

CHAPTER ONE

a cultural revolution: sources, character, niches

The most dramatic development of Christianity in the century recently concluded has been Pentecostalism and its vast charismatic penumbra. While Pentecostalism has spread primarily among the poor of the non-western world, the charismatic movement has had a more middle-class provenance, clearly so in the West but also globally. How you estimate the overall numbers involved depends on the criteria you apply, but on a fairly conservative estimate we are dealing with a quarter of a billion people, and so with the most widespread form of non-Roman Catholic Christianity. Broadly understood, Pentecostalism includes one in eight of the Christian “constituency” of nearly two billion, indeed more given how much of that is dormant, and one in twenty-five of the global population. It has therefore to be placed in the context of other massive religious mobilizations, notably those within Islam but also within Hinduism and Buddhism.

For some observers such huge shifts, Christian, Islamic, and otherwise, can be assembled together under the rubric of “Fundamentalism” but there are good reasons for rejecting this catch-all category, quite apart from its journalistic misuse and its pejorative overtone. One is that while Pentecostalism is indeed attached to Christian “fundamentals” and to a conservative understanding of Scripture, the heart of its distinctive appeal lies in empowerment through spiritual gifts offered to all. Another is that whereas Islamic revivalism pursues an organic relation between law, society, and faith, Pentecostalism represents a fissiparous and peaceable extension of voluntarism and competitive pluralism. A third reason relates to understandings which view “fundamentalisms” as reactions against modernization. However, in those parts of the world where Pentecostalism is most expansive, notably Latin America and Africa, any extension of pluralistic voluntarism is arguably a manifestation of modernity. Nor, as will become clear, is that the only respect in which Pentecostalism manifests and advances modernity.

There are even more difficult issues to be canvassed than nomenclature and categorization, which have to do with models of secularization. If Pentecostalism advances pluralism in Latin America and voluntarism in Africa (and elsewhere) then it not only has historical links with the USA, but represents a variant of the North American model of secularization in areas where such a development seemed unlikely. That model is one in which differentiation separates church from state, from territory and local community, and exhibits a partnership between voluntary denominations (including revivalist movements) and modernity.¹

The question posed is obvious. If indeed secularization according to this model is proceeding in Latin America, then it may be that the very influential Latin European model, which it recapitulated up till quite recently, is historically temporary and geographically local. According to the Latin European style of secularization, there is intense conflict between church and state, and between Catholic clerics and enlightened radicals, and a relation between religion and nationalism varying between mutual support and outright warfare. That, after all, is the context in which the hard version of secularization theory, taken as a package, made most sense, though very significantly modified (as I have argued in my *A General Theory of Secularisation*) for the varied conditions of establishment and partial establishment in non-Latin and non-Catholic Europe. If then European secularity taken as a whole, and not only the southern Latin version, is localized, then it makes sense to discuss the very modest impact of Pentecostalism in Europe under the rubric of what Peter Berger has called "European Exceptionalism." Chapter 2 attempts to do precisely that.

Unfortunately complexity multiplies, because not only does the North American model exhibit a partnership between modernity and voluntary competitive religion, but there is a partial shift in the later stages, round about the beginning of the last century, from Evangelical to Liberal Christianity, most dramatically exemplified in the evolution of Methodism. Such a shift implies that Evangelical Christianity (of which Pentecostalism is a version) belongs to a phase in the process of modernization, with the corollary that the Pentecostalism now so expansive in the modernization of the developing world is likewise a phase. Put crudely, Pentecostalism in the developing world is likely to follow a trajectory of incline and decline, until its devotees all too successfully better themselves, relax their rigor, and "go to school."

However, complexity multiplies again, because it now appears that the Liberal Christian adjustment to modernity in the USA, seen as somehow natural, itself runs into trouble, undermined by its own logic of pluralism, individual choice, and tolerance. The matter is endlessly debated, especially as it impinges on the character, timing, and extent of

secularization in the USA, but there is little doubt as to the vulnerability of Liberal Christianity, however big its battalions. At the same time there is some modest agreement as to the reinvigoration of Evangelical Christianity.² One stresses the modesty of this agreement because there is a subsidiary debate as to whether yet another sequence of liberalization is proceeding within this reinvigorated Evangelicalism. Given that we are considering an extension of the North American model in the developing world, at least by analogy if not diffusion, these debates clearly bear on the course and future of Pentecostalism in those areas. We have to ask whether Pentecostalism follows the Liberal trajectory in the style of the early twentieth-century USA, emulating in particular the evolution of Methodism from which it partially derived, or alternatively whether that trajectory is itself historically contingent and local.

Nor are such questions straight alternatives, since it is quite possible, even likely, that the Liberal-modern nexus may be *partly* local and contingent, just as the European experience may be partly local and contingent. After all, post-modernity (if one takes that seriously), and the doubt about continuing enlightened hegemony (if one is likewise serious about that), together suggest the old presumptions about sequences of development no longer hold. As the confrontations of earlier stages of modernization in “the West” recede, the alternative logics which evade the more restrictive protocols of reason may reassert themselves. As the academic and intellectual strata lose their grip on the socialization of the young is the world really to be made-over in the image of the faculty club? One way and another it may turn out that universal western predictions are local extrapolations.

Something of the mixture of local and contingent with the universal is implied by the difference between Pentecostalism in the developing world and in “the West,” more particularly North America. The contemporary situation is roughly as follows. In the developing world we observe a mobilization of “the damned of the earth,” not in the “enlightened” Marxist form so long anticipated (e.g. Ethiopia), but through religion, and so far as Christianity is concerned that means pre-eminently through Pentecostalism – or else through Catholicism, to be discussed below. Liberal Christianity is clearly under pressure in the developing world, even among the elites. However in North America, Liberal Christianity retains a massive hold, especially in the denominational directorates, as does an older non-Pentecostal Evangelicalism. Insofar as Pentecostalism spreads it does so principally through a charismatic movement partly inside the older churches and partly “breaking bounds” in every sense, even displaying faint affinities with New Age “spirituality.” Though classical Pentecostalism is vibrant in North America, it remains subordinate. That particular pattern is repeated throughout the North Atlantic world, though the degree of

evangelical-charismatic invigoration decreases as one moves from the USA to Canada, Canada to Britain, and Britain to Western Europe. Clearly this gradient needs to be analyzed, a task taking up the rest of chapter 2.

Beyond that, one observes how the charismatic version of Pentecostalism, partly within the historic churches and partly breaking bounds in Neo-Pentecostal and other forms “with signs and wonders,” also emerges in the expanding middle classes of the non-western world. These are often part of a transnational business culture with considerable exposure to American cultural radiation, and their adoption of a softened form of Pentecost with more porous boundaries could be fitted into a modified version of standard developmental sequences. Conceivably they too are in a queue awaiting liberalization. Emerging in parallel with them is a Pentecostal intelligentsia, still small, but also open to American cultural radiation, and perhaps ahead in the same queue. One waits with some interest to see how they will handle themselves.

