

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF LATIN AMERICAN PROTESTANT GROUPS: A Sociohistorical Perspective*

Jean-Pierre Bastian

Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Iztapalpa

Study of religious phenomena in Latin America and the Caribbean covered by the generic term *Protestantism* has opened up a fertile field of research for sociologists, anthropologists, and historians in the last thirty years. The exponential growth in new non-Roman Catholic religious movements since the 1950s and the breadth of their organized networks have stimulated research based more often on sensationalism than on a scientific perspective. The complex and pluralistic manifestations of this heterodox religious phenomenon have generally been reduced to a notion of Protestantism rarely found in scholarly usage. The multiplicity of non-Roman Catholic religious movements cannot be reduced to some catchall category of "Protestantism." Moreover, one must also analyze the connection between usage of the term *Protestant* and a culture marked by the Spanish Inquisition, which shaped the Ibero-American collective unconscious for more than three centuries, in order to understand why a fair number of Latin American researchers look at religious dissidence rather superficially, reducing it immediately to "Protestantism."

Another frequent conflation has been to associate Protestantism with all new religious movements and with the generic concept of sect, a term that has been employed superficially and rarely from a sociological point of view. This confusion has resulted from the Latin American cultural perspective, a product of the Inquisition that pursued followers of "sects of Luther, Moses, and Muhammed" on the American continent in the sixteenth century. As it turned out, Islam never took hold in Latin America until recently, and Judaism has not survived except by the indirect means of "*marrano*" assimilation (covert Judaism in response to forced conversion). The only religious force (beyond indigenous "idolatries") that has gradually been recognized as a representation of heterodoxy has been the Lutheran heresy and its latter-day variations. To paraphrase Serge Gruzinski, it is possible to assert that Protestants thus join "the series

*This article was translated from French by Margaret Caffey-Moquin with funding from the Tinker Foundation.

of deviants, phantasms, and obsessions that haunt the imagination of the Iberian societies alongside the Jews, sodomites, and sorcerers" (Gruzinski and Bernand 1988, 163).

Amalgamation of the terms *Protestantism* and *sect* was reinforced in the nineteenth century during the apogée of Roman Catholic ultramontanism (advocacy of papal primacy) and the struggle against the liberalizing forces of modernity, when the "Protestant sects" were denounced by conservatives and intransigent Catholics in terms exceeding the normal political discourse of the nineteenth century. Thus it is not surprising that the tendency to label all sects as Protestant has reappeared since the early 1960s, along with the ideological polarization and violent politics that characterized the cold war (1950–1990). This same aggregation of *Protestantism* and *sect* was by this time also common in intellectual circles on the right and the left, notably among the younger generation of Latin American researchers for whom Marxist dogma supplanted Inquisitorial dogma. In this intellectual climate, numerous attempts were made to forge a "conspiracy theory" (see Stoll 1984). Such a theory thus represents a repetition of the clichés of the Inquisitorial culture surviving in the collective unconscious: denunciation of Protestant groups by suspecting them of representing the vanguard of U.S. imperialism, preparing to annex Latin America to the United States, destroying national identities and the unity of the Latin American peoples, being the chief agent of acculturation, presaging an invasion by U.S. capital, and so on.¹

The durability of these clichés is all the more surprising because since the late 1960s, several solid sociological studies (Lalivé d'Épinay 1968, 1975; Willems 1967) have proposed a typology and an interpretation of the Protestant movements that are still applicable in the 1990s. As a result, one can only ascribe the proliferation of uncritical and unscientific essays on this theme to the limited scientific background of researchers who have not assimilated the theoretical underpinnings of the sociology of religion and have instead substituted the rhetoric of Marxist "jargon" or inquisitorial Catholic culture for the rigor of a scientific approach.

Despite this severe handicap, some progress has been made in analyzing "Protestant" religious phenomena in Latin America and the Caribbean since the basic studies were undertaken by Christian Lalivé d'Épinay and Emile Willems. Subsequent research has taken two directions: historical approaches have permitted an understanding of Latin American Protestant groups over the long term, while a number of anthropological monographs

1. Numerous examples of essays produced by former Catholic clergy can be cited, among them José Vadderrey, "Les Sectes en Amérique Centrale," *Pro Mundi Vita*, no. 100, no. 1 (1985): 1–39; and Gilberto Giménez, *Sectas religiosas en el sureste: aspectos sociográficos y estadísticos* (Mexico City: CIESAS, 1988); and Assman (1987). An example of a Marxist argument is the pamphlet by Erwin Rodríguez, *Un evangelio según la clase dominante* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1982). On the conspiracy theory, see Stoll (1984).

have managed to capture the syncretic nature and the sociopolitical implications of religious dissension in indigenous settings.

Finally, three comprehensive studies of Protestant movements in Latin America appeared in 1990 (Bastian 1990; Martin 1990; Stoll 1990). All three attempt to explain the Protestant religious explosion in Latin America over the last thirty years. My study considers Protestantism over the long term from the perspective of its connections with political regimes and Latin American culture and concludes that these connections changed beginning in the 1960s. David Martin, in contrast, links Protestantism to the earlier Protestant outgrowths in England (Methodism) and the United States (Pentecostalism), perceiving Latin American Protestantism as an extension of Pentecostalism. David Stoll meanwhile views Protestantism in Latin America not as an invasion but as an evangelical awakening that offers new forms of organization to working-class sectors. All three studies affirm that the phenomenon in question is definitely Protestantism. None of them, however, have examined the topic itself.

The objective of this article is to explore the subject by using the following hypothesis as a point of departure: the flourishing of heterodox religion being witnessed in Latin America is a redeployment of "popular religion," of rural forms of Catholicism without priests. Thus rather than talking about Protestantism, it is necessary to ask whether the Latin American Protestant movements that have existed for over a century have undergone a metamorphosis. Such a change characterizes the now-fragmented religious world, one liberated by the economic and social transformations imposed on Latin American societies since the 1960s.

In this sense, recent research suggests a double question: can one still speak of "Protestant groups" in referring to the heterodox Christian religious phenomena found at the center of the Latin American religious world? And are these manifestations still part of a "Protestant logic," or are they forms of millenarianism and messianism similar to other minority heterodox religious expressions that proliferate when traditional societies crumble?

In analyzing the metamorphosis, this article will first address the relationship of Latin American Protestant movements to their history. Next, it will consider the statistical data that allow measurement of the growth of heterodox religious societies. Finally, I will explore the structure of the object of study by discussing four points that respond to recently published anthropological and sociological research.

THE RELATIONSHIP TO HISTORY

Recent Latin Americanist historiography, by emphasizing the long duration and the permanence of the mentalities and mental constructs of social control, affords a view of the constants within Latin American polit-

ical and social practices. In particular, the corporatism that permeates all social practices is usually perceived as the fruit of a pre-Hispanic and colonial double heritage. The Aristotelian-Thomist view of the social order as a natural order that is hierarchical, vertical, and integrated reinforced the pre-Hispanic values and practices that produced the authoritarian colonial culture of the old regime (see Pietschmann 1980; Mansilla 1989; Lafaye 1974).

The “natural social order” became above all a colonial order in which the top-down hierarchy legitimated the dominion of Spaniards over Indians, blacks, and the *castas* (mestizos or those of mixed race). The racial preeminence of whites over Indians and people of mixed race continued virtually unchanged by the political independence movements of the early nineteenth century, when the elite creoles (who were white) supplanted Iberian power. Ever since then, their dilemma has been how to modernize Latin American societies while maintaining their own privileges and control of the indigenous and black masses known to them as *las chusmas* (the rabble).

In resisting centrifugal social forces, Catholicism proved to be the essential cohesive factor for these fragile nationalities. Thus the basic problem for the first generation of liberal moderates was how to reconcile Catholicism, which increasingly favored papal power over national or diocesan authority, with liberal modernity without destroying that keystone of corporatist mentality and practices, the Catholic Church. Some radicalized liberal minorities attempted to resolve the problem of Catholic “intransigence” by imposing by force of arms liberal constitutions and a forced secularization on the traditional mentality of the masses. In Latin America, liberal modernity could find no basis for a religious reform that would have allowed eventual transformation of the corporatist mentality. Partly for this reason, attempts at democratic reform of all types—whether authoritarian and oligarchic liberalism, neocorporatist populism, or caudillismo—succeeded to about the same degree (see Bastian 1990; Halperin Donghi 1985; Touraine 1988).

The power struggle between the deeply rooted mental constructs of Latin American societies and liberal democratic modernity caused the “Protestant question” to arise with particular force during the nineteenth century. This problem emerged for the creole elite as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century over the issues of free trade and the promotion of settlement in the colonies.² The question of religious tolerance and its radical corollary of liberty constituted the heart of the political

2. By the term *creole*, I mean Spanish and Portuguese descendants of second generation and later who were born in Latin America to white parents. In the Caribbean, the term *creole* is applied to those of mixed race.

debates of the liberal elites during the first half of the nineteenth century (see for example Rodríguez 1980).

