic factors. Thus, although a compact ‘Latin American’ cluster can be constructed, one can also construct a broad ‘Catholic’ cluster in which Argentina is as close to Spain as it is to Chile. Indeed, controlling for per capita GDP, value differences between Protestant and Catholic societies remain significant (e.g. stronger ‘traditional’ and ‘survival’ values in the latter), even though that may have little to do with the direct influence of the churches today. Like the cat’s smile, values may persist long after their religious cradle has rotted. In that sense, Latin America is still Catholic, at least as much as Sweden is still Protestant.

In comparative terms, the World Values Surveys show Latin America as a region of high religious belief, ‘traditional values’ and moderate practice. In Brazil in 1995, 99% believed in God. All Latin American countries researched except Uruguay come in the ‘traditional values’ cluster rather than the ‘secular-rational values’ cluster. In attendance at religious services, countries range from fairly high (Colombia, Peru, just above the US), through moderate (Brazil, Argentina, Chile) to low (Uruguay, just below Britain). As for long-term trends, while Argentina declined from 31% weekly attendance in 1981 to 25% in 2001, Mexico went from 54% in 1981 to 55% in 2001 (Norris & Inglehart 2004:74, 90, 101, 239).

On the other hand, since the emphasis of this paper is on religious *change* in the region, it should be noted that the WVS has sometimes come up with some rather unlikely percentages for religious affiliation in some Latin American countries, percentages which are uncorroborated by other reputable surveys or by the national census (in those few countries which include religion in their census). And, of course, Inglehart and Carballo’s findings depend on the meaningfulness with which, for example, countries like Guatemala (with the highest percentage of Protestants in the region) or Brazil (which has the second-largest community of practising Protestants in the world) can still be classified as Catholic on the grounds that ‘religious traditions helped shape enduring national cultures that persist today’. To the increasing diversity within the region in other spheres one can now add the likelihood of more and more varied religious scenarios as the original patronato/padroado Catholicism is undermined by diverse forms of pluralism (spearheaded, with

greater or lesser force according to the country, by pentecostalism). If one adds to that migration's blurring of the border between 'Latin' and 'Anglo' America and the greater assertiveness of indigenous peoples (also not unrelated to religious change, including Protestantism's use of the vernaculars), it is possible that the nineteenth-century French term 'Latin America' may not enjoy uncontested ascendancy beyond a few more decades.

Religion and Existential Insecurity

Since Latin America is unique as virtually the only part of the 'developing world' that has not been decolonized within living memory, and as virtually the only part that is traditionally Christian, it is important to examine the relevance of Norris and Inglehart's recent (2004) reworking of the secularization thesis through data culled from the World Values Surveys. They develop a revised version of secularization theory that emphasizes existential security (the relative absence of ego-tropic or socio-tropic risks). The core idea of security denotes freedom from various dangers, including military, environmental, disease, violations of human rights and poverty. High 'security' (access to basic necessities, social equality, employment, healthcare, low crime and low fear of war) means lower religiosity. This idea is hardly novel (it is at least as old as New England Puritan Cotton Mather's 'religion brought forth prosperity and the daughter destroyed the mother', or Wesley's conclusion that fervent religion leads to changes in lifestyle which tend to produce prosperity which in turn undermines religious fervour, not to mention the Torah's 'when you are full... do not forget your God who brought you out of Egypt'); and it implies a high degree of structural inevitability (development leads to security which leads to secularization), despite their affirmation that distinctive religious worldviews have shaped cultures in enduring fashion (making even non-practising Protestant nations still meaningfully classifiable as 'Protestant'). (The corollary that newly-Protestant nations will take time to show the effects of their conversion is not discussed.) But the sting in N&I's discussion is in the tail: far from becoming more secular, the world as a whole has more people with traditional religious views than ever before, and they are a *growing percentage of world population*, because secularization and human development have a powerful negative impact on human fertility rates, thus expanding the gap between sacred and secular around the globe.

It may be possible to reinterpret much of the World Values Surveys data to contest or nuance N&I's arguments. Since their categories of 'post-industrial' and 'industrial' societies are almost all Christian, it is hard to disentangle Christianity and level of security as causes of secularization. In any case, N&I do not separate 'southern' Christianity from that of the developed world. It is quite possible that a separate category of 'southern Christian' would yield quite different results for value systems, attitudes to work, the market and the state, social trust, etc. Where exactly does 'southern Christianity' fit into the 'clash' between the West and the Islamic world, which for N&I centres around sexuality and gender equality?

Similarly, when N&I conclude that Protestant societies display the weakest, not the strongest, work ethic, they do not mention that these societies are overwhelmingly post-industrial and traditionally Protestant, with very weak practice. But the table presented seems to show that all of the few 'agrarian' Protestant societies examined (all in Africa) are heavily pro-work. It would be interesting to correlate the work ethic with levels of Protestant practice in diverse countries. The same applies to some other issues examined in N&I; 'southern' Christianity (especially 'southern' Protestantism) gets swamped by the countries of the developed West.

At a deeper level, there are problems with N&I's reductionist account of the causes of religiosity ('feelings of vulnerability are driving religiosity, even in the rich nations') and their projection of wealthy Western ideas of vulnerability onto Third World people's feelings (they do not cite any survey data showing people in poorer countries actually feel more vulnerable, and the survey data on pentecostals in the global south, cited below, does not confirm the idea). In addition, the

assertion that the spread of female emancipation generates powerful religious reactions can certainly not be applied to Latin America's religious changes, as we shall see below. And if, for the sake of argument, one does entertain N&I's categories, serious questions must arise concerning the sustainability of advanced secular societies, which have an average of 1.8 children per woman of childbearing age, versus 2.8 for religious societies. N&I point out that the two dozen most religious societies grew at 2.2% per annum from 1975 to 1997, compared to only 0.7% for the secular rich nations; estimates for 1997 to 2015 are 1.5% versus 0.2%. (The UN predicts that in the next 50 years the population of the more developed countries will remain at 1.2 billion, whereas the less developed will grow from 4.9 to 8.2 billion [Hanson 2006].) Irreligious security, it seems, cannot sustain itself; either it shrivels away, or else it becomes parasitic and depends on immigration from the 'religious' world. And if the whole world became irreligious and secure, it would have no source of immigrants. In addition, N&I do not ask about the role of religion in producing the processes that diminish insecurity (Mather's 'religion beget prosperity') which, far from pointing to an increasingly secular world, would point to a circular process whereby insecurity with religion begets security without religion, which in turn begets insecurity with religion. (Conceivably, 'Christianity' specifically should be substituted here for 'religion' in general). The first location for the last part of that cycle would presumably be Europe in the next few decades. Always concerned to explain the main (but not the only) 'outlier' in their scheme, the United States, N&I assert that the trend toward secularization in the US is masked by massive immigration and economic inequality; we might add that these are two phenomena which will probably increase in Europe. And as their volume increases and the European self-image comes more and more to include immigrants, it is unlikely that all of the 'religious' immigrants to Europe will assimilate to the currently prevailing secularism.