There is a final and important question to do with the relation between the cumulative global impact of the successive Anglo-American empires, an impact which has been as much in the cultural as in the political sphere, and the uprising of (some of) the damned of the earth in the form of the redeemed. The answer to that question is as intriguing as it is unexpected. It lies in a fusion of a populist Christianity, originally coming out from under the Magisterial Reformation of Luther, Calvin, and Cranmer, with a black spirituality, including in that the Afro-Brazilian strain. That has in turn fused with a layer of shamanism from the Andes to Korea and inland China.³

This is where the perspective dramatically extends in time as well as in space, and one envisages links with the pneumatic Christianity of the Primitive Church. In the precise sense of the word Pentecostalism is “primitive” Christianity as it emerged two millennia ago on the despised margins of the Roman empire: lay empowerments of the Spirit in alliance with aspirations to holiness and wholeness. These intermittently simmered in the Catholic matrix, which for a millennium acted as the unifying holy ghost of a fragmented Roman imperium, and in the skirts of the established Protestant churches. Eventually they found opportunity to break loose from the constraints of the Magisterial Reformation in Northern Europe, especially as establishments started to cave in across the English Channel and finally to break up across the Atlantic Ocean. On these Anglo-American marches and margins, as I argued in *Tongues of Fire*, radical primitive Christianity expanded as part of successive downward mobilizations, until it reached poor whites and poor blacks, each in different ways moved and “transported.” Finally it crossed the cultural species barrier to germinate among the poor, especially poor women, in Harare, Seoul, Lagos, and São Paulo.⁴

That bears restatement because it is crucial. Somewhere in the successive and increasingly unsponsored mobilizations of *laissez-faire* lay religion, running to and fro between Britain and North America, especially between their respective unruly margins in Ulster, Cornwall, Scotland, and Wales, and in Kentucky, Kansas, Texas, and (finally) California, there emerged a many-centered mobilization. In the pullulating matrix of American experimental religion, stomping alongside American modernization, there emerged a potent variant capable of stomping alongside modernization world-wide. It met life-threatening and feckless disorder with personal discipline and collective ecstasy.

What happened following the explosive star-burst at the end of the trail in Los Angeles in 1906, and equally following all the other parallel star-bursts world-wide, was a hurling of people in every direction, carrying with them a fusion of the faith of culturally despised poor blacks with that of culturally despised poor whites. This reached down through semi-stabilized upper crusts of religiosity to a primal layer of spiritual energy. Under intense pressures the modernizing upper levels fired the deep structures, allowing the upward draught of a universal "holy" Spirit to suck a multitude of ambiguous spirits into its inclusive ambit. No wonder that Pentecostalism is so potently ambiguous, because (as I argued over a decade ago) it brings together the most ancient and the most modern, and unites the modernizing thrust to the deep structure of spiritual "animation".

Once this fusion is properly recognized then the combination of Anglo-American genesis – Mow Cop, Staffordshire, Gwennap Pit, Cornwall, the Kingswood miners, the Keswick evangelicals, Kansas poor whites and Los Angeles blacks, backwoods Appalachians, circuit riders on the frontier – with many-centered, near-contemporary and semi-independent manifestations from India to Santiago, Chile, makes sense. So also do the links between American provenance and rapid indigenization, and between a ransacked global English and a polyglot translation of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures into a myriad languages. David Lehmann has insightfully distinguished between a Catholic cosmopolitan universality, relating itself by accretion and absorption to cultural context, and of recent years consciously pursuing "acculturation," and an unsponsored Pentecostal globalism without such sensitivities (and, indeed, as will be illustrated later, anxious to break out of local context into wider more modern worlds).⁵ However, precisely that distinction, perhaps overdrawn, needs to take account of what is *already* "acculturated" in Pentecostalism, as well as that crucial escape from sponsorship which Lehmann rightly emphasizes. (Implicitly, of course, his point raises the question: who are we, if our relativism is genuine, to define authenticity for others, or to deny their capacity actively to appropriate as creative agents just because their choices are not ours?)

In my *Tongues of Fire* I used the metaphor of a “walk-out” from the linked mediations of socio-ecclesiastical hierarchies, into a movement led by energetic cadres of God-made men, trained through long years of practical apprenticeship among those of their own kind.⁶ This is how it comes about that we are now hearing the raised voices – the “tongues” – of those not heard from before, sometimes pushy, even brash and nepotistic in the leadership cadres, but ingeniously pragmatic in using every resonance of modern communication to make their presence felt. They, quite literally, have got the microphone and the electronic synthesizer in their own hands.

To understand this walk-out, which has already in some places become a walk-in, so fast is the pace of change, one has to understand how faith works. Faith gives divine permission to speak without certification through the authoritative offer of new names and re-formed identities. It issues open-ended and pressing invitations to come off the highways and byways to forge a new “respectability” in a deep sense of that misused word. It initiates participation in a bounded social space of the like-minded through the exercise of an outrageous religious entrepreneurship. It creates a mobilization from the bottom up by “unlearned and ignorant” men. The fissiparous star-burst that follows has traditionally been accounted the Achilles heel of Protestantism because it leads to a Babel of disjointed rival movements, but in today’s rapidly changing world, with its demand for constant adjustment, it can also lead to a jostling Pentecost.

All this means that it does not make much sense to regard Pentecostalism as an imported package, especially in situations – the vast majority – which are replete with multi-cultural transfers, and where there has long been a changing market in the gods. Rather it is a repertoire of religious explorations controlled, though sometimes barely, within a Christian frame and apt for adaptation in a myriad indigenous contexts. In that it resembles the Bible, also controlled, if barely, within an ethical and monotheistic frame. People link their own stories and their group experiences to a narrative moving from slavery to liberty, exile to restoration, and also from the dark dominion of the powers through the engagements of spiritual warfare to the empowerments of the kingdom. The kind of reverential and close reading of the Bible found among Pentecostals makes them familiar with its landscape, intimate friends with its characters regarded as people like themselves, and able to find all kinds of resonances in its dreams, healings, and deliverances, its rebirths, prophecies, and expectations of future transformation. At the same time, Pentecostals will often engage in a luxuriant and mimetic redeployment of local practices, including its modes of authority, but reassembled under a Christian aegis. This is not a kind of promiscuity

because boundaries are retained and rigorously marked out. The antecedent forms, and the deep structures of “the archaic,” are brought together in an unbroken continuum opening on to modernity. People can dance their way through the rebirths of a great transition, bringing the whole person to bear rather than a split-off segment of the rational self. People are moved as they move, inner drama matching outer. The past is carried forward even as a line is drawn under it. That is why some acute observers mistake it for a recrudescence of popular religiosity – a significant misidentification all the same because antithetical to the charge of being an imported package.

Reworking the Methodist Linkage

In almost all these ways Pentecostalism is an extension of Methodism and of the Evangelical Revivals (or Awakenings) accompanying Anglo-American modernization. However, it inclines more to the American than the British way because British Methodism ran into an upper ceiling of established religion which blunted it, whereas in the USA Methodism was merely self-limiting in ways to be indicated later.