But only in one context, when armed forces imposed grand liberal principles like the separation of church and state and the freedom of worship, can one speak of Latin American Protestantism. This form of Protestantism arose not from outside (as one Protestant hagiography would have it or as the superficial perception of numerous works would lead one to believe) but from within the liberal radical minorities, as demonstrated by the works of David Gueiros Vieira (1980), Marcos Antonio Ramos (1986), and my own studies (1989, 1990). All these works have shown that in Brazil, Cuba, and Mexico as far back as 1850, non-Roman Catholic schisms were proliferating along with Catholic evangelical associations modeled on the lodges or “evangelical” religious societies organized by radical-liberal Latin Americans long before U.S. missionaries arrived.

Thus these dissident religious networks already existed and were actually rebaptized for the most part (as Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and so on) following negotiations between missionaries and dissident religious liberals. This process evolved by reinforcing the preexisting networks and their expansion (previously limited to a radical-liberal dimension) and by redirecting the missionaries’ economic contribution toward developing radical-liberal religious presses, schools, and democratic models of religious administration. This process grew out of the liberal political culture of Latin American Protestant agents of change and adapted to the struggle against the larger traditional society, which was corporatist and Catholic. For this reason, the symbols of this liberal Protestantism—Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Wesley—were replaced by Benito Juárez, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, and José Martí, thus developing a liberal civic religion that was in effect a Protestant syncretism adapted to reflect Latin American liberal values.

Recognition of the fundamentally endogenous character of the Latin American liberal Protestant movements of the nineteenth century (excepting the transplanted Protestant denominations of Europeans who immigrated to the southern part of Latin America) leads to the perception that they shared the associative logic of other “societies of thought” that were their contemporaries.³ In effect, these Protestant movements shared the

3. On the concept of “society of thought,” see Furet (1978). For its application to Protestantism, see Bastian (1989, 1990b). According to Furet, a society of thought is “a form of socialization whose principle focuses on what its members should do, in order to conserve their roles, to divest themselves of all specificity and their real social existence—the opposite of what was called ‘organizations’ under the old regime, defined by a community of actual professional or social interests as such. The society of thought is characterized by the fact that for each of its members there is only one relationship to ideas. In this sense, these societies anticipated the functioning of democracy, because the latter equalizes individuals according to an abstraction sufficient to constitute them as such: the citizenship that contains and defines that part of sovereignty corresponding to each person” (Furet 1978, 220).

nineteenth-century passion for organization within civil society, as witnessed by the emergence of other similarly local associations that adopted the trappings of foreign associative systems in the form of lodges, spiritist circles, and mutual-aid societies.

These new forms of association were attractive to social sectors in transition (such as workers, small landowners, employees, and school-teachers) and mestizo in origin, whose precarious economic status had alienated them from the traditional social order of the hacienda and the creole oligarchies who were imposing an authoritarian economic development. For the social sectors in transition, the Protestant associations and the other “societies of thought” served as a means for individuating oneself and inculcating democratic practices and values. This process occurred within a holistic larger society that remained corporative and dominated by collective social and political actors. With their synods, assemblies, general conferences, and conventions, the Protestant associations developed social countermodels and became veritable laboratories for administering modernity not only through egalitarian social relationships but also by applying democratic practices of religious administration that anticipated similar demands to be made of the larger social order.

Another trend was the ongoing participation of Protestant actors in the great democratic liberal and bourgeois struggles, the anti-oligarchic and anti-authoritarian campaigns that by the late 1850s had been going on for a century. Members of Latin American Protestant congregations could be found siding with the democratic forces at the heart of the republican and antislavery struggles in Brazil (1870–1889), during the Cuban independence movements (1868–1898), and in the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920). Latin American Protestants were also active in the movements opposing the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz in Mexico (1876–1910), among the *tenientes* (lieutenants) in Brazil of the 1920s and 1930s, in the Peruvian *civiliste* movement (1920–1940), on the side of the Jacobo Arbenz regime and the agrarian revolution in Guatemala (1950–1954), and in the early days of the Cuban Revolution (1953–1961). The political and social vision characteristic of Latin American liberal Protestant movements appeared in the work of John Mackay (a disciple of Miguel Unamuno and a friend of Raúl Haya de la Torre), in the writings of Mexican Alberto Rembao, and in the review *La Nueva Democracia* (published from 1920 to 1961 in New York City). In these ways, the identity of the Protestant movements was forged as an agent of a reform that was religious as well as intellectual and moral, a precondition for democratic modernity.⁴

What is striking to historians today is the cohesive identity of the Protestant political position by the late 1950s, especially in comparison

4. For a general interpretation of the historical evolution of Latin American Protestant movements, see Bastian (1990) and Prien (1978).

with current Protestant movements, which are polarized into antagonistic camps on the left and the right, "progressives" versus "conservatives." It appears that toward the end of the 1950s, the Latin American Protestantism that had arisen from the political culture of radical liberalism and reinforced that culture was playing the role of a "society of thought," hoping to disseminate to the larger society the experiments carried out in temples and schools, where a new, ultra-minoritarian group of citizens (representative social actors in the classic sense of liberal democracy) was being created.

The relationship of Latin American Protestantism to radical liberalism allows researchers to investigate more confidently the heterodox religious phenomena that have been called Protestant, as well as contemporary Protestant groups that reflect more the extensive transformation of the current religious sphere than a preexisting Protestant heritage. There is even reason to ask whether the contemporary Protestant movements are not the opposites of the earlier "societies of thought." Although the traditional forms of Protestantism arose from the political culture of radical-liberal minorities and questioned the corporatist order and mentality, the contemporary "Protestant" religious schisms originated instead within the Catholic and shamanistic popular religious culture and no longer offer any countermodel to corporatism. On the contrary, they reinforce the order that accounts for their exponential growth and success.

THE EXPONENTIAL GROWTH OF RECENT PROTESTANT MOVEMENTS

One of the noteworthy phenomena in the evolution of Latin American and Caribbean societies over the last thirty years has been the metamorphosis of the religious sphere. Although the Catholic Church has remained dominant at the national level in many regions, it now represents less than half of the total religious forces that are present in these countries.

Since the early 1960s, a veritable atomization has occurred. For example, in 1985 there were 72 Protestant religious societies in Nicaragua and 106 in Guatemala, but in the early 1990s they can be counted by the dozens in both countries. Consequently, the available statistical data for 1960 and 1985 clearly reflect this exponential growth. Unfortunately, however, only a few countries (like Mexico) have implemented a ten-year census that includes questions on religion. The available statistical data on Latin America as a whole come from the religious organizations themselves. Although less reliable, these data also indicate the exponential growth of Protestant religious societies. Comparing the figures published in the U.S. journal *Christianity Today* in 1963 for the year 1960 with those of J. P. Johnstone for 1985 (published in 1986), one finds a broad trend in which some parts of Central America have fallen victim to social disin-

tegration, and a slower but similar tendency has characterized secularized countries like Venezuela and Uruguay.

A precise religious demography for each country (nonexistent as yet) could capture the distribution and regional impact of these societies. One such study has been completed on Central America based on statistical data gathered by the Proyecto Centroamericano de Estudios Socio-religiosos (PROCADES) in Costa Rica (see Bastian 1986). My analysis revealed exponential growth (see table 1) and distribution characterized by two strong poles of concentration for each country in the region. Protestant groups in Central America are clustered in two areas: in marginalized rural zones far from the traditional centers of political and religious power and on the periphery of the capitals and regional urban centers. Evidently, marginalization and migration are two of the key factors responsible for the expansion of Protestant societies in Central America. The statistical data from the Mexican census for 1980 confirm this duality in the strong concentration of non-Catholics in the southern states (Chiapas and Quintana Roo having 9 percent each, Tabasco 12.5 percent, and Campeche 10.5 percent) and also in the capitals of the central provinces and the North, where rural migrants abound.⁵ In contrast, the west central provinces of the Bajío, a traditional region with strong Catholic influence since the colonial era, registered Protestant rates of less than 1 percent.

It should be noted nevertheless that because the statistical reports available are usually published by the Protestant organizations, such data tend to validate the Protestant religious phenomenon at the expense of other heterodox religious manifestations. This kind of research focuses on a single religious manifestation and thus tends to reinforce the inflexibility of the categories being considered (see Fonseca 1991). It should also be emphasized that since the 1960s, the fragmentation of Protestant denominations has been accompanied by a corresponding differentiation in the religious sphere with the result being that Protestant groups today in no way represent all the unofficial religious movements.