In view of this, might it not make more sense (even 'buying into' N&I's account of sources of religiosity) simply to invert the way their thesis is stated, and to say that *religion will continue to gain significance, except where there is existential security?* And surely, increasing awareness of globalization is, amongst other things, increasing a sense of global insecurity, not to mention the wave of concern regarding climate change. The effects of the latter are, of course, very hard to predict, and a technological 'quick fix' requiring minimal social change is not out of the question. But it is quite reasonable to assume that two other scenarios are more likely: either insufficient action is taken, resulting in fulfillment of some of the dire predictions with their attendant chaos and, presumably, attendant religious awakenings, both of traditional faiths and of new ones; or else serious action is taken in time, requiring substantial changes in economic expectations and lifestyles, including the need for a new 'long-termism' (and Tocqueville reminds us that, in the absence of aristocracy's layering of social expectations, the democratic social condition only offers two options for overcoming its inherent short-termism: either an autocratic government imposing long-term plans, or religious feeling strong enough to moderate the 'democratic passions' among the masses). Hans Küng's 'no survival without a world ethic', while unlikely to come to fruition, points helpfully to a very different use of the word 'survival' from that implied in some scholars' categorization of Latin American pentecostalism as a 'survival strategy'; one wonders, in fact, whether 'development' is not more and more squeezed by those two senses of 'survival'.

Religious Change in Latin America

Religious change is, of course, not limited to Latin America, but has affected many parts of the globe in recent decades. Although most attention has been focused on Islam, Christianity has also become a global religion, both in Catholic and Protestant forms. Pentecostal Christianity is a key part of this, being the main growth sector of Protestantism in the global south.

The debate about religion and modernity needs to become more global. This debate has been dominated by discussion of Europe and North America, which is only justified if one imagines

a single model of modernity with a lead society (either Europe or North America, with the other becoming an ‘exception’ needing explanation). Attempts to go beyond are often limited to a consideration of Islam. It is time to incorporate Christianity outside the developed West. Christianity is now located mainly in the global south (Latin America, Africa, Asia, the Pacific), distant from power and wealth, and it spreads largely as an autonomous social movement and as a ‘globalization from below’.

In all these discussions, Latin America will loom increasingly large. It is virtually the only traditionally Christian area outside those (Europe and North America) which have provided the main contending paradigms for relating religion and modernity. Sharing many socio-economic characteristics with newly-Christianized regions such as sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific, and with non-Christian regions of Asia. More than that, Latin America can now claim to be the heartland of Christianity. It has more Catholics than any other region, and also more pentecostals. However, its religious field is also fast-changing, resulting mainly in more pluralism within Christianity but also in growing pluralism beyond it. In Brazil, for example, conversion (from one religion to another, or to ‘no religion’) now occurs at a similar rate to the US (26% compared to 29%, according to the 2006 Pew Research Center survey *Spirit and Power*, hereinafter S&P, 2006:125). Peaceful conversionism, one of the possible religious corollaries to ‘multiple modernities’, is flourishing in Latin America.

Within global Christianity, Latin America occupies a unique position as a traditional part of Western Christendom which is not (yet?) going through very significant secularization or de-Christianization, but undergoing a unique process of Christian pluralization *from within* (i.e. not significantly stimulated by missionaries or immigrants) and *from the bottom up* (i.e. not by top-down national Reformations). Latin America is thus a unique site for globalizing the US-European debate on religion and modernity, since it is the major region in which Western Christianity (still vibrant among the native-born population and not just among immigrants and ethnic minorities) meets poverty and geopolitical humiliation. For the specific concerns of this paper, what light is thrown by the globalization of pentecostalism on the historical correlation between Protestantism and economic development? Is that a spurious correlation, dependent on other factors in the developed West which might not exist in the global south? And after all, religious traditions are not univocal or immutable; there is always diversity as well as development.

Not all of Latin America has equally reliable statistics on religion (and those that have such statistics do not take into account the Latin American tradition of dual affiliation, leading, for example, in the Brazilian census to gross under-representation of the cultural importance of the Afro-Brazilian religions, most of whose frequenters refer to themselves as Catholic). Nevertheless, it is clear that, at the same time as Catholicism has become globally centred in Latin America, its hegemony there has been eroded (see Freston 2007a). With variations between countries, the main beneficiaries have been pentecostalism and the category of ‘no religion’, both of which continue to expand quickly. The best recent data from Brazil (Datafolha), in line with the trends shown in the 2000 census, points to an increasingly pluralistic religious field comprised of Catholics (around 67%, largely non-practising), Protestants (around 20% and heavily practising, of which over two-thirds are pentecostals) and ‘non-religious’ (about 8%, very few of whom are atheists). The 2002 Chilean census gave 70% Catholic, 15.1% Protestant and 8.3% ‘non-religious’; Nicaragua’s census of 1995 was similar (73% Catholic, 15% Protestant and 8.5% ‘unaffiliated’), while Bolivia’s 2001 census showed Catholics at 78%, Protestants at 16%, ‘other Christian religions’ at 3% and ‘non-religious’ at 2.5%. Regionally, Protestantism (always predominantly pentecostal) varies from somewhere between 20 and 30% in Guatemala to probably less than 5% in Uruguay. Indigenous Amerindians in both Andean and Mayan areas are always more Protestant than their national averages. Pentecostals today probably number between 40 and 50 million in Latin America as a whole.