Methodism can be seen, in terms of the suggested sequence of downward mobilizations, and of the groups to which it appealed, as in every way inter-mediate. It traveled in the ambit of a mobile society, a global movement prior to globalization, above all on the American frontier but also on the British frontier in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific islands. In Methodism one sees the ancient territorial emplacements of religion begin to dissolve into fraternal associations, so that John Wesley could genuinely claim, “The world is my parish.” As its circuit riders traveled they offered universal good news for the personal choice of multitudes in a way analogous to and even presaging the offer of universal citizenship. However much the believers saw themselves as mired in sin they might still by grace aspire to a Christian perfection, assurance, and holiness, and become “fulfilled” with God. “All things are possible,” wrote Charles Wesley and in that claim one recognizes an exuberance which with only a change of key can yield a theology of success and power.

Because Methodism had escaped the social and ecclesiastical hierarchies linked to territory, to automatic belonging, and to state power, it was a cultural revolution rather than a political one. It might exploit this or that political affinity according to its social placement, as when it aligned itself with late-nineteenth-century British Liberalism and later with the Social Gospel, but its primary and original sphere of action was finding the supernatural in the fabric of everyday life. It revised biographies and belonged to the expanding networks of voluntary association

between state and individual – that is, to what we now call civil society – as well as creating a zone of peaceable order over against disorder and fecklessness.

Nathan Hatch, the distinguished Methodist historian, has put it as follows, and it is instructive to tick off one by one the different kinds of consonance with a Pentecostalism which (through the holiness branch of Methodism) eventually took over from it.⁷

Methodism in America transcended all barriers and empowered common people to make religion their own. Unlike Calvinism, which emphasized human corruption, divine initiative, and the authority of educated clergymen and inherited ecclesiastical structures, the Methodists proclaimed the breathtaking message of individual freedom, autonomy, responsibility and achievement. More African Americans became Christians in ten years of Methodist preaching than in a century of Anglican influence. Methodism did not suppress the impulses of popular religion, dreams and visions, ecstasy, unrestrained emotional release, preaching by blacks, by women, by anyone who felt the call. It was under Methodist auspices that religious folk music – white and black spirituals – prospered.

Hatch goes on to note the ways in which Methodism used to be unacceptable just as Pentecostalism is now unacceptable, in particular through loud singing, groaning, bouncing, and sighing. It appealed to aspiring upstarts making up the first wave of competitive religious entrepreneurship. Yet the self-limitation which it eventually encountered even in the USA came about as it began to build Gothic churches and to create universities, one of whose objects was to train its professional ministry in the old east-coast manner. By 1900 it had become the largest and wealthiest Protestant denomination, and the time was ripe for Pentecostalism to pick up Methodism's "unfinished task."

Unacceptability takes many forms, and Hatch comments that even the history of Methodism has been passed over as somehow too close to the American spirit to be distinctive and worthy of note: the primacy of practicality over theory, of sincerity over manners, and of experience over doctrine. Since historians prefer to deal with intellectual history they have found Methodism uninteresting compared with Puritanism. Furthermore, their commitment to ecumenism has motivated them to overlook the way raw dynamism gives rise to splintering, rivalry, and aggressive conversion. Here Hatch emphasizes, as I have done with regard to Pentecostalism, that Methodism represented religious organization taking market form.

In almost every respect Pentecostalism replicated Methodism: in its entrepreneurship and adaptability, lay participation and enthusiasm, and in its splintering and fractiousness. It did so also in the place it offered to

blacks and women and that in spite of the splintering over color which occurred in both movements, and in spite of the lack of endorsement for equal ministry as between men and women. Where the two movements differed was in the "third blessing" of Holy Spirit baptism, in the intensity of millennial expectation, and in a shift to a Christ of power rather than the Man of Sorrows. In reality the third blessing and the millennial expectation were closely linked because the gift of tongues presaged the last days. During the time remaining, one was not passively to await the end but to "work while it is still day."⁸ Yet such differences may not be all that great. So far as millennial expectation is concerned, we find it present in early Methodism, and one cannot be sure how prominent it remains in contemporary Pentecostalism. As for the shift from Christ crucified to Christ triumphant, that is yet another possible source for a shift to a theology of success – and power.

Harold Bloom, the literary critic, extends Nathan Hatch's analysis by characterizing Pentecostalism as a quintessentially American shamanism in its ecstatic embrace of power. He says that of all versions of the American Religion, Pentecostalism is experientially the most daring in "trespassing upon so many taboos." He sees it as a wild affirmation of self and an acute devaluation of social concerns, without being necessarily identified with the most right-wing among American denominations. It is this spirited relativization of contingent circumstance which gives Pentecostals their appeal to the insulted and injured. (Hence the title of Robert Mapes Anderson's book *Vision of the Disinherited* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).) As Bloom puts it, "To attend a Pentecostal service, where the Spirit descends upon and among the congregation, is to hear and see the unloosing of authentic forces that seem to emerge from the recesses of being. . . . My one experience of a Hispanic Pentecostal service was a humbling and informative occasion."⁹

In expressing himself with this evident degree of empathy and ambivalence, Harold Bloom belongs to a group of agnostic commentators who clearly recognize a primal presence but who wonder what the upshot may be. André Corten, for example, in recounting his own empathic experience of "the opium of the people," also characterizes it as a form of "theological romanticism" with the authoritarian potentials to which that has sometimes led.¹⁰

If commentators of the distinction of Hatch, Corten, and Bloom comment on the unacceptability of this kind of religion then one has to pause and ask why this is so, without recourse to such stock literary stereotypes of the evangelical as Sinclair Lewis's Elmer Gantry, Dickens's Chadband, or Augustus Carp. One has to ask why the affluent arbiters of secular and religious opinion should be hard on a religion which is so much the option of the poor, especially of the black female poor. Why

should they ignore or at best satirize a faith exuberantly achieving the holism to which they themselves awkwardly aspire?

Such unacceptability is as much a Durkheimian “fait social” as anything else, and as much requiring explanation. Clues already touched on include Pentecostal indifference to notions of authenticity and the way the gains of participation are linked to the vigorous exercise of authority. However, perhaps the major clue lies in the way many Pentecostals embrace social quietism at the expense of analytical social criticism, though they recognize well enough the injustice of their situation. Again, in the turbulent developing world they are viewed as too often inclined to political obedience rather than the romanticism of revolutionary violence.

For them the “world” and “nature” are swallowed up in an ecstasy which divides believers from a secular reality dominated by the age-old Enemy of Mankind. A dualism of faith and world reanimates a primitive Christian vocabulary of spiritual warfare “against wickedness in high places.” Perhaps it is this terminology of spiritual war that arouses suspicion, at least by comparison with “struggle,” though it can hardly come as a surprise to Catholics, or indeed to anyone steeped in St. Paul, John Bunyan, Charles Wesley, or the cantatas and Passions of Bach. Victory is clearly at the heart of the Christian lexicon and once one has heard a vast congregation of mainly black Pentecostals in Brazil shouting “Gloria” in the Hallelujah Chorus – following close on a performance of “Thanks be to God which giveth us the *victory*” from *Messiah* – the long-term cultural genealogies are hardly in doubt.