Pentecostal groups represent another important segment of heterodox religious movements, but numerous non-Protestant societies (such as Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, and Dianetics) are also proliferating, along with other movements that are syncretic (Luz del Mundo), miracle-oriented (El Niño Fidencio in Mexico, El Niño Jesús de Barlovento in Venezuela), and millennialist Catholic (La Nueva Jerusalem). To this ever expanding religious universe should be added the new movements of Eastern origin that recruit their adherents among urban and university populations (such as the Moonies, Tibetan movements, Baha'i, and the Hare Krishna), the ancient esoteric sects (like the spiritism

5. See the Mexican census for 1980: *X Censo de Población: resultados preliminares* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Programación y Presupuesto, 1981), p. 75, t. 14.

TABLE 1 Percentage of Protestants in National Latin American Populations in 1960 and 1985

Country	1960	1985	
	Protestants (%)	Protestants (%)	Fringe Groups (%)
Argentina	2.1	5.5	1.1
Bahamas	-	56.4	1.1
Barbados	-	59.3	2.5
Belize	-	25.8	2.0
Bolivia	1.0	7.6	0.7
Brazil	7.8	17.4	0.5
Chile	10.8	22.5	2.0
Colombia	0.7	3.1	1.1
Costa Rica	4.3	7.7	2.2
Cuba	3.2	2.4	-
Dominican Republic	1.5	6.4	0.6
Ecuador	0.3	3.4	0.9
El Salvador	2.2	14.0	1.2
French Guyana	1.2	6.5	1.7
Guatemala	3.0	20.4	0.7
Guyana	-	28.0	1.8
Haiti	10.4	17.4	0.6
Honduras	1.5	9.9	0.7
Jamaica	-	38.6	5.0
Mexico	1.9	4.0	1.0
Nicaragua	4.5	9.3	2.1
Panama	7.6	11.8	1.0
Paraguay	0.7	4.0	0.3
Peru	0.7	3.6	0.9
Puerto Rico	6.9	27.2	2.7
Surinam	9.7	19.9	1.0
Uruguay	1.6	3.1	2.2
Venezuela	0.7	2.6	0.7

Sources: The data for 1960 were compiled for publication in *Christianity Today* 8, no. 21, 19 July 1963, p. 8. Data for 1985 are from J. P. Johnstone, *Operation World*, 4th ed. (1986) 26: 498-99. "Protestant" includes the historical churches as well as the Pentecostal denominations; "Marginal Groups" designates non-Protestant societies such as the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses.

of Alan Kardec), and the new esotericisms (La Gran Fraternidad). One of the first methodological consequences of the evolution of the Latin American religious world is that it is no longer possible to study the so-called Protestant groups themselves. A second consequence is that one can no longer explain the evolution of the religious field only in terms of Protestantism (the unfortunate assumption made all too often). Only comparative studies can go beyond the impasses of reductionism by employing a

theory of the religious sphere, as do the pioneering studies of Brazilian Carlos Rodrigues Brandão (1986, 1987).

PROTESTANT MOVEMENTS AS OBJECTS OF STUDY AND INTERPRETATION

Contemporary Latin American Protestant movements cannot be analyzed without first consulting the seminal studies of Lalive d'Épinay and Willems, the first to observe the accelerated transformation since the Protestant phenomenon began in the 1960s. The limitations of Lalive d'Épinay's work evident today are found in the choice of a region (Chile and Argentina) that is atypical of the indigenous, black, and mestizo continent and his strictly Protestant theme. He nevertheless posed the essential questions. On the one hand, Lalive d'Épinay developed a typology that locates the variants of Protestantism along the continuum of cult-sect-church, still a useful means of classifying the wide spectrum of religious movements. On the other hand, he (not Willems) was the first to perceive the Protestant sects' gradual adoption of the practices and values of popular religion and culture.

Within the framework of a theory of economic and social crisis and the resulting social disorder, Lalive d'Épinay understood Protestant sects as countersocieties in which what he called the "hacienda model" has reconstructed itself. Similarly, he placed at the center of such a religious society the role of the pastor or patron whose style of religious administration is typically authoritarian and antidemocratic. Because Protestant sects made up the majority of Protestant groups by the late 1960s, Lalive d'Épinay strongly emphasized the Protestants' tendency toward corporatist acculturation, even though he did not precisely describe the break with previous Protestant models implied by this tendency. He perceived Protestant sects as continuous with and reelaborating popular religious culture, and he questioned whether or not these Protestant movements "should be interpreted as a reform of popular Catholicism as much as a renewal internal to Protestantism." In pursuing this line of analysis, Lalive d'Épinay situated these Protestant sects within "the panorama of popular religions alongside the animisms, the spiritisms, the Afro-American religions, the messianisms, the popular forms of Catholicism set up around the sanctuaries, etc." (Lalive d'Épinay 1975, 178–79).

Whereas Willems explained the growth of Protestant forms as resulting from urbanization and the increasing rationalization of everyday life, Lalive d'Épinay observed the establishment of rural as well as urban Protestant sects and placed them within the logic of an adaptation to popular attitudes. Beyond this point, Lalive d'Épinay described their relationship to politics as one of "conformist disengagement," which he termed a "passive modality of the function of witnessing" (Lalive d'Épinay 1975, 279).

Since the work of Lalive d'Épinay and Willems, case studies have proliferated, particularly by anthropologists working in indigenous societies (see among others Miller 1979; Garma Navarro 1987; Muratorio 1981a; and Fajardo 1987). But only recently has it been possible to develop integrated approaches based on these studies: one from a historical perspective (Bastian 1990), another from an anthropological point of view (Stoll 1990), and a third from a sociological perspective (Martin 1990). My own extensive review of the literature discerned a rupture starting in the 1960s, marked by Protestant movements adopting the attitudes and values of popular religion as a result of the Pentecostal revolution.

Current Protestant movements are therefore less an expression of the original Protestantism than a redeployment of popular Latin American religion. On the basis of his participatory observation in Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Ecuador, Stoll has posited an expansion of Protestantism that offers a "new form of social organization and a new way to express their hopes" while it is "at least producing new leaders for popular movements" (Stoll 1990, 331, 330). In his view, it is not Protestantism that has become Latin American, but Latin America that has opted for Protestantism. Along this same line, Martin (1990) reviews an ample literature of field studies and perceives what he calls "the explosion of Protestantism in Latin America" via the Pentecostal movements. For Martin, these Latin American Pentecostal forms express an ongoing Protestant ferment that extended from eighteenth-century English Methodism to early-twentieth-century U.S. Pentecostalism. In his view, the Protestant explosion in Latin America is tangible proof of the vitality of Protestant Anglo-Saxon religious culture and of the Latin American masses' progressive acculturation. For Martin, the evangelical awakening is a paradigm that has recurred in three successive sociopolitical contexts.

The Pentecostal wave that is inundating Latin America is the manifestation of a long-term religious and sociopolitical reform leading to the secularization and rationalization of popular behaviors and values. All things considered, the set of questions developed by Stoll and Martin amplify and refine but do not modify or transcend the analyses of Lalive d'Épinay, which had already identified Pentecostal movements as vehicles for reform in Latin American popular religion. Hence arises the necessity of considering the questions raised by Lalive d'Épinay and his findings on the subject. They will be discussed and critiqued in the context of other interpretations, focusing on four points in the hope of stimulating future discussion and advancing the debate.

Protestant Expansion as a Renewal of Popular Religion

The expansion of "Protestant" societies and new religious movements corresponds neither to a "reform of popular Catholicism" nor to a

“renewal internal to Protestantism” but rather to a patchwork kind of renewal of popular religion and by the historic Protestant groups’ adopting the practices and values of popular Catholic culture.

Throughout the 1970s, when the topic of popular religion was in vogue, many researchers stressed the autonomy of popular religious practices in response to control by the Catholic hierarchy—a juxtaposition of practices that were connected but not integrated (Queiroz 1986; Parker Gumucio 1987; Kohut and Meyers 1988). It is probable that the centralizing and vertical development of Catholicism (which has been called “Romanization”) as well as the destruction of traditional social relationships of production in rural settings and ensuing migrations have all combined to foster instances of symbolic redevelopment among minority sectors of Latin American societies. In considering this interpretive perspective, a hypothesis advanced by Pierre Chaunu in 1965 may prove fruitful. In his view, the popular Protestant movements are actually substitutes for forms of Catholicism and thus fill a void: “This radical Protestantism, without dogmatic demands, wholly amenable to inspiration, wholly devoted to the revelation of God—when all things are considered—is it not closer to a Catholicism without priests [typical of the tradition of] part of the masses?” (Chaunu 1965, 17).