Pentecostalism is thus the engine of religious change in Latin America, and has had the effect of ‘pentecostalizing’ other sectors of the religious field (either through imitation, as in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, or through hostile reactions leading to modifications in doctrinal and practical orientation, as with the Afro-Brazilian religions). It emphasises the contemporary manifestations of ‘gifts of the Holy Spirit’ such as speaking in strange tongues to worship God, divine healing, prophecy and exorcism of evil spirits. Pentecostalism is thus a highly emotional and expressive religion, with an emphasis on the immediate presence of God, expressive and participatory worship styles, and the exercise of gifts of the Spirit. It is largely unhelpful to analyse it through the category of ‘fundamentalism’ (see Freston 2007b). Whereas fundamentalism stresses the correct grammar of belief, Pentecostalism stresses the experience of the gifts of the Spirit, an experiential rather than literal understanding of the Bible. While pentecostalism is generally attached to a conservative understanding of scripture, its distinctiveness is empowerment through spiritual gifts. Many pentecostals could perhaps be described as unreflective fundamentalists, but what really matters to them is not whether the biblical miracles happened as related in the Bible, but whether the same miracles happen today. Unlike Islamic fundamentalism, pentecostalism does not seek an organic relation between law, society and faith. Instead, it is a fissiparous and peaceable extension of voluntarism and competitive pluralism. Pentecostalism is not generally a reaction against modernization, but rather a manifestation of it, advancing the differentiation of church from state, territory and local community.

Pentecostal Social Location

Notwithstanding the prominence of elite churches in Guatemala (which have produced two presidents) and a growing pentecostal middle class, pentecostal religion is generally associated with the Latin American poor. In Chile this is very evident: while 24.8% of the lower socio-economic level was *evangélico* (as all Protestants are usually called in Latin America) in 1990, the percentage fell to 12.5% among the middle level and to only 1.6% among the higher level (Talavera & Beyer 1991). Indeed, among the lower class, practising Protestants (10.2%) outnumbered practising Catholics (9.7%). In Brazil, the social location of pentecostalism is somewhat less stark than in Chile, but still pronounced. While 25.9% of Brazilian voters earned less than twice the minimum salary in 1994, that percentage rose to 33.3% among pentecostals. The expansion of pentecostalism has been fastest in ‘the most dynamic spaces in terms of the economy and of migratory movements’ (Jacob et al 2003:39), i.e. in the metropolitan areas of the South-East and the agricultural frontiers of the North and Centre-West. In metropolitan regions, pentecostals are located heavily in the poor periphery, forming a circle surrounding the more Catholic (and prosperous) municipality at the centre; hence the unkind jibe that ‘the Catholic Church opted for the poor but the poor opted for the pentecostals’. Jacob et al attribute this not just to poverty but to the virtual absence of the state or the Catholic Church on the peripheries. While pentecostals are less than 5% in the more central areas of São Paulo, they are as much as 30% on the periphery.

Apart from their greater prevalence among lower-income sectors, is it possible to be more specific about the social composition of Latin American Pentecostalism? Brazilian Protestantism, besides being skewed towards the poor, is even more skewed towards the less educated. It is also well represented among blacks and mestizos (Fernandes 1994). Data from El Salvador paint a similar picture: *evangélicos* are poorer and have a lower educational level and occupational status than practising and non-practising Catholics (Coleman et al:1993).

Beyond this, however, the data is contradictory. For Coleman et al, Protestant recruitment among the lower strata contrasts with Catholic Base Community recruitment in the well-established *barrios* (Ibid:116). Lancaster says the Pentecostal explosion in Sandinista Nicaragua was associated with dire urban poverty in the poorest and newest *barrios* of Managua. In these areas, the percentage

of Protestants is double the national average, and they are usually the poorest in these *barrios*, being associated with female-headed households and with recent or persistent illness (1988:101-104). On the other hand, many authors say Pentecostals may be associated with low-paying and low-status jobs or with unstable employment, but they are not mainly from the marginalized and very poorest sectors (Martin 1991; Tennekes 1985:87; Hoffnagel 1978:49,61).

Studies comparing pentecostals with Catholic Base Communities in Brazil have arrived at somewhat different conclusions. Burdick (1993), for example, says the base community model has reinforced the association between the institutional Catholic church and the relatively more stable, literate and better-off segments of the working class, while Pentecostalism tends to accommodate the poor in general. Liberationist discourse encodes the values of literacy and articulateness. The very poorest are thus reluctant to attend. Pentecostalism, on the other hand, creates a liminal state in which normal social relations are suspended. the Spirit is highly valued, enabling illiterate people to occupy leadership positions.

In occupational terms, we also have conflicting pictures. Lalive and Fontaine and Bayer: 77% of *evangélicos* are self-employed, against 38% of Catholics. In large Mexican cities, 'the Protestant sects and the unions are not competitors; the former recruit in the marginalized sectors with a home-based strategy, whereas the latter recruit in the workplace among the organized working-class' (Bastian 1983:225). In poor municipalities of Greater Rio, Rolim discovers a pronounced sectorial imbalance in Pentecostal employment: 59,9% in services (against only 9% for the whole population of the area), and only 19,9% in industry (compared to 55,8%). This means greater dependence and insecurity (1985:171). On the periphery of Santiago, on the other hand, Tennekes found no significant differences between Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals in terms of employment (1985:29-30).

In short, the detailed social composition of Pentecostalism seems to vary from place to place and from church to church. Marginal differences in liturgy and message can meet subtly different social demands. In the 1970s an influential interpretation of pentecostalism (Fry & Howe 1975) emphasised the difference in life experiences between the two religions which were assumed at the time to be growing rapidly among the Brazilian masses, pentecostalism and umbanda. Supposedly, pentecostalism appealed more to those with more experience of bureaucracy, and umbanda to those more used to the traditional Brazilian improvised make-do strategies encapsulated in the well-known term 'jeitinho'. Today, however, it is less and less likely that such a distinction holds water, especially with the numerical stagnation of umbanda as compared to the rapid growth of pentecostalism, and the latter's capacity to produce more and more diversified forms of pentecostalism and increasingly recruit from the Afro-Brazilian religions themselves.

The need to talk of *pentecostalisms* in the plural is even greater when one includes the Protestant 'charismatic movement' among the middle class. As elsewhere in the world, there is a link here with greater expressiveness, especially with the expressive professions. The founder of the most 'fashionable' church in São Paulo was previously marketing manager of Xerox. He illustrates a trend: not only do religious leaders absorb business practices and even branch into other fields, but now entrepreneurs from modern sectors transform themselves into religious leaders.