The Pentecostal virtues of betterment, self-discipline, aspiration, and hard work are those which in the western experience are assigned to the first, harsh phase of modernization. Though they clearly assist the survival of the poor and help forward fledgling economies, they are dismissible as mere “capitalist work discipline” and have so far resisted translation into contemporary liberal attitudes. Pentecostals belong to groups which liberals cast in the role of victim, and in every way they refuse to play that role. By contrast with those social milieux in which people admire either communitarian obligation or individual autonomy, they obstinately adhere to the disciplines of the nuclear family. As people remote from the political and educated classes and with few resources, Pentecostals concentrate their efforts on “doing good to them that are of the household of faith.”

There is also a different though supplementary source of unacceptability emanating from the historic churches. Partly it has to do with dualism in various forms, by which is meant an emphasis on the supernatural, including the miraculous, rather than the orderliness of nature. This is linked, of course, to the recovery of a “primitive” Christianity. However, it has also to do with the kind of theodicy (or justification of the ways of

God) which can be latent in classical Pentecostalism and often manifest in Neo-Pentecostalism. This theodicy spans the whole cultural range from an instrumental attitude towards divine power present in what (for want of agreed acceptable terminology) has to be called “folk” or “primitive” religion, and a consumerist attitude towards faith found on the debatable margins of post-modernity.

This fusion of instrumentality and consumerism is particularly evident with respect to healing from diseases and bedevilmments, and includes an implicit or explicit bargain with Providence: give in order that you may receive; have faith and God will save you from the ills that threaten you. This can, of course, simply express a law of spiritual existence to the effect that those who surrender themselves reap an abundant harvest of grace and fulfillment, but quite slight changes of intonation easily lead to major changes of emphasis. One may, for example, recognize that greater bodily and internal well-being follow from a disciplined and faithful life (especially where psychosomatic ills are rife) but then shift towards an inherent link between virtue and achievement, or between faith and a form of Christian body-building. In Neo-Pentecostalism this kind of slick theodicy can play a major role. What had been a consequence of virtue turns into its evident proof, with the corollary that those who fail or fall ill have also failed in faith. Inner devastation follows. Thus the “empowerment” of “the poor,” which is usually “acceptable,” becomes an embrace of power per se, and of a “God of power and might,” most obviously on the part of leaders, which is conspicuously “unacceptable.” The “miracles” of restoration undeniably observed among the poor can be redeployed as tinsel advertisements for itinerant wonder-workers.

Resources and Paradoxes of Autonomy and Dependence

The relation of Pentecostalism to modernity as well as to a deep structure of shamanistic power and healing energies should be clear enough. Such a relation, whether direct or indirect, includes internalized conscientiousness and a portable integrity at home and at work, as well as an eminent pragmatism as to means, the principle of voluntary choice and voluntary association in matters of faith, and an aspiration to rise above fickle fortune. But simply to note the consonance of Pentecostalism with modernity (and especially perhaps with the initial phases of modernity) is to place this particular cultural revolution in far too shallow an historical and sociological perspective. It is to deal only in the historical foreground, and to neglect the more profound social dynamics such as those of autonomy and dependence.

After all such central themes as inwardness and a portable and all-embracing integrity were broached millennia ago, not merely in the Reformation, but in early Christianity and the Hebrew Scriptures. This is not to say that these are their only sources or that those who put them forward intended them just as we understand them today. It is to say that they have lain latent in the particular religious ensemble we have inherited, awaiting the successive releases afforded by social circumstance, and what is more, their existence has been an active factor in bringing such circumstance about. The latter point is, of course, crucial in that religion creates latent platforms in consciousness from which new initiatives can take off. They then prove their ability to fly far from their original base without their Christian (or Jewish) names attached.

Take, by way of example, such themes as "Rend your hearts and not your garments" or the law written equally "in the heart from the greatest to the least" or the Pauline injunction to attend first to the circumcision of the heart rather than the ritual incision denoting a particular identity. By persistent extension and deepening, such themes can divest systems of authority of their justification and turn law into a matter of inward judgement and sincerity rather than external observance. Again, to make human solidarity as such the criterion of sympathy, *caritas*, and right action, in accordance with the New Testament model, is to corrode all the compulsory solidarities of particular local societies. To suppose that the universal spirit of power and wisdom can fall on hedge preachers merely because they attend to a call from within or above subverts every principle of social honor, inherent status, and necessary mediation. So, too, does the idea that "all" are priests and kings "unto God," and that anyone can understand the clear sense of Holy Scripture. The whole world becomes an open book, which "he who runs may read." A slave knows how to overhear such phrases as "You are no longer slaves but sons, and if sons then heirs. . . ."

The mere setting forth of such principles in the sphere of faith by implication secularizes the state, and one can see how a prolonged crisis of legitimation has been written into the foundation documents of Christian civilization. It is then only a matter of time and circumstance before such corrosions trickle through initially tiny conduits to undermine every structure at base. That is why the official carriers of Christianity, ensconced in seats of power, will simultaneously propagate its doctrines and restrict their implications, partly to safeguard their own position, and partly because authority, hierarchy, power, mediation, and hypocrisy of some sort are necessary ingredients of *any* kind of civilization.

Once that central paradox of social organization in relation to the Christian dynamic is understood, then it is inevitable that Christianity also embodies principles of obedience in relation to the auras of sacred

authority, such as “Fear God and Honor the King,” as well as subtle casuistries, and these have to be called into play by particular authorities to defend their position, and indeed by any authority to buttress stability as such. How the implications of re-formation play into the necessary stabilizations required by established power, and how these are bound to be built into the reform itself is clear, for example, from the course of the break-neck changes instituted from above and picked up from below in the short reign of Edward VI from 1547 to 1553. Even then an essential revolution was achieved through the secularization of the state and of its legitimation, which turned out in the long run to be irreversible, as the next century was to prove.¹¹ The immediate and apparent aim had been to emulate the Hebrew monarch Josiah through the evangelical purification of faith; the long-term consequence, however, was the autonomous Protestant and protesting individual. The fact that the Magisterial Reformation had small interest in democracy or autonomy is irrelevant.

But such ironies and paradoxes are themselves misleading and partial unless related to the complementary paradox of authority. The dynamic of Pentecostal populism, and of its partial restriction within the religious sphere, includes the paradox that autonomy depends on dependence, as equality depends on differences of power, and participation on authority. People acquire and discover their independence through mutual recognition in the assembly or community, “I” to “I,” and through authoritative proclamation. They are empowered to speak collectively and individually by *being given* a new name through authoritative conferral. Observers note how vigorously authority is deployed in the Pentecostal assembly, forgetting not only that this is a standard characteristic of revolutions, even when they are restricted to the level of culture, but forgetting also just how dangerous it is to encourage everyone to speak at once. Pentecostalism invites an antinomian anarchy which can only be kept from dissolving the assembly in confusion by exercise of pastoral oversight.