David Stoll’s latest analysis views Latin American Protestant movements similarly as a reorienting (or rechanneling) of “the popular religiosity of folk Catholicism” (Stoll 1990, 112–13; see also Westmeier 1986). Several monographs on Pentecostal movements in indigenous settings demonstrate the plausibility of this hypothesis. In studying the Toba of the Argentine Chaco, Elmer Miller (1979) as well as Pablo Wright (1983, 1984, 1988) and Daniel Santamaría (1990) have all noted the continuity between shamanistic and Pentecostal religious practices as a kind of religious patchwork or composite assemblage. For Wright, the creation of the United Toba Evangelical Church in 1961, directed by an indigenous religious hierarchy according to the traditional norms of symbolic and political power, “represented an attempt to legitimize certain aspects of their culture through a language and an entity acknowledged and accepted by the surrounding non-indigenous society that discriminates without regard to the autochthonous codes of communication” (Wright 1988, 74). According to Santamaría, this sect involves a strategy of adaptation that redefines ethnicity via a new Christian cult resembling the surrounding society “but which, through its own symbolic manifestations, exists within the ancestral religious atmosphere” (Santamaría 1990, 12).

In Central America, Samandu detected a similar continuity in emphasizing that “Pentecostal beliefs make possible free expression of the popular religious world [that is] inhabited by demons, spirits, revelations, and divine cures . . . in such a way that the believers recognize in Pentecostalism ‘their’ religion with profound roots in the popular culture,

long discredited as superstition by the cultivated and educated classes" (Samandu 1988, p. 8; 1989). The Pentecostal sects' acculturation is not unique, however, because most of the historic Protestant churches have "Pentecostalized" themselves during the last thirty years by adopting charismatic practices and thus assuring themselves of continuing growth and even a rural indigenous base. Such is the case with the Iglesia Presbiteriana Nacional de México, which is strongly entrenched among the Maya of the Yucatán and Chiapas. Andrés Fajardo (1987) found a similar trend in Presbyterianism among the Ixil Maya in neighboring Guatemala (Fajardo 1987; Stoll 1990, 85–86).

To understand this process of acculturation better, it is necessary to consider the diverse expressions of the current Protestant movements within the scope of religious observance. As in the Brazilian case of the village of Santa Rita, "no particular observance of religious worship has succeeded in imposing its hegemony, and where religious mobility and a plurality of beliefs" often characterized popular practices (Saint Martin 1984, 114).

It is also necessary to note the "dynamic of interaction among the diverse religions of the people," as was observed by Cláudia Fonseca (1991) in a working-class neighborhood in Porte Alegre, in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul. There the Pentecostals are former "Catholics," while others among the informants in the neighborhood are former Pentecostals.

In other words, contemporary popular Protestant groups are participating in a patchwork religious culture in which "passages from one church to another are frequent; the faithful of the Assembly of God often frequent the *terreiro* of the Umbanda, and more rarely the Catholic Church" (Saint Martin 1984, 114; see also Samandu 1991). The enduring characteristics of popular religious culture within Latin American Protestant movements was observed by Roger Bastide in 1973:

What strikes me most as an ethnologist is the process of acculturation of Protestantism via Catholic mass culture: the Protestant seminarians wear chains with crosses or even saints' medals; the men and women separate into two opposite groups in the temples; the festivals (under the pretext of fund-raising) play a more important role than Bible studies; Hispanic "*caudillismo*" continues despite all the conflicts among the various churches, reinterpreted only in the form of dogmas or liturgical differences; institutional indifference wins over the younger generation, so that many individuals today are at the same time Catholic and Protestant, or Protestant and spiritist, or have even become strangers to the life of the churches in which they were baptized. (Bastide 1973, 146)

The assimilation of Latin American Protestant groups into the religious and political culture of millennial and messianic movements causes them to be viewed today as being more continuous than discontinuous with the religious and cultural universe of the societies in which they prosper. Thus one can ask whether grounds exist for describing them

as Protestant or whether they are instead new syncretic religious movements that have become part of the strategy of a symbolic force of resistance or an adaptation to modernity in a religious patchwork produced by the lower strata of Latin American societies.

Protestant Movements as Means of Resistance and Adaptation

In the past dozen years, researchers have noted the growth of Pentecostal movements in rural societies where political conflicts with the landed regime are violent. Several case studies demonstrate the growing cacique-style control by mestizo or indigenous elites who, via popular Catholicism and management of a symbolic religious system, have maintained absolute power and a monopoly over land, commerce, and the political structure of rural society (Bastian 1984; Garma Navarro 1987; Burnett 1989, 137–38). Given the monolithic nature of the vertical and authoritarian political structures, reinforced by a popular Catholicism that was deflected from its reciprocal and redistributive functions, the new “Protestant” religious movements have become one of the few options for breaking with the past. Carlos Garma Navarro’s pioneering (1987) work examined Protestant groups in the northern Sierra in the Mexican state of Puebla. He demonstrated that since the 1960s, faced with the mestizo elites’ control of coffee commercialization and political power via popular Catholicism, the indigenous peoples have opted for “Protestant” religious practices in order to develop a counterforce. In doing so, the “Protestant” leaders have come to represent a renewal of politico-religious leadership in the region by questioning the mestizo elite.

Similarly, in a study of northeastern Brazil (1985), Regina Reyes Novaes highlighted the active participation of the Pentecostals in the peasant leagues of Francisco Julião during the 1960s, a movement promoting land claims and agrarian reform. In the Ecuadorian province of Chimborazo, the agrarian reform of the 1980s has been viewed more recently by various anthropologists as accompanied by an explosion of Protestant movements (see Casagrande 1978; Muratorio 1981a, 1981b; Santana 1981, 1983). Such studies regard this trend as “an ethnic revitalization” as it relates to the large landowners and to a Catholic hierarchy that (paradoxically) was progressive in the Diocese of Riobamba. Since the 1984 elections, the Asociación Indígena Evangélica del Chimborazo (AIECH) has become a means of expressing the fundamental demands of the Quechuas vis-à-vis the monopolies of land and religion (Stoll 1990, 302). In the southern part of neighboring Colombia, among the indigenous Paez and Guambianos, Joanne Rappaport (1984) noted similarly that “Protestantism” had reinforced ethnic identity while allowing the cult’s realization without a nonindigenous intermediary and “while integrating their new beliefs into traditional systems of thought, particularly the aspects that legitimized

and structured their political activity oriented toward self-determination" (Rappaport 1984, 116, 112).

Such case studies suggest a mechanism of active resistance via adopting "Protestant" religious practices linked to a "creative symbolism" that allows for a restructuring of the dominated group's identity in the sense of modifying the relationship of political force to the dominant sectors of society in the hope of regaining short- and long-term advantages. One can similarly ask whether these rural indigenous "protesting" forms of Protestantism eventually become part of the millennial and messianic forms that Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz (1968) sought to categorize in distinguishing the restorative movements from the reformist and subversive ones. Donald Curry (1968, 1970) also drew a parallel between Pentecostal movements and messianism in the Brazilian *sertão*. But even so, Protestant sects are not merely vehicles for passive conformism, as Lalive d'Épinay proposed. Particularly in rural and indigenous settings, where social acceleration occurs via modernization, Protestant sects are the manifestations of active resistance. In a thorough consideration of this analytical framework, passive conformism would also be one element of resistance by these minority sectors of society. As Leannec Hurbon (1987) observed, this kind of "passive resistance" can operate in the new religious movements of the Caribbean "through the secret workings of the system of symbols and images with the aim of producing a Caribbean culture that would not be reducible to Western culture" (Queiroz 1968; Hurbon 1987, 58). Through a process of "legitimation or rejection of symbolic activities and traditional images, the convert engages in a process of distancing himself or herself from the dominant values" (Hurbon 1987, 60). It is also true that the main expression of passive resistance and passive conformism is found, as Lalive d'Épinay showed, in the protection that a religious sect offers the individual while enfolding him or her within a countersociety and a minority religious culture. But in my view, it should be possible to enlarge understanding of passive conformism by discussing its relationship to the dominant political and religious culture, transformed by an authoritarian and antidemocratic corporatist symbolism that is identical with that of "Protestant" religious societies.

The Authoritarian and Vertical Religious and Political Culture of Latin American Forms of Protestantism

Rarely have studies of Pentecostal religious societies explicitly re-applied Lalive d'Épinay's analysis of the religious model as being transposed from that of the hacienda and the role of the pastor-patron. Although he attempted to show the innovative character of the Protestant leadership, which (unlike the hacienda) multiplies the possibilities for assuming power, he did not emphasize the elements of continuity that result from

reproducing the practices and values intrinsic in traditional and corporatist political and religious culture. Today the majority of Pentecostal churches have leaders who are the chiefs, owners, caciques, and caudillos of a religious movement that they themselves have created and transmitted from father to son according to a patrimonial or nepotistic model. Thus the large Pentecostal church known as Brazil para Cristo, which is affiliated with the Ecumenical Council of Churches, functions under the absolute control of its founder. As Ari Pedro Oro (1990) has shown, this sect has also developed miracle-working practices typical of the Afro-Brazilian movements. Similarly, La Iglesia de la Luz del Mundo, founded in 1926 by a *bracero* in Guadalajara, Mexico, has seen its founder, under the adopted name of Aaron, become a powerful messiah and the uncontested chief of the movement. Upon Aaron's death in 1984, his son succeeded him under the name of Samuel. In Peru the chief of the Pentecostal society known as Los Israelitas has proclaimed himself a messiah by taking the titles of "Grand Biblical Compiler, Grand and Unique Missionary General, Spiritual Guide, Prophet of God, Master of Masters, and Holy Spirit and Christ of the West."⁶ This messianism, typical of all the large Pentecostal societies, reappears at all levels of the Pentecostal religious hierarchy. It starts at the level of the local congregation, in which the pastor is not only the proprietor of the temple and the land on which he has consolidated his religious enterprise (often begun in the street) but also the absolute master of it all.