Despite the increasing social flexibility of pentecostalism, there are good reasons for thinking that its current headlong growth will reach a ceiling within the next two or three decades. In both Brazil and Chile, only half of those who cease calling themselves Catholic convert to Protestantism. In addition, the Catholic Church is slowly learning to compete better in Latin America's new competitive religious field. And pentecostalism's reputation has been increasingly scarred by scandals and its poor political image. The probable religious future of Latin America will include a revitalized Catholicism, a highly fragmented Protestantism which may peak at between 20 and 35% of the region's population, and a sizeable sector of non-Christian religions and 'non-religious'. Just before

the Pope's recent (May 2007) visit to Brazil, one study (FGV) estimated that Catholic numerical decline had dried up. That is unlikely to be the case *yet*, but the survey's interpreters put forward as possible reasons for such a 'Catholic reaction', besides the growing strength of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, the fact that the Lula government's social programmes (such as the 'bolsa-família') have created a larger state presence among the most underprivileged sectors. In this case, greater 'existential security' is supposedly shoring up Catholicism, an ironic outcome in light of the tendency among Catholic hierarchs (and even 'progressive' Catholic intellectuals) to regard the growth of the 'pentecostal sects' as a temporary way-station on the route to secularization (in the 'progressive' version, at the behest of the global capitalism). This would amount to standing the Norris and Inglehart thesis on its head.

Pentecostal Social Projects in Latin America

One obvious way to look at the relationship between Pentecostalism (and the evangelical world of which it is the main segment) and development in Latin America is with regard to specific efforts to promote development. Mainstream global evangelicalism awakened to such involvement after the Lausanne conference of 1974, a sort of 'Vatican II'-style *aggiornamento* at which Latin American evangelicals (non-pentecostal) played an important role. Lausanne (and its subsequent consultations and booklets) 'liberated evangelicals to be involved in development'. Evangelical relief agencies now developed theologies and strategies of development, though distancing themselves from the World Council of Churches' perceived identification of salvation with socio-political change. From the 1980s onwards, when enterprise development among the poor grew, evangelical organizations proved generally more ready than those associated with the ecumenical movement to embrace the mechanism of the market (Samuel 199?). At the same time, the major evangelical development agencies generally accepted the 'Oxfam model' (relying on local communities to determine their own development needs, abstaining from proselytism) rather than the 'missionary model' (Thomas 2005). This has led to a 'diversification in mission' (Appleby 2000) with the creation of a considerable number of evangelical NGOs, whether local or transnational such as World Vision. The latter's work in Ecuador is analysed by Brysk (2000), stressing that its work there was influenced by anthropological norms which 'stressed respect for local cultural values', reorganizing several times in response to local critics, including those from the strengthening indigenous movement; some evangelical Indians who had gained experience in World Vision projects went on to become active in the Indian rights movements.

World Vision, of course, was neither founded in Latin America nor by pentecostals, but it exemplifies the sort of broader evangelical organization that both works with Latin American churches, many of which are pentecostal, and incorporates pentecostal activists. But at another more homespun level, there has always been some pentecostal social involvement; there were orphanages and other projects right from the beginning in the early twentieth century, although only on a relatively small scale. The theological emphasis was very much on evangelism, and sometimes the strong feeling of living in the 'last times' inhibited social concern. In Latin America, until recently people used to say that the 'traditional' Protestants had social projects but the pentecostals did not. That has changed considerably in the last 15 or 20 years. There is now quite a lot being done, possibly because of worsening social conditions, the weakening of the state, the effects of globalization, and also because of the growing numbers of pentecostals and the growing expectation (from pentecostals themselves and society in general) that those numbers should result in greater social impact. Some of the newer denominations, both at the lower class and middle class levels, have become heavily involved in social programmes of quite varied types.

This involvement is often of a rather 'assistentialist' type rather than more sophisticated projects of 'conscientization', community mobilizing and empowering. But over time there has been

a growing reflection on what does and does not work. In some cases that leads to a growing awareness of social reality and its structural dimensions. Gradually some pentecostals come to realize that not everything can be solved simply by converting individuals and transforming them into altruistic people, but there are also other dimensions that need to be tackled through lobbying, social pressure, community mobilization and perhaps direct involvement in the political system.

On the whole, though, the pentecostal approach to social action has been a straightforward one based on the 'holistic' ministry of Jesus (teaching, helping, healing). Occasionally still, social work is done as a pre-evangelistic strategy, an underhand way of proselytizing. There are a lot of grassroots initiatives which are not linked in to global Christian reflection on social involvement, although sometimes such initiatives do later make connections with national or international evangelical NGOs. Some scholars (e.g. Miller forthcoming) are starting to talk of 'progressive pentecostalism', a new wave of social ministries carried out by pentecostal and charismatic churches in the name of a gospel 'holism'.

Pentecostalism and Development in Latin America: Contours of the Debate

The debate about pentecostalism and development, of course, goes way beyond the efforts of religiously-inspired 'development agencies'. It is related to the whole 'embeddedness' of the economy in value systems and non-economic institutions, and inevitably the ghost of Weber looms large whenever any form of Protestantism expands dramatically in a new part of the globe. Sometimes, Weber's ghost is incorporated via a presumed historical link. Thus, Lawrence Harrison argues that states colonized by countries sympathetic to the Protestant ethic have developed better than those colonized by Catholic countries (in Selinger 2004). That, of course, seals Latin America's fate. But maybe contemporary religious transformations can overcome the weight of history? Robin Grier (1999) says that developing societies with more Protestants have better post-colonial economic growth rates. Thus, Anthony Gill examines whether the rise of evangelicalism in Latin America might be influencing the Catholic historical legacy in ways that transform the region's development. Given that evangelicals preach thrift, trustworthiness and personal responsibility, he says, one might expect this ethic to bolster capitalism's prospects. He comments that some scholars reverse Weber's causality: rather than Protestantism promoting capitalism, they see individuals converting to Protestantism because it is more congruent with the previous advance of capitalism in their part of the world. Gill thus seeks to test the linkage between church affiliation and economic predispositions using the WVS data from 1990. He concludes that Protestants and Catholics do not differ substantially in their economic preferences, and that other factors such as age, gender and socio-economic status matter more. Weber is therefore 'not at work in Latin America', at least in terms of the culturally defining role of Protestantism (Gill 2004). Thus, even the 'inverted causality' Weber seems to be firmly in his grave.

This is the polar opposite of Peter Berger's assertion (1990) that 'Max Weber is alive and well and living in Guatemala City' and that the growth of Protestantism in Latin America will lead to 'the emergence of a solid bourgeoisie, with virtues conducive to the development of a democratic capitalism' (in Martin 1990: ix). For Berger, Weber is not only alive (and therefore, being himself an heir of the Protestant ethic, inevitably 'at work!'), but he is also standing on his feet, rather than the watered-down 'inverse causality' version alluded to by Gill which we can describe as Weber standing on his head. A third possibility, of course, would be 'Weber lying down', that is, a mutually reinforcing relationship between pentecostalism and development in Latin America. This is, therefore, the first methodological question: the direction of causality alleged by each analyst of Latin American pentecostalism.