Of course, that exercise of oversight is bound to echo the forms of authority to which believers were used prior to conversion, because the religious transformation is simultaneously a social transition. It has to entail old continuities in a new frame, and so observers too easily conclude that the new elder in the faith is only the old tribal elder “writ large.” As already argued, all reformations re-form authority, and inevitably the old models are framed in the new forms. The important point is that these new forms are chosen rather than ineluctable and that the pastor is not bound into age-old and interlinked hierarchies of church, state, and local territorial community. Such linkages may and probably will recur. A Pentecostal leader, like Ezekiel Guti in Zimbabwe, will

repudiate and manipulate the local political authorities, just as he repudiates and manipulates his useful contacts in the United States – while deploying a nationalist rhetoric of anti-colonial authenticity. After periods of conflict, excommunication, and withdrawal, rival powers renegotiate a balance of advantages and exchange favors. That is why the Spirit taking hold of those not party to this renegotiation, often the young or a denominational counter-elite, will fracture the solidarity of the religious assembly. Dissidents recognize how peace and consensus can be an ally of the established union of charisma, the powers of office, and selective patronage. The result is bound to be mutual excommunication between leaders and dissidents. Though the “mark” of the Spirit is a hard-won peace and love, its working out is bound to be breakage of fellowship. Consolidation and dissidence, pacification and excommunication follow in cycles as the young men who “dreamed dreams” become elders. Powerful dreamers develop into authoritative interpreters, and “good” and “bad” exchange masks as the dance proceeds.¹²

As with the other revolutionary principles mentioned, this invitation to join together in a shared speech, which converts the Babel of voices into the Pentecost of tongues, is both very old and very modern. It made sense in the *oekumene* of the ancient classical world before inevitable closures channeled it through restrictive forms, and it makes sense now in the “ecumenical” world of global society where you do indeed encounter “all nations, tribes, and tongues.” What we see then is not simply a “legitimation crisis” in relation to the unsponsored but their own affirmation of “communicative competence.” The avenue for such an affirmation is not rational exchange and competition, but the alternations and comings together of inspiration. Unavoidably, as in every possible kind of situation, rational or inspired, that too has its own potential for the expression of preponderant power, given that some are more gifted in the articulation of hope than others.

Economic Discipline and Psychic Liberation

Having touched on the *longue durée* of pneumatic lay empowerment, and its governing paradoxes, it is worth recalling that global Pentecostalism has a particular and more contingent relation to the changes in economic and social climate since the sixties. On the one hand there has been a reassertion of economic disciplines and on the other the offer of major releases and permissions. In the developed world the permissions and releases can be pursued by quite large numbers of people while ignoring the economic disciplines, at least for a quite extended period of license, but in the developing world the economic disciplines cannot be evaded. Though in the developed world you can accept disciplines

in your working life and ignore them elsewhere, in the developing world your disciplines must govern your whole life, or you fall by the wayside – or fall into crime. In Pentecostalism ecstatic release actually fuels conscious discipline; release is the complement of self-control not the alternative.

Thus there is a discernible consonance between Pentecostalism and the simultaneous (indeed, related) advance of global liberal capitalism and “the expressive revolution.” Pentecostals work hard and let go; they give satisfaction to the customer and sway to guitars and synthesizers. Nor is this in any way peculiar to them, since as Bernice Martin and Paul Heelas have argued, it is often the adepts of the expressive revolution who most assiduously exploit contemporary consumer culture.¹³ Seeming oppositions easily become practical symbioses. Perhaps one might anticipate that as people in the developing world suffer less from exigent conditions, faith will be less a hedge against destitution and more a guarantee of satisfaction.

There is a sliding scale here of shifting validations, whereby (as suggested earlier) the poor do indeed improve their lot and find the evidence of faith in bigger and better congregations and in larger churches with shinier automobiles parked outside. A big God “has done great things for us” which it is up to the believer to emulate. Three generations, perhaps two, are sufficient for this to come about, and perhaps there may be no need at all for an initial phase of humble accumulation once mobile or already affluent people seek alleviation of stress and vacuity in charismatic fellowship. Religion offers its own kind of touching and feeling, and renews individual spiritual power in a shared spirit of collective praise.¹⁴

Versions of Pentecostalism not only resemble consumer culture but overlap the modes of the modern media. The overlaps began in the early years with the Pentecostal adoption of the journal and the magazine and is found now in a simulacrum of the television show. Religion is remade in the image of business with buildings more like cinemas than churches. At the same time Pentecostalism also produces its own version of an intelligentsia, picking up some of the threads of social and theological criticism. Those it has nurtured and advanced find the faith of their mothers wanting in social awareness and analytic acuity. In particular young women to whom it has offered new opportunities and fresh spaces come to feel frustrated by scant provision for their contribution at the upper levels of the pastorate and administration. As some of the older Bible Schools and institutes seek university status, for example Vanguard University in California, Pentecostalism may create its own intelligentsia and so develop a social critique. If young Pentecostal scholars seek validation from (or in) the schools of the older historic denominations,

they put themselves under western tutelage and in time they emulate the style of those denominations in constituting an expert stratum of social critics and commentators. Perhaps this is the channel along which Pentecostalism donates personnel to Methodism just as Methodism has donated personnel to Anglicanism. Perhaps Pentecostal grandmothers may even find their grandsons Catholic prelates.¹⁵

One of the most interesting aspects of the make-over of religion in the image of the media is the remarkable hostility the secular media show to their religious counterparts. Though the former progressively exclude serious religious debate or worship, nevertheless, they criticize the religious media from a quasi-orthodox viewpoint, as if themselves practitioners of humility and poverty and opposed to egoistic aggrandizement. The moment Pentecostals deploy modern technology to orchestrate responses, or give evidence of financial or sexual impropriety, they are assured of instant negative publicity. The "Word of Life" movement in Sweden, for example, attracted much hostility from the secular media on grounds of deviation from accepted norms. Such hostility is replicated throughout the western world in the way the Sunday supplements characterize all such movements without essential discriminations, and provides a major element in the social construction of unacceptability. It takes care and insight to recognize what is coming about as the "rough beast" moves forward (though Ruskin did just that when he heard the popular preaching of Spurgeon, recognizing that one who enters the pulpit a hairdresser's assistant may leave it an inspired apostle). Elsewhere however, in West Africa or Brazil, the debate may be carried out on more equal terms, as witness the contest between the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and the television conglomerate "Globo."

Neo-Pentecostalism? Post-modernity?

Much of the preceding argument has been concerned with the relation between Pentecostalism and modernity, supplemented by *sotto voce* hints of a relation between Neo-Pentecostalism and post-modernity. The approach throughout has been to indicate all such relationships by concrete instances and connections rather than to add to a vast literature setting out to define modernity, or debating whether or not such a condition as post-modernity even exists.