Jacques Gutwirth (1991) found among those of modest means in the Pentecostal sects in Porto Alegre a passive acceptance of authoritarian practices:

This group seems to search and to find in the temples certainties implied by an understanding of the world that is at once very stereotyped and very limited; it also yields with submission to the authoritarian mode of the pastors, who take charge of the conduct of life [and] the way of thinking of the faithful. Miracles and secondarily exorcism are major elements of a religious system with despotic tendencies, conducted by a "charismatic" leader . . . who himself answers to the local directors of the churches. (Gutwirth 1991, 105)

As Wright concluded from studying Toba Pentecostals, "religious leaders are recognized by their influence over the other members, influence based on some powers of supernatural origin—the contact with divinity—and also on their social and economic prestige" (Wright 1988, p. 74). It thus becomes necessary to analyze with greater rigor, as does Kamsteeg (1990), the networks of reciprocity and redistribution emanating from the Pentecostal leaders in order to perceive the extent to which these networks operate within the logic of the traditional corporatist political and reli-

6. On La Iglesia de la Luz del Mundo, see Ibarra Bellon (1972). On the authoritarian role of the pastor, see also Stoll (1990, 110–11).

gious culture and to recognize their absolute difference from the political culture of Latin American Protestantism of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth.

Acculturation also affects the historical forms of Protestantism, which are partially "Pentecostalized" but have also assimilated the corporatist political culture, unlike the earlier Protestant models arising from the political culture of radical liberalism. A recent dissertation by Pedro Enrique Carrasco (1988) vigorously demonstrated the process of "episcopalization of the ranks of the Latin American Baptist leadership." Carrasco concluded that the "evangelical Baptist churches are directed by an elite with oligarchic tendencies that capitalizes on a symbolic power and an authority of tradition that function as ongoing institutional visibility" (Carrasco 1988, 231–32). This acculturation of one of the most radical Protestant societies (according to its original congregationalist and democratic model) mirrors a reality that affects the majority of the historical Protestant societies, with the exception of the European Protestant groups transplanted to the southern part of Latin America. Yet the 1960s and 1970s witnessed the same authoritarian model centered around an individual founder and patron within most of the ecumenical study centers arising from the influence of the World Council of Churches in places all over Latin America.⁷ In these specific cases of ecumenical corporate enterprise, the abundant contributions received allow authoritarian control to be predicated on mechanisms of redistribution and reciprocity that reinforce the absolute power of the ecumenical "patron." A sociology of this "ecumenical practice" remains to be written. It is enough for now to concur with Carrasco's observation that "the episcopalization of the evangelical churches places the leaders in a posture of social nobility." I would add that this process also develops according to the norms of the dominant corporatist political culture.

In this regard, I made a comparative analysis of popular Protestant movements in Nicaragua and Guatemala (between 1980 and 1984) and their political behaviors under regimes that appear antagonistic because of their political ideologies but are actually governed by the same corporatist logic. I tried to show that in both countries each urban Protestant movement entered into a relationship with the government as the priv-

7. The abundant funding received by the centers for ecumenical studies sustained by the Ecumenical Council of Churches provides a basis for corporatist authority and for establishing relationships of reciprocity and redistribution, in which financial control by the individual founder and cacique is a key element of the power structure. Many examples can be cited of centers founded during the 1960s and 1970s that remain under the control of the founding cacique, among them: the Centro de Coordinación de Proyectos Ecuménicos (CECOPE) and the Centro Nacional de Comunicación Social (CENCOS) in Mexico City; and the Centro Antonio Valdivieso (CAV) in Managua.

ileged client of a patron state just when the tensions between the Catholic Church and the state had become acute (see Bastian 1986).⁸

One can thus hypothesize that the passive conformism characteristic of religious countersocieties, far from being merely a turning back on itself, is in fact a key element of the corporatist dynamic of the contemporary Protestant groups. These minority religious movements enter into negotiations with the state about the extent to which they can expect reinforcement of their position in the religious sphere vis-à-vis the Catholic Church, the traditional monopoly-holder on religion. These negotiations follow the same corporatist logic as that of the larger society. Thus during the last twenty years, the Pentecostal leadership has been able to establish itself in certain Latin American countries as a political clientele of the authoritarian regimes in the traditional sense of corporatist mediator.⁹

Two studies of Brazil have shown that Protestant leaders encouraged their members to vote for the military dictatorship in 1974 in order to obtain privileges and jobs in the administration (see Alves 1985 on the Presbyterians and Hoffnagel 1979 on the Assembly of God). This finding was also supported by Francisco Rolim, who observed that “the Pentecostal believers offered themselves as candidates in a major government party in the hope that the government would make available greater means of conceding favors and responding to demands” (Rolim 1985). Another specialist on the Brazilian Pentecostal movement has noted the pervasiveness of corporatist attitudes within the Pentecostal groups in the São Paulo region: “for the evangelicals, to have a representative in the municipal legislature signifies ‘opening the door’ to their specific interests, close to the public administration—particularly for concessions of land, transportation, etc. . . .” (Rolim 1985, 146). One Pentecostal from the Rio de Janeiro region forcefully expressed the traditional political attitude found in contemporary Latin American Protestant movements: “To vote for the candidates of the government parties, and preferably for the evangelicals, is to make your vote count for us” (Rolim 1985, 246). Today one can venture the general hypothesis that Latin American Protestant movements are no longer the vehicles for a democratic religious and political culture.

8. Stoll observed in field studies the Guatemalan situation in the Ixil triangle in 1985. He noted that the indigenous Protestants were inclined toward a military regime mainly for reasons of survival in the face of death threats. He concluded that the growth of the evangelical churches was due not to U.S. financing but was instead a consequence of the revolutionary strategy of the Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres, which was hardly consistent in its civil activities in the area (see Stoll 1990, 202–3).

9. This process was evident during the Chilean dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet from 1973 to 1990 and is not exclusive to Pentecostal societies. A similar process developed in Nicaragua and Guatemala (see Bastian 1986). The situation is also similar in Cuba, where the Consejo Ecueménico de las Iglesias de Cuba plays the role of corporatist mediator and maintains ideological control of the Protestant bases through a close relationship with the Departamento para los Asuntos Religiosos of the socialist state.

On the contrary, they have adopted the authoritarian religious and political culture and are developing themselves within the logic of corporatist negotiation.¹⁰

This trend largely explains the emergence of politicians who have learned to use the new religious movements in a clientelist fashion, such as Alberto Fujimori in 1990 in Peru and Jorge Serrano, the first democratically elected Protestant Latin American president, in Guatemala in January 1991. At the same time, the negotiating capacity of the Protestant leaders and their skill at transforming their religious clienteles into a political clientele propel them along the corridors of power. Examples are the second vice-president of Peru elected along with Fujimori and some thirty deputies and senators from the rolls of Cambio 90 (the political party created for Fujimori's campaign). Even if the political displacement in favor of these sectors can be explained by the economic crisis of the 1980s, the political experience that they are acquiring and the exponential growth of their followings are creating long-term political actors who will have to be taken into account in a corporatist political culture that is unlikely to be replaced by a democratic one (Hermet 1973).

Endogenous Interests Mediating the Link between Latin American and U.S. Protestant Movements

An important issue not yet elucidated is the connection between Latin American Protestant movements and the international Protestant denominations. This area of research remains unexplored beyond the numerous pamphlets produced by the so-called conspiracy theory. This relationship must be approached from a comparative perspective, starting with the observation that the entire Latin American religious field is connected to international religious interests. This general rule applies to the Catholic Church as well as to the Protestant and newer religious movements. It is nonetheless probable that popular Protestant movements, because of their syncretism and their dominated position within the religious sphere, are much less influenced than the Latin American Catholic Church by decisions made outside Latin America. Taking a different ap-

10. It is interesting to note that in Peru, the presidential elections of April and June 1990 contained strong racial overtones in pitting the white candidate of the right against the non-white candidate of the left-center. Alberto Fujimori, who is of Japanese origin, was described by the press as "el chinito." His running mate for the vice-presidency was Carlos García García, a Peruvian Baptist pastor. It seems that part of the electoral surprise created by Fujimori in the first round, in which contrary to all expectations he received almost as many votes as Mario Vargas Llosa, was due to the effectiveness of the networks of the so-called Protestant groups in rapidly creating a political following. Compare the account of James Brooke, "Se preve una lucha entre las iglesias católica y evangelista," *Excelsior* (Mexico City), 29 Apr. 1990, pp. 2, 22, with that of Roque Félix, "Preocupan a la Iglesia los brotes racistas previos a la divisiva segunda ronda en Perú," *Excelsior*, 12 May 1990, 2d part, sec. A, p. 1.

proach, recent anthropological works have underscored the syncretic nature of rural Protestant movements to suggest their limited connections with international Protestant groups. The link exists nevertheless and merits analysis in studying the urban bureaucracies of Protestant churches. Particular attention should be paid to the selective usage made of international Protestant financial aid and to how such relationships help reinforce the corporatist power structures of Latin American Protestant sects (except for the transplanted Protestant movements of the Southern Cone and certain rare Latin American organizations).