The second methodological question concerns the social level at which any such relationship is thought to be operating. Weber wrote about a specific historical juncture (northern Europe in the

early modern era), a specific group of Protestants (those influenced by what should really be called the 'Puritan ethic' rather than the overly broad 'Protestant ethic') and a specific social location (the rising bourgeoisie). He himself did not imagine that a constant repeat of that process would be necessary either to maintain capitalism where already established or to establish it where it was not. That does not mean, of course, that one should not examine whether Latin American pentecostalism is not assisting 'the emergence of a solid bourgeoisie'; Weber, after all, may have been wrong. But it does mean that the discussion should not be restricted to that. Pentecostalism may be affecting capitalist development at other levels, perhaps more suited to the social location of its particular constituency, or to the structural position of the Latin American economy today, or to the specific type of ethic that these pentecostals incorporate.

The third methodological question has to do with what constitutes evidence (not only for affirmations, but also for their negations). In the examples already cited, Berger is basing himself (and perhaps going somewhat beyond) David Martin's work on Latin American Protestantism, a review of the literature supplemented by personal observation and the collecting of pentecostal life-histories. Gill, on the other hand, is using the WVS survey data. It might be thought that the latter is a more solid basis. Yet, in addition to all the traditional limitations of a survey, what can really be determined from such data? Hard evidence of conversion causing upward social mobility (or even merely attitudinal change), rather than the reverse (i.e. that mobility causes conversion) requires longitudinal studies which are very difficult to do, especially for a conversionist religion which is constantly gaining new members (and even losing some old ones). Such a study is far harder than for an ethnic minority whose mobility over time can readily be traced. A recent study showed 62% of Brazilian pentecostals were not born into the religion but have converted to it, many of them in the last few years. This not only makes causal relationships very difficult to trace at the aggregate level, but it also means that the 'wait and see' argument (used by some authors and dismissed by others) is not absurd. It proves very little merely to cite a survey showing that pentecostals are accentuatedly lower-class, or even to cite two surveys ten or twenty years apart to the same effect. None of this proves that pentecostalism does not cause upward mobility, still less that it causes downward mobility (which, significantly, no-one seems to suggest). In the absence of the right sort of statistical data over quite long periods of time (enabling us to trace the economic destinies of the members of a religious community which is three times as large today as it was twenty years ago), we are reduced to using other, 'softer' indicators (as Martin [1990] says, 'we are dealing only with cumulative indications and likely outcomes'). Pentecostal 'testimonies' (the religiously-inspired recountings of elements of their life-histories) do allege a causality, but it is implicitly of the counter-factual type (such an outcome would not have happened if I had not converted, or not trusted God, etc). Since we cannot re-run our lives to tinker with particular variables, such allegations are impossible to prove. But their rebuttals are equally impossible to prove.

So should we just ignore the ghost of Weber and invoke that of Ho Chi Minh regarding the outcomes of the French Revolution ('too early to say')? Ho should, perhaps, have the last word, for the reasons already alluded to, but before that there are some affirmations that can be made with reasonable assurance and others whose plausibility can be profitably discussed. Thus, in relation to Berger's invocation of the 'full' Weber, we can remember Bernice Martin's caution (1995) that Weber's thesis was a solution to a one-off historical puzzle and there is no need to expect analogues among Latin American pentecostals. We can add two other caveats: Latin American pentecostals operate on the periphery of established global capitalism and cannot have the same sort of macro-economic effect. In any case, they do not usually have the classic Protestant work ethic and frugal consumption patterns, lacking the theological ideas of predestination and worldly vocation, with the attendant psychological mechanism (anguish about eternal destiny) which supposedly impelled the Puritan in his rational search for prosperity. Nevertheless, they may well be energized economically

by various aspects of their faith (greater optimism and self-belief, new patterns of honesty, sobriety and diligence) and by skills learnt in the churches. But effective economic betterment is usually restricted to modest advance from absolute destitution to dignified poverty, with perhaps more significant upward mobility in the next generation.

Thus, a first reply to Berger would be that Latin American pentecostalism does not have the classic Protestant work ethic, and it operates in a significantly different economic context. Hard evidence for upward mobility is scarce, and signs of a macro effect on Latin American economies even scarcer (the Latin American countries with larger percentages of Protestants are distributed across the region's range of macro-economic performance, from relatively successful Chile to far less successful Guatemala and El Salvador); but once again, appreciable Protestant growth is so recent that one must always remember the injunction to 'wait and see'.

Amy Sherman (1997) claims there is no need even to wait and see. Protestantism in Guatemala is already having a positive effect on development, including receptivity to entrepreneurialism, educational attainment and literacy for both sexes. In a sense, her argument is the positive mirror-image of that of Brouwer et al (1996), who subsume much of Latin American pentecostalism (especially of the newer 'neopentecostal' variety) under the label of the 'fundamentalism' which they see as promoted from the US and related to the acceptance of worldwide capitalist expansion, destructive neocolonialism and cultural Americanization. The latter is very doubtful, especially for the pentecostalism of the larger South American countries, but in any case, as Smilde (1998) points out, the problem of separating causation and correlation remains. Sherman chooses to employ causal language, even though her only before-and-after data are converts' own testimonies.

Annis' work on an indigenous Guatemalan town also finds that Protestantism is the strongest predictor of which families will be upwardly mobile and end up in micro-business ownership. But 'Protestantism' as compared to what? If the term of comparison is 'Catholicism', the effect of Protestantism can seem immense; if, however, it is 'practising Catholics', the effect may be much diminished. However, since most Protestant converts come from the 'non-practising Catholic' category, at least they do seem to be increasing the overall number of people acquiring such characteristics, rather than just recycling them under another religious label.

Nevertheless, Bernice Martin reminds us that there might still be a way to invoke a nearly 'full' Weber. The entrepreneurial class is constantly replenished by new recruits who, as individuals, encounter for the first time the need to make money but not dissipate it. With the expansion of post-modern capitalism, she says, there may be a continuing role for inner-worldly asceticism in the small business sector. This is perhaps a rising petty-bourgeoisie rather than a rising bourgeoisie, but the author points out that most pentecostals in post-1980s Latin America have to create work for themselves and set their own time schedules. This is 'survival entrepreneurship', putting a premium on internalized discipline rather than on the traditional pietistic 'ethic of the good functionary'. This survival entrepreneurship does not have to give account to employer or foreman, so it chooses to render account to pastor, fellow-believers and God. Pentecostals know how to 'hustle with charm', putting their evangelistic skills to good use in the person-to-person service economy.