However, there are aspects of these questions worth picking up; they take off from earlier remarks about the fit of classical Pentecostalism (and early Methodism) with an initial *phase* of modernization or, indeed, looking at the contemporary scene, as just one version of modernization alongside other versions. The phase referred to is shown up in the contrast drawn by Simon Coleman between the 90,000 or so old-style Pentecostals

in Sweden, who make up some 1 percent of the population, and the charismatic “Word of Life” movement based in Uppsala.¹⁶ Whereas the “classical Pentecostals” are an accepted feature of the cultural landscape, with their own newspaper and banking facilities, the latter are – as indicated earlier – treated as a highly undesirable mutation. The Protestant Ethic has switched from the currency of virtue to a conspicuously financial currency and, as Coleman recounts it, the proper service of others has become a form of helping oneself. What was a discipline of self has become a form of self-management collectively promoted as a religious version of the “feel-good” factor. As between the old and the new there is a different mix of the disciplined and the expressive, which in the case of the “Word of Life” generates a spiritually charged aesthetic expressed in rhetoric, media consumption, and physical environment.

Such is the contrast suggested by Coleman, and it fits in very well with the observations of Bernice Martin and others about a transition from the alternation of work and release to a use of expressive modalities within the disciplines of work itself (including God’s work).¹⁷ The task may still be exacting, but it requires a mobile self and indeed a powerful persona constantly redeployed to meet constantly shifting situations and exigencies.

This fits well enough with elements identified as belonging to post-modernity: the rapid alternation of environments, and a passage across what were the conventional frontiers of cultural and ethnic identity. Charismatics who embrace this particular style are effectively laying down their own specific tracks across these shifting sands, creating their own mutually recognizable style of transnational, non-denominational identity, and expanding the self to complement an expanding globe. And, curiously, this transition is reflected below the level of classical Pentecostalism as well as above it. The mobile self may be as relevant in meeting the random buffeting of the informal economy of Rio as in contemporary Sweden. In short, though both Neo-Pentecostalism and post-modernity are shadowy and indeterminate entities, there may still be an elective affinity between them.

Global Alternatives to Pentecostalism, especially Catholicism

The advantages and disadvantages of Catholicism as an alternative option to Pentecostalism arise from its residual links to social and ecclesiastical hierarchies, to cultural continuities and folk practice. The roots of Catholicism still lie in territory, birthright membership, the organic frame, communal obligation, and peoplehood. That means that it places a sacred canopy over the average and the religiously relaxed, and lacks

a defined and incisive edge. Catholicism can never be at its ease with the fissiparous dynamism of untutored religious entrepreneurship. Even when the Church monitors profound energies through its own version of charismatic Christianity, it has to retain clerical control and mark out limits and boundaries. However attractive its option for the poor may be, the Church can hardly allow the poor to captain their own barque of salvation beyond appropriate mediation or without prolonged processing through the right channels. However subtly folk practices are assimilated to mass devotion and pilgrimages to healing sanctuaries, that is not the kind of literal revelation that comes with opening the holy book, and reading it for oneself in the company of like-minded others. That is why Catholic "fundamentalism" is so unlike Protestant "fundamentalism."

The Catholic mode of entry into the modern world has been very different from the Protestant mode and, above all, different from the mode of Anglo-American voluntarism. For a long time it endeavored to conserve within a single and universal system the mutualities of an organic society *locked together* with the symmetries of ecclesiastic and political power, against the corrosions of individualism, including moral choice, and of capitalism, including consumer choice in religion. Those twin evils were focused most clearly in the Anglo-American cultural condominium. Thus in Argentina at the beginning of the twentieth century, the *revanchisme* of the Catholic Church in alliance with the military identified precisely individualism, liberalism, Protestantism, and capitalism as the enemy, and Anglo-America as the front and head of what was most opposed to a Hispanic Catholic spirit.¹⁸ Even socialism might seem to provide more persuasive analogues to Catholic "integristism" than liberal capitalist individualism and religion offered on the open market. Socialism was, after all, a system based on mutualities like those of the medieval guild, and even trumpeted the recovery of organic relations, so that Catholic radicals could migrate to socialism or even Marxism much more easily than to the free market. The free market was more of a means than a principle, and lacked any governing idea or notion of quality beyond consumption, exchange value, and profit. That was its strength as well as its weakness.

Of course, from the 1890s on the Catholic Church began a halting movement towards modernity (or *aggiornamento*) though within a socially paternalistic frame analogous to the sacred paternalism of the Church itself. Even when the social paternalism was soft-pedaled or jettisoned the ancient linkages stayed put, not only in the public mind but in the presumptions and assumptions of the upper echelons of Catholic societies. As for holy paternalism, it could not be dropped without bringing down the whole Baroque edifice.

What happened everywhere from Hungary to Montevideo and Lima was the opening up of a fissure between Catholic conservatism, more or less allied to elements of the *ancien régime*, and different kinds of liberal radical, anti-Catholic romantic nationalist, anarchist, and radical socialist; roughly in that sequence. Latin America and Latin Europe were pre-eminent cases: huge cultural blocs riven apart by social conflicts in which religion was ranged *as such* against the spirit of what the French called *laïcité*. What never seriously emerged was the intermediate term of a voluntary and competitive religiosity helping forward and adapting to modernization. That was despised or rejected on all sides as spawning unsystematic accommodation to the varied sentiments of middling people like grocers and clerks, artisans and “respectable” workers. Inevitably the Catholic response was different where Catholicism was aligned with a repressed nationalism or was a minority, as in Germany or Anglo-America. Yet even in the USA, the conflict over “Americanism” acquired serious momentum. Though the “Americanists” won, it has still not been all that plausible to promote capitalism, liberalism, and Catholicism as an undivided trinity in the style of (say) Michael Novak.¹⁹

Eventually, however, the pressures of modernity in particular national or regional segments of the Catholic Church built up, either because, as in Latin America, conditions were appalling, or because, as in Germany, conditions were already fully modern and comfortable. The dam broke in the 1960s with the Second Vatican Council, and it did so at a time when a partial separation had occurred of ecclesiastical powers and hierarchies from their social co-equals, and the prestige and power of the Papacy had by contrast risen from its abject low point at the beginning of the nineteenth century.²⁰

The post-war Catholic Church had adopted various viable strategies at the political level, as well as within its own organization. Politically it accepted democracy, abandoned alliances with organic conservatism, and attempted to promote its interests and values through Christian Democratic (or similar) parties on the Center Right, with a particular eye to combating communism. Internally it had developed a managed participation of the laity, glossed by communitarian emphases, which was worked out in ancillary organizations like Catholic Action and various youth associations, as well as in the conduct of worship. So far as worship went the strategy worked quite well, since it was only symbolic and backed up by precisely the paternalism it was supposed to mitigate, so much so that it was also propagated ecumenically by non-Catholic Churches. So far as Catholic Action and (for example) the “Christian Student Movement” were concerned, they became partly radicalized in some of the local national and regional sectors, and they were in turn

followed by the movement of liberation theology, mostly incubated in Europe and the USA, but dramatically fertilized in Latin America.

Thus the openings to the Left, constantly frustrated from the 1830s on, secured a qualified validation within the Catholic Church which at least for a time made good sense in terms of ecclesiastical geopolitics. On the one hand the motivations for liberation theology were moral, faced with the material conditions and social costs of global capitalism in Latin America, Africa, and elsewhere, but on the other hand they were also rational, in that the Church needed to pre-empt the appeal of Pentecostalism or Marxism, or both together.²¹ Marxism was a rival form of “integrist”, and so compatible at one level, though to a quite limited extent, while Pentecostalism represented the old enemy of free-market Christianity. So far as Pentecostalism was concerned the hope was that it could be countered by the rival attractions of base communities.