An equally fertile field of research has been opened by David Stoll in analyzing the institutions of the U.S. Protestant religious Right and their support for U.S. government policies in Latin America (1982, 1990). Stoll has rigorously demonstrated the direct support provided by the Summer Institute of Linguistics and U.S. televangelists of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency in the anti-Communist thrust and military takeovers during the 1960s and 1970s. But it should also be pointed out that the U.S. Protestant right wing was matched by a left wing represented by the National Council of Churches of Christ, an organization that regrouped most of the large denominations of the Protestant establishment that sympathized with the socialist regimes and democratic openings.

Stoll's recent study (1990) convincingly reconstructs in detail the close link between the U.S. Protestant right wing and the policies of President Ronald Reagan in Central America as well as the effective limits of their impact on Latin American Protestant movements. In his three case studies (Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Ecuador), Stoll found genuine autonomy in Latin American Protestant strategies regarding missionaries (Stoll 1982; 1990, 86, 202-3, 328). Likewise, Ari Pedro Oro's (1990) study of the use of the media by the Brazilian Pentecostal churches concluded that far from reproducing models imported from U.S. televangelism, these Brazilian churches recreate via radio or television syncretisms and miracle-working that are then broadcast by the media.¹¹

Jacques Gutwirth (1991) has confirmed this finding of "a national audiovisual religion that is growing but escaping the control and norms of the established Protestant persuasions." It arose "according to modalities that were certainly 'deviant' in their connection with the 'established' Pentecostalism of American origin" (1991, 10). For Gutwirth, these churches constitute a "popular religion" that accentuates exorcism and miracle-working according to endogenous modalities: "in Brazil, televangelism of American origin thus plays a secondary role in the offensive advocated by the Rockefeller and Santa Fe connections" (Gutwirth 1991, 112).

In other words, international Protestant organizations are being

11. Oro (1990) and Gutwirth (1991, 102, 110, 111) take a position opposite to the "conspiracy" interpretation of Assman (1987).

increasingly rejected by Latin American Protestant groups as a consequence of the differing logics of their respective religious origins. Although it seems probable that they can influence the Latin American Protestant movements to some extent and in certain circumstances, the influence of the international organizations shows up primarily in the selection process engaged in by the Latin American Protestant leaders to reinforce their own traditional and corporatist religious authority. The international organizations are the source of their influence, insofar as these organizations can reinforce authoritarianism, but also reveal many limitations, as evinced by their failure to slow the processes of change or to combat syncretism successfully. The international Protestant organizations probably find themselves having the same kind of relationship with the Latin American Protestant sects that the Catholic Church has with Latin American popular Catholic movements.

CONCLUSION

In considering the overall evolution of Latin American Protestant movements since the second half of the nineteenth century, the metamorphosis they have undergone over the last thirty years is striking. In general, the Protestant movements of the nineteenth century arose from the political culture of radical liberalism, which was democratic and promoted individual free will. The current popular Protestant movements, in contrast, derive from the religious culture of popular, corporatist, and authoritarian Catholicism. Whereas nineteenth-century Protestant movements represented a religion of the written word, of civil and rational education, the current popular Protestant movements constitute an oral religion that is unlettered and lively. While the former were vehicles for practices that inculcated democratic liberal values, the latter are vehicles for caudillo-style models of religious and social control. The outcome of the popular Protestant sects is that, like an expanding model, the historical Protestant groups themselves (which are in the minority today) have largely broken with their liberal heritage and adopted the corporatist values of authoritarian political projects (Alves 1985). In this sense, study of these sects derives from a sociology of religious metamorphoses (Bastide 1970).

On the whole, it may be said that Latin American Protestant movements, with the exception of the transplanted churches of certain organizations arising from the historic denominations, are preponderantly syncretic in nature. In this sense, they are similar to the other new religious movements and should be approached by broadly analyzing the role and functions of the new religious movements within contemporary Latin American societies. In contrast to official Catholicism, which is highly structured, these movements belong to a loose system ruled by a kind of

informal religious economy. One should also ask, as Reyes Novaes does, whether these popular Protestant movements characterized by an intrinsic messianism and millenarianism “represent in some way, in very different historical circumstances, a historic redefinition of the nineteenth- or early-twentieth-century messianic movements, which are no longer currently viable” (Reyes Novaes, cited in Saint Martin 1984, 113). In my opinion, they are a renewal of popular religion in the sense of being a patchwork of resistance and development of a new relationship to the modernity imposed on them by Latin American governing elites. In this sense, a sociology of the Pentecostal movements should be undertaken to open new avenues of inquiry and to go beyond thinking in terms of religious syncretism or the more far-out phenomena. Certainly, the “Pentecostalized” indigenous groups do not limit themselves to bringing together two cults, as a conventional “religious” analysis would lead one to believe. They interconnect and establish within their practices and their vision of reality several systems of expression of familial and village identity and of the relationship of the individual to the community, to the environment, to production, to one’s ancestors, and to one’s self-image—facets that all merit thorough study.

Some recent studies take steps in this direction. Elisabeth Brusco’s dissertation (1986) on the links between the adoption of evangelical religion and the modification of machismo in Colombia opens a promising avenue. Cecilia Mariz’s (1990) article on the incidence of conversion to Pentecostalism and the struggle against alcoholism in Brazilian working-class society opens another. It would be interesting to analyze whether Pentecostalism is in reality something more than syncretism. That is to say, within popular cultures, Pentecostalism may provide the impetus for a new relationship to the community and to the family by imposing a new way of looking at the subject, a revolution in communication techniques. It is certainly a novel angle of research (as Martin 1990 acknowledges) that could make way for a sociology approximating anthropology in taking new steps while continuing to baptize these innovations as “Protestant.”

Furthermore, instead of depicting a typology of messianic and millenarian movements and appending the rural and urban Pentecostal forms, it would be useful to modify the perspective by leaving aside the study of the movements themselves in order to address some of the larger issues. These questions should include the flexibility of popular religious traditions, the specificity of religion within the non-Western world, the mechanisms of control and power within Latin American societies, and the modalities of syncretism and Westernization.

Martin has described the explosion of Protestantism in Latin America: “The Evangelical religion now spilling over from North to South America is primarily Pentecostal” (1990, 42). Stoll meanwhile asks via the provocative title of his latest book, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?* Unlike

those who have believed or wanted to discover within the Catholic movements of the popular church and liberation theology a continent-wide religious reform movement, Stoll believes that the Latin American Protestant sects are actually the authentic reform in expansion.

First of all, it should be made clear that neither the popular Catholic Church nor liberation theology fits the definition of a reform movement. Jean Meyer's recent book (1989) places them firmly in the continuum of the intransigent Catholic movements, bearers of a messianic hope for a reign of God on earth, the opposite of the secularizing Protestant reform that heralded modernity. Like the Mexican *Cristeros* of yesteryear, the *guerrillero* priests of not long ago believed that both Catholicism and socialist revolution referred to a revolutionary Catholic society. Second, neither the new Latin American religious movements nor the Protestant sects have any connection with religious reform and even less with political and social reform. They represent instead strategies of adaptation and resistance, fashioned by the lower strata of Latin American societies, which reinforce the autonomy of the authoritarian and corporatist popular religious culture.