The 1980s in Latin America were, of course, the 'lost decade' of recession, reduction in manufacturing employment and trend to deregulation, all this in the context of relatively poor economies with fragile or no welfare systems. As a result, more women and children were thrown onto the labour market, leading to an increase in family breakdown and the growing number of 'street children'.

David Martin, in two influential studies (1990 and 2002), looked at Latin American pentecostalism in what he refers to as 'a new phase of global capitalism in which culture is

increasingly recognised as a key variable', where the ability to be punctual, regimented and obedient (important in the Fordist factory system) are less relevant than the capacity to be self-motivated and self-monitoring, and to manage interpersonal encounters skillfully. Pentecostalism, he admits, does not have the Weberian notion of vocation, but it operates a psychic mutation towards independence and individual initiative, qualities which are required even for survival in the informal economy. Its 'reformation of manners' has implications for development. First of all, it gives a powerful new sense of agency, equipping for seizing opportunities and not merely for consoling the victims of social change. Pentecostalism rejects the European Christian approach to suffering as exemplary; rather, it sees suffering as something to be overcome, with no great distinction between spiritual, physical and material well-being. Yet, even in the newer forms of 'prosperity gospel' and in the more middle-class versions of pentecostalism, the tension of unalloyed consumerism with evangelical disciplines remains. With global capitalism, the consonance is partial and the consumerism selective.

As for upward mobility, Martin affirms that, for the lower-class majority of pentecostals, their religion functions as a raft to which people lash themselves for safety. Initially, most of their energy is expended on constructing the raft. Economic advancement depends on facilitating economic conditions. People advance by the margins available, pressing on their constraints rather than breaking out of them. 'What one can affirm is that economic advancement and evangelical religion often go together and appear to reinforce each other' (1990). Pentecostalism may console those who lose from social change, or it may select those who can make the most of the chances change offers. But capacities may take two or three generations to come to fruition, says Martin, recognising that hard evidence is scarce. Without going as far as Berger, he considers Pentecostalism may be building a constituency well-disposed to a capitalist form of development.

Pentecostalism, says Martin, is 'a faith of the household poised against the seductions of the street'. In a context of increasing female employment and male irresponsibility and violence, it restores the family largely through reformation of the male and the elimination of the double standard. In these observations, Martin joins an increasing number of scholars, especially female sociologists and anthropologists, who have reevaluated the pronounced gender dimension of Latin American pentecostalism, which appeals disproportionately to women (even more so than most forms of religion). Sometimes this is a puzzle to scholars because they perceive in pentecostalism what seems to be a very traditional patriarchal discourse. But in fact the effects on the ground for poor women in the Third World are usually very positive, especially in domesticating their menfolk, weaning men off the machista culture and helping them value the same things as the women themselves, especially in terms of how money and time are spent. Inasmuch as few things encourage development more than the education of women and releasing them for more significant roles, this may turn out to be the greatest pentecostal contribution to development in the long run.

We must look beyond the patriarchal rhetoric to perceive Pentecostalism's "revalorization of the material, psychological and spiritual currency of the family and the individuals within it" (Garrard-Burnett 1993:204). The advantages to poor women are financial, emotional and physical. Elizabeth Brusco (1993) shows how Pentecostalism in Colombia helps women resocialize men away from the destructive patterns of *machismo*, even though (or, in fact, precisely because) it maintains the rhetoric of male control, reinforced by biblical language about headship. A new male role totally opposed to machismo is offered, and the public-male/private-female boundary is redrawn. The private realm is placed at the centre of both men's and women's aspirations. Thus, not only is a new ideal of manhood promoted, but also a strategic alteration in consumption patterns. Male aspirations are redefined to coincide with their wives', centred on children and home. Pentecostalism's reconciliation of gender values is something middle-class feminism has not managed to achieve. Thus, it serves the practical interests of poor women in Latin America, even when it legitimizes male authority (Tarducci 1993; see also Machado 1994). (However, a 2006 survey in three Latin American

countries found that pentecostals everywhere were more in favour of women as religious leaders than were other Christians and the general population. As to whether men should have more right to employment than women when jobs are scarce, they mirrored their general populations.)

In fact, a recent (Neri 2005) interpretation of religious change in Brazil (principally, but not only, towards pentecostalism) calls attention to the parallel curves of religious conversion and increasing female participation in the labour market. Neri talks of 'elective affinities' between religious choices and the economic changes affecting women. In 1940, he says, women were more Catholic than men; today, the opposite is true. While men have either remained Catholic or joined the 'non-religious' category, women have migrated disproportionately to other religions. Neri attributes this to the Catholic Church's difficulty in regard to questions of female emancipation such as contraception, divorce and professional success. In the mid-nineties, a survey in greater Rio de Janeiro found that Protestant affiliation made a greater difference in reproductive behaviour (fewer children), the lower the social class involved.

The relationship between the growth of pentecostalism and of 'non-religious' is a fascinating one. In Brazil, the 'non-religious' are concentrated in the same urban peripheries (and rural frontiers) as the pentecostals, among the young and darker-skinned. Yet (a key difference), they are overwhelmingly male, whereas pentecostals are largely female. 'No religion' is, perhaps, the male equivalent of pentecostalism among unemployed and precariously employed young people. Might it therefore be a temporary option, a luxury of young unattached and underemployed males which is later replaced by pentecostal domesticity, rather than a new tendency which will work its way through the age cohorts?

A fascinating documentary film (*Santa Cruz*) on the first year in the life of a small pentecostal church on the periphery of Rio de Janeiro tells how in one neighbourhood virtually everyone has become pentecostal and property values have risen. The location is considered safe, people concern themselves with the well-being of their neighbours, families are more structured, the men no longer drink and beat their wives and it is generally considered a more desirable place to live, despite the visible poverty which still reigns there. And a 1996 study of attitudes in Brazilian society, commenting on the growth of the informal economy and of female employment, mentioned the increasing rejection of the 'malandro' image (the anarchic, undisciplined and amoral negotiator of the interstices of the urban world) and embrace of the opposing image of the self-disciplined and upright 'believer'.