The problems of the opening to the left were several, in that the initial phases of liberation theology seemingly threatened the basis of hierarchical control and even a fusion with movements like the “People’s Church” in Nicaragua. However, control was in fact maintained and reinforced, especially as it became clear how dependent “base communities” were on the existence of well-disposed bishops. Of course, the global collapse of Marxism relieved the pressure so far as the Catholic hierarchies were concerned. The other side of retaining control was that Pentecostalism retained some of its key advantages, above all the autonomy of its self-made leaders and an arena of participation in which the old hierarchies held no sway. Indeed, it also seemed that Pentecostalism appealed to lower strata than those responsive to Catholic mobilization, whether these were base communities or charismatic groups within the Church.²² More recently, of course, the Catholic Church has granted acceptability to charismatic Catholicism, especially as it may be extending its appeal downward, only providing that denominational boundaries are re-emphasized together with the Papacy and the Blessed Virgin – a reassertion of the historically effective “notes” of Catholicism.

The two most recent shifts in the global situation of the Roman Catholic Church have been a curving inward or recomposition of the radical impulse of liberationism, and a partial separating out of Catholicism from Christian Democratic Parties, as they have gone into fragmentation with the collapse of their Communist rivals. Quite what that will mean for the future of liberationism is unclear, though it was never more than a minority option even in Brazil, but the upshot is a Catholic Church following a halting course towards the status of a voluntary interest group promoting a particular moral vision.

This is not to suggest that the Catholic reflex of power-seeking has been finally relaxed. In Chile, for example, after Pinochet’s departure,

the Church attempted – unsuccessfully – to use the moral credit gained by its defense of human rights to turn its moral program into law.²³ Again, in Poland, the Church falsely extrapolated from the support it generated against communist repression to support in the post-communist period for the legislative enactment of Catholic principles. Of course, elite connections remain and the Church has always had an interest in elite education, but there does seem to be a new situation. The two key elements here are the decline of the Marxist threat and the way western individualism has made increasingly problematic any legal implementation of Catholic teaching by the state as, for example, on matters like abortion and divorce. Slowly even the Catholic Church acquires some of the characteristics of a denomination.

Outside the traditional areas of majority Catholicism the Catholic Church is already a denomination, and unhindered by the problems of managing a declining dominance. One says “some of the characteristics” because in certain territories previously colonized, notably in parts of Francophone Africa, it is a partner in power and can to some extent act as a political arbiter. Like other established churches it is also able to perform as a Non-Governmental Organization with a discreet influence on government, or else when conditions deteriorate to mount a critique of corruption and abuse. This it can do aided by long experience, by a high international profile, and by the deployment of international personnel. So far as expert personnel are concerned, the religious orders are a crucial asset, for example, in Korea, the Philippines, and El Salvador. In almost all the respects just canvassed the situation of the Pentecostals is different: their experience is recent, the informal contacts at the same status level are not yet fully formed, and pastors usually lack an international profile.

One consequence of the Second Vatican Council relevant here is the downgrading of those tangible and folk devotions which were associated with “fortress Catholicism” during its long war with modernity and which also had a potent affinity with local indigenous cultures. It was as if the reforming elites of the Catholic Church, with their own rational traditions, had partly compounded with the enlightened rationalism of their elite opponents to remake the Catholic Church and to ignore the way the great mass of Catholics had constructed their faith according to context. As a result the very tangible faith of Pentecostalism, with its concrete spiritual powers, moved into the vacant or over-rationalized spaces, or else segments of the Catholic Church, for example in Africa, mounted their own cultural resistance. Such consequences were ironic given that the reforming sectors of the Catholic Church both aimed to institute a modern church *and* to promote a new respect for local cultural authenticity.

What this brief overview of the Catholic Church in its encounter with modernity, and especially with pluralism, shows is the great importance of cultural factors. Even today a Catholic culture is not as a Protestant culture. In the Protestant world, especially in Anglo-America, the loosening or abolition of ties between a church and the state, the social hierarchy and the local community, has meant that cultural revolutions in the religious sphere can be promoted from below, whereas in the Catholic world they will be first resisted and then promoted from above. In that sense even the operations of Opus Dei in Spain represented a modernizing revolution, though at the elite level. The relative popularity of Pentecostalism compared with *basismo* in the developing world reflects just this difference between the autonomous and the managed, although the disadvantages of the former are what strike the observer from the viewpoint of the western academy. It is precisely the unsponsored populist faiths which may on occasion be tempted to collude, naively or culpably, with populist dictators, just as in the past an established Catholicism routinely colluded in defense of its vital interests with dictatorships of the right, some populist and some not.

Both Catholicism and Pentecostalism are global options, offering the two most vital versions of Christianity in the contemporary world, and it is important to emphasize the different ways in which they relate to context. Historically Catholicism attempted imposition followed by accommodation, partly because in the periods of enlightened autocracy followed by liberal nationalism it was not really in local control. In parts of the world, notably Latin America, ecclesiastical administration lacked any serious grip. The modern period, however, has seen an increase both in control and administrative grip in association with centralization in Rome. Of recent years that has meant the policy of respect for local culture already referred to, and even more recently a belated recognition that downgrading Catholic folk practice has made the Church vulnerable. In any case traditional Catholics feel that acculturation dilutes a hard-won identity. Experience teaches. What the Catholic Church cannot do as a centralized system and a global institution is to allow local believers to find out needs and meet them in the Pentecostal manner. Pentecostalism as a repertoire of themes propagated by competitive unsponsored entrepreneurs has no policy about "authentic" culture, because it responds to, and indeed *is*, the market. It is the culturally despised proffering "goods" to the culturally despised.

The other global options are really outside the scope of an initial chapter except to suggest that, to the extent that they embody the organic principle exemplified in Catholicism, they find it difficult to generate the kind of voluntaristic and competitive pluralism of Pentecostalism. Islam,

because it is even more organically integrated than Catholicism, generates mass movements aiming to overthrow conservative religious elites as well as enlightened elites and westernizers, and creates a social assistance system for its radical followers in the “wild mosques.” Buddhism is very different because its attitude to “the world” makes it the religion of the monk, and yet today it has been able either to graft vigorous voluntary associations on to monastic roots or generate them out of prophetic callings (as well as offering its own “enlightenment” to eastern and western elites). This is the more possible because it is less an articulated institutional system and more a cultural modality manifested in temples and monasteries. Thus the closest “functional equivalents” of Christian pluralism are in the “new religions” of Taiwan and Japan (and their overseas extensions, for example, in Brazil). Once again, the importance of cultural frames is underlined.