Moreover, before speaking of "Protestant reform" as readily as Stoll and Martin do, one must consider the essential ambiguity of contemporary Latin American societies. Enrique González Pedrero describes it thus:

Is this not precisely the curse that hangs over [Latin Americans] of our times . . . having to be Catholic in a situation that could be called secularized Protestantism, which is the situation in today's world? Here is the question of what has happened to Latin Americans, born to life and history starting with Spanish Catholicism—which came first and solidified in the Counter-Reformation—and who must nevertheless act socially, politically, and economically within a society, a politics, and an economy that have been provided by a secularized Protestantism, which is not the religion of [Latin Americans'] origin. Does this not explain the permanent damage, the double life, the hypocrisy, and the horror of making it appear or simulating that we agree with the logic of industrial society, with modern political values, and with the contemporary neoliberal economy while in reality, these do not correspond to the world in which we were born and the values that shaped us? (González Pedrero 1990, 23; see also Paz 1959)

In terms of this basic question of an ambiguous modernity in Latin America, it makes sense to raise the question of their relationship to democratic modernity in Latin America before considering popular Protestant groups as religious reform movements. As has been amply shown, the historic Protestant movements were vehicles for this democratic modernity and were therefore central to the great democratic and liberal sociopolitical struggles against the forces of traditional society (see Bastian 1989, 1990). The historic forms of Protestantism sought recognition as the religious culture of modernity but did not succeed in transcending the constraints of radical liberalism. In contrast, the current popular Protestant

movements, which are constantly expanding, seem to have assimilated the popular political and religious culture of repression (Alves 1985).¹²

It is in this relationship to premodern traditional religious and political culture that one must comprehend the complete metamorphosis of Latin American Protestant movements. From their original role as protesters, these Protestant groups became witnesses, existing somehow as the religious expression of the rending of the Latin American individual faced with a modernity that was imposed but not assumed. Along this line, one can even ask whether it is still possible to speak, as does Martin (1990), of Protestant movements, that is to say, of movements of religious, intellectual, or moral reform. Is there instead a new modality of Latin American popular religious culture in the sense of an adaptation and a reinforcement of the traditional mechanisms of social control? To the extent that the "Protestant principle" becomes replaced by these "popular Protestant movements," the latter are less the expressions of a *sui generis* Protestantism than an ensemble of new non-Roman Catholic religious movements that are as eclectic and diversified as what continues to be the autonomous popular religion of a great part of the masses.¹³

In the end, one can ask whether the accelerated differentiation of the Latin American religious world and its fragmentation into hundreds of separate religious sects, each as authoritarian as the next, operate to reinforce the autonomy of civil society and to condition the formation of independent public opinion and democratic practices. As Alain Touraine has observed,

Viable institutions can only exist if there first exist viable social actors. Democratization cannot be defined as a passage from chaos to liberty or from the masses to government. It presupposes the preliminary organization of social demands and the freedom of action of associations, of syndicates or other interest groups. It also presupposes that a debate will take shape before the one that takes shape in the political institutions—a debate in which the arena is public opinion. If this is dominated by confrontation of the [political] parties, the democracy lacks a base. (Touraine 1988, 447)

The Latin American Protestant movements of the nineteenth century, insofar as they were "societies of thought," were actually the ultra-minoritarian instrument for shaping public opinion via debate and the demands of free will. In contrast, the current popular Protestant movements, top-down and authoritarian, are a relay point for the vertical social control of a society blocked in its evolution toward a liberal and democratic modernity by the built-in tension between the actual country and

12. For development of this idea, see Bastian (1990, 261–73).

13. In the same sense, the nascent Chilean Pentecostal movement was viewed by the liberal press as "a ceremony of Indians" (compare Bastian 1990, 153–54). Le Bot observed that "Guatemalan Pentecostalism first arose at the very heart of indigenous society" (Le Bot 1987).

the legal country. Today the democratic transformation of Latin American societies seems to have been retarded, as Touraine notes. During the 1960s and 1970s, the military regimes triumphed, then the 1980s and 1990s seemed to herald a return to neocorporatist forms of populism that, according to the Mexican example, do not hesitate to lean on the Catholic Church to maintain their hegemony. In such contexts, the popular and millenarianist Protestant movements seem to be the tools for a project of restoration rather than of religious and social reform. As Touraine has emphasized, Latin American societies "continue to be stubbornly dualistic. On the one hand is the world of the word, that is to say of participation by not only the rich but the middle class and extending to a large part of the working class. On the other hand is the world of blood, that of poverty and repression." In such a dual world, the popular Protestant movements would arise out of the world of blood and would represent no more than an enormous effort to pass in the world of the word. The limitation of such a project is that it must be accomplished according to the logic of the world of the word, that is to say according to corporatist models of social control.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALVES, RUBEM

1985 *Protestantism and Repression: A Brazilian Case Study*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis (1st ed. in Portuguese, 1979).

ASSMAN, HUGO

1987 *La iglesia electrónica y su impacto en América Latina*. San José, Costa Rica: Departamento Ecueménico de Investigaciones.

BASTIAN, JEAN-PIERRE

1985a "Para una aproximación teórica del fenómeno protestante en América Central." *Cristianismo y Sociedad*, no. 85:61-68 (published in Mexico City).

1985b "Dissidence religieuse dans le milieu rural mexicain." *Social Compass* 32, nos. 2-3:245-60 (published in Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium).

1986 "Protestantismo popular y política en Guatemala y Nicaragua." *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 48, no. 3:181-99.

1988 "El paradigma de 1789: sociedades de ideas y revolución mexicana." *Historia Mexicana* 38, series 1, no. 149:79-110.

1989 *Los disidentes, sociedades protestantes y revolución en México, 1872-1911*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica and El Colegio de México.

1990 *Historia del protestantismo en América Latina*. Mexico City: Casa Unida de Publicaciones.

BASTIAN, JEAN-PIERRE, ED.

1990 *Protestantes, liberales y francmasones: sociedades de ideas y modernidad en América Latina, Siglo XIX*, Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica and the Comisión de Estudios de la Historia de la Iglesia en América Latina (CEHILA).

BASTIDE, ROGER

1970 "Sociologie des mutations religieuses." In *Sociologie des mutations*, edited by Georges Balandier, 157-68. Paris: Anthropos.

1973 "Contributions à une sociologie des religions en Amérique Latine." *Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions*, no. 85:139-50.

BECKFORD, JAMES A., ED.

1986 *New Religious Movements and Rapid Social Change*. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage.

BRUSCO, ELISABETH

1986 "The Household Basis of Evangelical Religion and the Reformation of Machismo in Colombia." Ph.D. diss., City University of New York.

BURNETT, VIRGINIA GARRARD

1989 "Protestantism in Rural Guatemala, 1872-1954." *LARR* 24, no. 2:127-42.

CARRASCO, PEDRO ENRIQUE

1988 "Les Cadres dirigeants baptes latino-américains entre le croire et la pouvoir: Etude sociologique d'un processus d'épiscopalisation dans une société religieuse congrégationaliste en Amérique Latine." Ph.D. diss., Centre de Sociologie du Protestantisme, Université de Strasbourg.

CASAGRANDE, JOSEPH B.

1978 "Religious Conversion and Social Change in an Indian Community of Highland Ecuador." In *Amerikanische Studien*, edited by Roswith Hartmann and Udo Oberem, 105-11. Saint Augustine, Germany: Anthropos Institut.

CHAUNU, PIERRE

1965 "Pour une sociologie du protestantisme latino-américain." *Cahiers de Sociologie Economique*, no. 12 (May):5-18 (published in Le Havre).

CHRISTIANITY TODAY

1963 "Catholics and Protestants in Latin America." *Christianity Today* 7, no. 21 (19 July):5-8.

CURRY, DONALD EDWARD

1968 "Lusiada: An Anthropological Study of the Growth of Protestantism in Brazil." Ph.D. diss., Columbia University.

1970 "Messianism and Protestantism in Brazil's Sertão." *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs* 13, no. 3:416-38.

FAJARDO, ANDRES

1987 "From the Volcano: Protestant Conversion among the Ixil Maya of Highland Guatemala." B.A. honors thesis, Harvard College.

FOERSTER, ROLF G.

1988 "Milenarismo, profetismo y mesianismo en la sociedad mapuche contemporánea." *América Indígena* 48, no. 4:773-89.

FONSECA, CLAUDIA

1991 "La Religion dans la vie quotidienne d'un groupe populaire brésilien." *Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions* 36, no. 73: (Jan.-Mar.):125-39.

FURET, FRANÇOIS

1978 *Penser la Révolution Française*. Paris: Gallimard.

GARMA NAVARRO, CARLOS

1987 *El protestantismo en una comunidad totonaca de Puebla*. Mexico City: Instituto Nacional Indigenista.

1988 "Liderazgo, mensaje religioso y contexto social." *Cristianismo y Sociedad* 26, no. 95: 89-100.

GONZALEZ PEDRERO, ENRIQUE

1990 "Reflexiones barrocas." *Vuelta* 14, no. 162 (May):22-27 (published in Mexico City).

GRANADOS, MANUEL JESUS

1988 "Los Israelitas." *Socialismo y Participación*, no. 41 (March):95-105 (published in Lima).

GRUZINSKI, SERGE, AND CARMEN BERNAND

1988 *De l'idolâtrie: une archéologie des sciences religieuses*. Paris: Seuil.

GUEIROS VIEIRA, DAVID

1980 *O Protestantismo, a Maçonaria e a Questão Religiosa no Brasil*. Brasília: Editora Universidade de Brasília.