None of this, evidently, actually proves upward social mobility through conversion to pentecostalism. Many studies (e.g. Hoffnagel, Steigenga) have commented on the pentecostal group ideology which preconditions them to believe that they have experienced 'uplift', but this should not be confused with reality. A study of El Salvador sees little evidence of upward mobility among Protestants, but admits that massive Protestant growth is very recent and that civil war conditions are not favourable to advancement (Coleman et al 1993). Among the rural poor of North-Eastern Brazil, Novaes noted that the expectation of improvement is not accompanied by a new work ethic. Pentecostals expect to be compensated for their "testimony" (the "forced saving" of an ascetic lifestyle), but not for the quality and quantity of their work (1985:111). Mariz (1989), studying a large city of North-Eastern Brazil, says Pentecostalism typically transforms a lumpenproletarian into a proletarian or a self-employed person. It raises from misery to poverty (for example, through combatting alcoholism), but no further than that. Even inter-generational occupational mobility in modern Brazil (a son who gets a white-collar job) does not necessarily mean social mobility. Pentecostalism is a tool for enduring poverty rather than for upward mobility. It changes attitudes to consumption rather than to work, offering a new plausibility for saving in an adverse context. (The value of this, of course, should not be underestimated; a recent study of Udaipur, India, concluded that the poor there could spend up to 30% more on food if they stopped devoting money to

alcohol, tobacco and festivals [*The Economist*, 28/4/07:90].) The Brazilian Pentecostal ethic reinforces dominant capitalist values among people who have already embraced such values but have not been materially rewarded for them.

The expectation of material reward through religious means is far from unique to pentecostalism. 64% of all religious Brazilians believe that God grants believers prosperity; pentecostals merely up the percentage to 83% (the respective figures for Chile are 28% and 49%, and for Guatemala 71% and 82%). (Somewhat contrary to common belief, however, this is not connected to a parallel pentecostal emphasis on self-employment; the same survey showed that pentecostals do not favour self-employment any more than their fellow-countrymen in Brazil and Guatemala, and considerably less than their fellow-countrymen in Chile.)

Zaluar's study of Cidade de Deus, the notorious area of Rio de Janeiro now immortalized in a feature film, discovered that 'the urban poor now experience poverty as a privation... The religious meaning of redemption through suffering has been lost' (Zaluar 1985:115f). This is an opening for Prosperity Theology, a religious discourse which rejects traditional Christian theodicy. In part because hard work and the other economic virtues often produce so little reward in Latin America, there is sometimes a large following for churches and preachers of 'prosperity theology'. This is based on the idea that God intends all his people to be prosperous, if we only have the faith to 'claim' what should be ours, and to demonstrate that faith by giving generously to God so that he will reward us many times over. But prosperity theology coexists tensely with a religious "populism" which glories in God's choice of the poor and is suspicious of the spiritually deleterious effects of wealth. The more traditional pentecostal ethic was that of primitive capitalism, a long and arduous struggle to reach modest respectability. Today, that ethic still exists, but has lost ground (especially within the newer churches) to prosperity teachings. But even in these churches, the recipe for prosperity is not just generous giving to the church; they also make a fairly realistic analysis of economic opportunities in modern Latin America. As a sermon in one Brazilian church said: 'It's no good just giving an offering. You must quit your job and open a business, even if its only selling popcorn in the street. As an employee you'll never get rich'. Previous pentecostal churches had valued self-employment only because it offered flexibility (the chance to give time to the church) and avoidance of spiritually damaging environments. Now, it is valued as a means to enrichment. Self-employment is just a stage on the way to becoming an employer: this church's publications contain practical suggestions on branches of business and the initial capital needed. Its message may reinforce the work ethic and petty entrepreneurial initiative in an adverse context.

Interestingly, this same church's publications contain highly critical evaluations of global capitalism. One of its bishops writes that 'globalisation is the fruit of an economic policy dictated by the developed countries to expand their markets... giving their citizens all the things they "steal" from ours. Globalisation is the domination of the underdeveloped countries' (*Folha Universal*, 17/10/99). Another bishop reconciles anti-neoliberalism with prosperity theology: 'There is a Satanic trinity in capitalism: the great "god" is the market, the great world religion is capitalism and the Holy Spirit is the IMF... When we do a Prosperity Chain [meetings dedicated to obtaining prosperity] we are going against the elementary principles of the market, which include "you are poor, you were born to be poor, you will die poor"' (*Ibid*, 25/4/99).

At a higher social level, we find pentecostal associations for businessmen which teach, for example, 'seven ways of taking over your rival's market'. The seven ways include practical advice (choose the right partners), moral exhortations (don't occupy a new market with manipulation and fraud, otherwise you will lose the support of the angels), psychological galvanizing based on religious identity (there is nowhere that a servant of the Lord may not enter; there are no impenetrable markets if you have the Lord's anointing; be confident you will overcome obstacles and conquer 'the promise'), and financial loyalty to the church (do not hold back anything that belongs to God).

Pentecostal treatment of financial donations is a highly controversial question in Latin American societies, especially with regard to the aggressive monetary appeals of some newer churches. The neo-pentecostal groups are usually heavily criticized for their emphasis on giving to the church. On the other hand, Mariz (1995) says that, in popular mentality, giving is power, whereas submission is symbolically reinforced by receiving. In pentecostalism, the poor discover they are capable of giving and not just of receiving. In addition, it should be remembered that donations often replace previous spending on medicines, drink or drugs. For many members, giving to the church and a rationalization of overall economic behaviour are inseparable. They came together as part of a package of transformations, a package which is constantly threatened by old habits. Giving incarnates this precarious commitment to the new pattern. In any case, the findings of a survey in Rio relativise the idea of pentecostal exploitation of the vulnerable; the percentage of contributors increases with the income level, as does the relative value of the contributions.

Talk of rationalization with regard to pentecostalism, a highly supernatural and 'magical' form of Christianity may seem contradictory. Yet it is perhaps in the more middle-class churches that 'irrationality' seems to be the greater problem. Thus, the leader of such a church in Brasilia (now a member of the Brazilian congress), claims that 'Latin America has borne the weight of foreign debt for decades... due to the sins of negro slavery, exploitation of Indians and pacts with demons brought by Afro-Catholic syncretism... They took the gold and wealth of Brazil to European banks and if we pray and break this spiritual curse... all this wealth will return' (Rodovalho n/d:47, 6, 8ss). This is macro-level 'spiritual warfare' as a solution to Brazil's underdevelopment! But the majority of pentecostals, at a very different social level, are more concerned with spiritual warfare against individual demons. Thus Mariz (1994), discussing the pentecostal approach to alcoholism, stresses how exorcism becomes an ethicization of the supernatural and therefore a way of rationalizing religion. In the case of pentecostalism, she says, magical and ethical religion are not opposed but reinforce each other by means of the concept of 'deliverance'. Although in itself 'magical', deliverance is the first step in a process of rationalization, leading believers to see themselves as 'individuals' with a certain power of choice, and not as 'persons' subject to traditional roles. The main cause of alcoholism is seen as an amoral magical force, which can only be conquered by an absolute and ethical force. The magical world is to be subdued by means of a stronger magic, one that is moral. Thus, Mariz concludes, the pentecostal churches do not contradict Weber's thesis of a greater rationalization of religion accompanying social development.

In Latin America today, it is impossible to talk of development without mention of the deleterious effects of rampant urban violence, especially on the poor peripheries. We have already seen that pentecostalism is disproportionately concentrated in such areas, and therefore its relationship to violence is key for understanding not only its attraction but also its possible relationship to development. In these marginal areas virtually untouched by other sectors of civil society or indeed the state, the pentecostal presence is generally perceived as vital. In Brazil, it is said that only two institutions really function in the shanty-towns: organized crime and pentecostal churches. Other forms of organized religion are generally absent or weak, and so is the state. This is pentecostalism's 'civilizing' mission, providing people with ways of escape from criminality, prostitution and drug addiction. The same applies to the vibrant pentecostal work in many Third World prisons (as, until its dismantling, in the notorious São Paulo prison of Carandiru), sometimes creating whole prison wings inhabited by prisoners who have become pentecostals, transformed in their behaviour within the prison and, so it is claimed, with considerably better rates of re-integration into society afterwards. In *Cidade de Deus*, Zaluar says that 'the few stories of regeneration which I heard involved sessions of healing in pentecostal churches or a radical conversion' (Zaluar 1985). Novaes echoes this evaluation: mothers in the shanties see only two alternatives for their sons, either to become criminals or 'believers'. Novaes talks of conversion to

pentecostalism is such areas as a way to leave the world of crime without fear of retaliation. Lins and Silva confirm this: 'the myth that there is no way back from the world of crime finds a clear exception in criminals' conversion to evangelical churches... The convert has the right to be pardoned by other criminals'. Astonishingly, a recent study of one of the largest shanty-towns in Rio says that the strong pentecostal presence extends even to a monument erected by the local drug-lords. 'A Bible sculpted in stone, the monument represents a homage paid by the [drug-lords] to the faith professed by their relatives and friends' (Freire-Medeiros & Chinelli 2003). In addition, stories abound of would-be muggers letting their victims go (and even apologising to them) after discovering that they were 'believers'.

Urban violence is related to perceptions of the demonic in Brazilian society. Interestingly, 43% of 'non-religious' Brazilians believe in the devil, virtually the same percentage as Catholics (*Veja*, 16 Dec 2001)! Pentecostals believe much more in the devil (above 80%), and this may be functional for their success in the dramatic circumstances of the urban peripheries. Birman and Leite describe how Catholicism in Brazil adapted to the beliefs and practices of Amerindians, Africans, Portuguese heretics and exiled criminals, in which formal dogma co-existed with strong devotion to the saints and belief in magic and witchcraft. This was the basis of an ethical order in which good and evil were not clearly defined, exclusive affirmations of identity were avoided and religious syncretism was practised. But this status quo is now under serious threat from pentecostalism which refuses to accept the status of a minority syncretic religion under the protection of a broad and powerful Catholic identity, in the way that the Afro-Brazilian possession cults did. Pentecostals do battle against all other spiritual beings, practising exorcism and demanding exclusive individual dedication and genuine pluralism in the public sphere. Meanwhile, in recent decades urban violence (often drug-related) has worsened dramatically and seems to demand a less conciliatory strategy. How, ask Birman and Leite, can one live pacifically with such perceived emanations of the devil? In the field of violence, certain religious interpretations have lost credibility and others (especially pentecostal ones) have become more plausible. The Catholic Church is perceived as at best helpless to deal with the causes of urban violence, and at worst as conniving with them. Pentecostal pastors, on the other hand, are widely regarded as possessing much more power than Catholic priests. They interrupt the flow of violence with the word of God and with rituals of exorcism. Indeed, exorcism has become one of the most significant methods of dealing with evil in the shanty-towns (Birman & Leite 2000).

In addition, Corten (2005) suggests that the transition from state violence (during the Latin American military regimes of the 1960s to 1980s) to privatized violence today further encouraged a change of religion. While Corten may underestimate the extent to which the lower classes have always suffered privatized violence, he is right that the transnational and hierarchical Catholic Church was better at combatting state violence, whereas the individual transformative power of pentecostalism does better against privatized violence (whether by dissuading young males from becoming criminals, converting prisoners or providing 'protection' for potential victims of violence).

Not unrelated to violence is the whole question of trust, much debated with regard to development. The recent Pew Research Center survey discovered that Latin America pentecostals resemble their fellow-countrymen on most measures of trust, a commodity in short supply in the region, especially in Brazil. The only significant difference was that pentecostals trust their co-religionists more (and even there, less than one might expect). The survey did not ask specifically if people in general think pentecostals can be trusted. It did, however, ask some other questions relevant for discussions of development. Pentecostals generally reflect national opinion regarding a free market economy (78% of Brazilian pentecostals agreeing most people are better off in a free market, compared to 72% of the general population; in Chile, the respective figures were 47% and 52%, and in Guatemala 74% and 72%). On whether government should guarantee food and shelter

to every citizen, pentecostals are everywhere slightly more favourable than their general populations. (The 1996 Novo Nascimento survey in greater Rio de Janeiro had found that 54% of Protestants believed the mission of the president should be to 'guarantee the country's development', versus 41% who believed it should be to 'favour the poorest'.

ⁱ Thomas goes on to appeal for a 'virtue-ethics approach' in which aid agencies seek to assist in the building-up of faith communities of character that produce social capital for development and which together determine an authentically Christian, Muslim or whatever response to development (Thomas 2005). Yet this is still secular agencies trying to influence religious bodies, and susceptible to being perceived as an instrumentalization. Indeed, it is still based on an essentially 'benign' evaluation of 'the religious' as a category distinct from 'the secular'.