GUTWIRTH, JACQUES

1991 "Pentecôtisme national et audiovisuel à Porto Alegre, Brésil." *Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions* 37, no. 73 (Jan.-Mar):99-114 (published in Paris).

HALPERIN DONGHI, TULLIO

1985 *Reforma y disolución de los imperios ibéricos, 1750-1850*. Madrid: Alianza.

HERMET, GUY

1973 "Les Fonctions politiques des organisations religieuses dans les régimes politiques à pluralisme limité." *Revue Française de Science Politique* 23 (June):439-72.

HOFFNAGEL, JUDITH CHAMBLISS

1979 "The Believers: Pentecostalism in a Brazilian City." Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley.

HURBON, LAENNEC

1987 "Nuevos movimientos religiosos en el Caribe." *Cristianismo y Sociedad* 25, pt. 3, no. 93:37-64. English version in Beckford 1986.

IBARRA BELON, ARACELI

1972 "La Hermosa Provincia: nacimiento y vida de una secta cristiana en Guadalajara, México." M.A. thesis, Universidad de Guadalajara.

JOHNSTONE, J. P.

1986 *Operation World*. 4th ed. Kent, Engl.: STL Books and WEC International.

KAMSTEEG, FRANS

1990 "Líderes y laicos entre los grupos pentecostales de Arequipa, Perú." *Cristianismo y Sociedad* 28, pt. 4, no. 106:59-76.

KOHUT, KARL, AND ALBERT MEYERS, EDS.

1988 *Religiosidad popular en América Latina*. Frankfurt: Verlag Klaus Dieter Vervuert.

LAFAYE, JACQUES

1974 *Quetzacoatl et Guadalupe: La Formation de la conscience nationale au Mexique*. Paris: Gallimard.

LALIVE D'EPINAY, CHRISTIAN

1968 *El refugio de las masas*. Santiago: Editorial del Pacífico. Published in English in London by Lutterworth in 1969.

1975 *Religion, dynamique sociale et dépendance: Les Mouvements protestants en Argentine et au Chili*. Paris: Mouton.

LE BOT, YVON

1987 "Cent Ans de Protestantisme au Guatemala: Notes et études documentaires." *La Documentation Française*, no. 4850:109-19 (published in Paris).

1991 "Présence religieuse et marché: le destin de l'Amérique Latine." *Le Monde*, 20 Aug., p. 13.

MANSILLA, H. C. F.

1989 "La herencia ibérica y la persistencia del autoritarismo en América Latina." *Cristianismo y Sociedad* 27, pt. 2, no. 100:81-94.

MARIZ, CECILIA L.

1990 "Pentecostalismo y alcoholismo entre los pobres del Brasil." *Cristianismo y Sociedad* 28, pt. 3:34-44.

MARTIN, DAVID

1990 *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America*. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell.

MARTINEZ, ABELINO

1989 *Las sectas en Nicaragua: oferta y demanda de salvación*. San José, Costa Rica: Departamento Ecueménico de Investigaciones.

MEYER, JEAN

1989 *Historia de los cristianos en América Latina, Siglos XIX y XX*. Mexico City: Vuelta.

MILLER, ELMER S.

1979 *Los tobas argentinos: armonía y disonancia en una sociedad*. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno.

MURATORIO, BLANCA

1981a "Protestantism and Capitalism Revisited in the Rural Highlands of Ecuador." *Journal of Peasant Studies*, no. 8:37-61.

1981b "Protestantism, Ethnicity, and Class in Chimborazo." In *Cultural Transformations and Ethnicity in Modern Ecuador*, edited by Norman E. Whitten, 506-34. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

ORO, ARI PEDRO

1990 "Religiones pentecostales y medios masivos de comunicación en Brasil." *Cristianismo y Sociedad* 18, no. 3:45-56.

PADILLA, RENE, ED.

1991 *De la marginación al compromiso: los evangélicos y la política en América Latina*. Buenos Aires: Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana.

Latin American Research Review

PARKER GUMUCIO, CHRISTIAN

- 1986 *Religion y clases subalternas urbanas en una sociedad dependiente*. Louvain: Université Catholique de Louvain.

PAZ, OCTAVIO

- 1959 *El laberinto de la soledad*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica

PIETSCHMANN, HORST

- 1980 *Staat und Staatliche Evolution am Beginn der Spanischen Kolonisation Amerikas*. Münster: Aschendorff. Spanish translation published by the Fondo de Cultura Económica in Mexico City in 1989.

PRIEN, HANS-JÜRGEN

- 1978 *Die Geschichte des Christentums in Lateinamerika*. Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht.

QUEIROZ, MARIA ISaura PEREIRA DE

- 1968 *Historia y etnología de los movimientos mesiánicos*. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno.
1986 "Evolução Religiosa e Criação: Os Cultos Sincreticos Brasileiros." *Cristianismo y Sociedad* 25, no. 88:7-26.

RAMOS, MARCOS ANTONIO

- 1987 *Panorama del protestantismo en Cuba*. Miami, Fla.: Editorial Caribe.

RAPPAPORT, JOANNE

- 1984 "Las misiones protestantes y la resistencia indígena en el sur de Colombia." *América Indígena* 44, no. 1:111-27 (published in Mexico City).

REYES NOVAES, REGINA

- 1985 *Os Escolhidos de Deus: Pentecostais, Trabalhadores e Cidadania*. Cadernos do ISER no. 19. Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Superior dos Estudos da Religião (ISER).

RODRIGUES BRANDÃO, CARLOS

- 1986 *Os Deuses do Povo: Un Estudo sobre a Religião Popular*. São Paulo: Brasiliense.
1987 "Creencia e Identidad: Campo Religioso y Cambio Cultural." *Cristianismo y Sociedad* 25, pt. 3, no. 93:65-106.

RODRIGUEZ, JAIME E.

- 1980 *El nacimiento de Hispanoamérica: Vicente Rocafuerte y el hispanoamericanismo, 1808-1832*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

ROLIM, FRANCISCO C.

- 1985 *Pentecostais no Brazil: Uma Interpretação Socio-Religiosa*. Petrópolis: Vozes.

ROUQUIE, ALAIN

- 1987 *Amérique Latine: Introduction à l'Extrême-Occident*. Paris: Seuil.

SAINT MARTIN, MONIQUE DE

- 1984 "Quelques Questions a propos du pentecôtisme au Brésil." *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, nos. 52-53 (June):111-14 (published in Paris).

SAMANDU, LUIS E.

- 1988 "El pentecostalismo en Nicaragua y sus raíces religiosas populares." *Pasos*, no. 17 (May-June):1-10 (published in San José, Costa Rica).
1989 "Los pentecostalismos en América Central." *Aportes* (June):34-35 (published in San José, Costa Rica).
1991 "Religión e identidades en América Central." *Cristianismo y Sociedad* 29, pt. 3, no. 109:67-86.

SANTAMARIA, DANIEL J.

- 1990 "Pentecostalismo e identidad étnica." *Cristianismo y Sociedad*, 28, pt. 3, no. 105:7-13.

SANTANA, ROBERTO

- 1981 "El caso de Ecuatoruni." *Nariz del Diablo*, no. 2:30-38 (published in Quito by CIESE).
1983 *Campesinado indígena y el desafío de la modernidad*. Quito: Centro Andino de Acción Popular.

STOLL, DAVID

- 1982 *Fishers of Men or Founders of Empire? The Wycliffe Bible Translators in Latin America*. London: Zed.
1984 "¿Con que derecho adoctrinan a nuestros indígenas? La polémica en torno al Instituto Lingüístico de Verano." *América Indígena* 44, no. 1:9-24 (published in Mexico City).

LATIN AMERICAN PROTESTANT GROUPS

- 1990 *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- TOURAINÉ, ALAIN**
1988 *La Parole et le sang: Politique et société en Amérique Latine*. Paris: Odile Jacob.
- VARGAS LLOSA, MARIO**
1989 "Entre la libertad y el miedo." *Vuelta*, no. 147 (Feb.):15 (published in Mexico City).
- WESTMEIER, KARL-WILHELM**
1986 "The Enthusiastic Protestants of Bogotá, Colombia." *International Review of Mission* 75, no. 297 (Jan.):13-24 (published in Geneva).
- WILLEMS, EMILE**
1967 *Followers of the New Faith: Future, Change, and the Rise of Protestantism in Brazil and Chile*. Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press.
- WRIGHT, PABLO G.**
1983 "Presencia protestante entre los aborígenes del Chaco argentino." *Scripta Antropologica* 8:73-84 (published in Buenos Aires).
1984 "Quelques Formes du chamanisme Toba." *Bulletin de la Société Suisse des Américanistes*, no. 48:29-35 (published in Geneva).
1988 "Tradición y aculturación en una organización socio-religiosa toba contemporánea." *Cristianismo y Sociedad* 26, pt. 1, no. 95:71-88.