Niches

Thus far the argument has contrasted two simplified models: churches based on locality, birthright membership, continuity, and extended familial and communal obligations, where there is some symmetry between religious and social hierarchy, and groups based on individual choice, movement, fraternal association, and the nuclear family. The shift from the one to the other is not a simple switch of denomination but a tearing of the social fabric, since people move out of a web of embedded relationships and choose to belong to a group of fictive brothers and sisters based on a shared moral ethos. In some cases this can even mean a break with national identity and inherited culture, sometimes also involving a transition from a world of rotations to a forward-looking narrative. A new name and revised identity through second birth is therefore brought at a price, which may include a haunting to be dealt with by a discourse of delivery and exorcism.

The question of what niches may favor Pentecostalism is therefore bound up with the radical disturbance of roots, including traditional sources of authority and social control, and the accelerating compression of time and space in contemporary global society as people move about and become aware of new horizons and the options realistically open to them. They may embrace these options before they move, by way of anticipation, or after they have moved, or en route, but the key lies in a religious “movement” accompanying and facilitating the movement of people. In particular, as relations in the countryside are disrupted by agrarian reform, capitalist relations, or state action, the religious fraternity, which is to a large extent a sorority, forms a caravanserai. It transports believers in more senses than one and provides reception centers as they

arrive in impersonal megacities, or else provides a depot to which they gravitate after corrosive experience of such places.

As believers acquire and reach out for this portable identity they also establish an inner compass or conscience built up by taking “readings” each from the other and by shared reading in the narrative of the pilgrim people of God. They also need and receive manuals of guidance for their new life which advise and encourage them how best to accomplish their spiritual re-vision. They are also buoyed up in their self-discipline by the discipline and discipleship of their fellow-travelers. Such a discipline is particularly important for men, as they are faced by the fragmentations and insecurities of a new world and drawn to the predatory agenda of the male peer group. Whereas women mostly fulfil their familial responsibility, men in situations such as obtain in the megacity need to acquire an inward discipline sustained by group obligations, sanctions, and respected roles. Street and home are rival pulls, and the voluntary group, with its standards imposed equally on women and men, is a hedge against chaos and a pledge of mutual support.

This is the paradigmatic transition where one may locate “classical” Pentecostalism today, for example, the Assemblies of God, a body which in many places makes up about one in three of the Pentecostal family. The Assemblies of God and similar bodies like the Methodist Pentecostal Church in Chile are rafts for the respectable poor. The poor hold on tight to the rules of the raft and to their barely achieved gains, as they move towards relatively safe collective havens, and maybe into the lower middle class.

However, there are also many for whom such bodies are too centrally controlled. These are people in the informal economy who create an equally informal economy of faith made up of a myriad micro-enterprises, some of them run just by husband and wife. Most Pentecostal churches are of this kind, and they abound everywhere from Lagos to Seoul and Santiago, honeycombing the poorer sectors. They operate under a thousand names in the interstices between the stable frontages of the larger churches. These are the “little people” running their own show, often at the margin of viability, and sometimes they will make up (say) one in five of the Pentecostal family.

Such micro-enterprises contrast sharply with the megachurches, which are communities often offering a wide range of services, some mainly for the very poor but some for middle-class clientele. The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God in Brazil, and its rival, God is Love, constitute one kind of megachurch with an extensive constituency among the poor, and especially the black poor. One might characterize them as main-street, cut-price emporia, in which popular religion is repackaged in the Pentecostal format: the repudiated ghosts of the past *sotto voce*

reassembled and controlled under the presidency of the Holy Spirit. Their buildings often look like cinemas or hangars, opening all day on to busy thoroughfares. Here tumultuous religious business is transacted, sometimes resembling the traffic of Catholic side altars but without a dim religious light to suggest ritual or piety. The main religious "entertainments," complete with comperes and ushers, often resemble lively soap operas, but their message nevertheless is psychic liberation. They operate in the random world of the big cities turning the inexplicable rotations of mundane luck into the donations of Providence.

The churches just mentioned happen to be distinctly controversial examples from Latin America, but the megachurch is found all over the developing world (as well as in the United States, where indeed it originated). Some of the largest are in Seoul, Korea and, as in Brazil, some of them repackage popular shamanistic practice in Christian form. On the one hand their members have the sense of making up a multitude which cannot be ignored, and on the other their more intimate requirements are met in a myriad cell-structures.

In the middle-class variants, megachurches cater for new professional and business people, or for potential elites (or counter-elites) with university backgrounds. Some of these churches will be formed *de novo* in a style appropriate to the clientele, and others will gravitate upwards away from the stricter disciplines of an older Pentecostalism. Professional and educational cadres may meet in comfortable living-rooms, where they find a friendly environment, a gentle participatory style, and an atmosphere supporting the integration of the family. The business equivalent, such as the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship, may emerge in the same way, attracting successful members of Pentecostal churches and then becoming the effective core of their devotional life and social activity. In some places, for example Argentina or parts of East Africa, these fellowships and charismatic enterprises will smudge the older denominational boundaries or simply proclaim themselves "Christians." Those involved in their running, and indeed many who belong to them, will entertain transnational vistas and relate to others of like mind in other countries, including the USA and diasporas in Europe or South East Asia. Many of those belonging to the Chinese business class in diaspora are attracted to such groupings. This is a fluid milieu where people recognize each other by spiritual affinities and where "executives may cry," and it often includes historic churches "in renewal."

On the whole charismatic fellowships and new-life churches do not extend above the emergent middle classes but there are a few places, such as Guatemala, where elite cadres feel at home in a warm evangelical discourse supporting their aspirations and buoying up their increasing confidence in an expansive future. Here influential people gather in

well-appointed and even plush venues, sharing common concerns and anxieties in an atmosphere of pious animation. They will absorb a literature of advice on how to handle ethical and personal problems, and how to deepen their inner life. Whether you are of Catholic or Evangelical background may not be all that salient.

Pentecostalism (and associated charismatic movements) find a quite different kind of niche deep in the interior of major civilizations or at the margin among ethnic groups which seek differentiation from the wider whole, and want to exchange inferior status for modernity. Perhaps suppressed for centuries, as in Latin America and the Philippines, and knowing that their culture is dismissed in stereotypical terms as backward, they find in Pentecostalism a chance to leap over their immediate environment to a wider world. Whereas previously viewed as dissolute or as colorful exhibits for the benefit of the tourist gaze, they dramatically “better themselves” and modernize, so overturning the stereotype. Of course, there may also be losses here in overall communal solidarity, of the kind documented by anthropologists. But it is difficult to see how or why such groups are to be sealed off, or how comprehensive change, including modern medicine, can be held at bay. Even a nationalistic reassertion and recreation of “traditional” culture such as may be seen in parts of Mexico (or in the Mari El Republic of Russia where the intelligentsia promotes paganism) is a characteristically “western” import.

Where conversion is to Evangelicalism it by no means depends on missionaries. Once people acquire extended horizons through their own mobility or the media, new messages do not need messengers. Whether one considers people on the Papuan border in Irian Jaya, or in the Tibeto-Burmese valleys of Nepal, or gypsies in Eastern Europe, they review themselves in global perspective. Sometimes that review affects a whole people, or an outer segment, or one particular local genealogy rather than another. Moreover, they do not swallow Christianity as a package but creatively appropriate it, sometimes turning the message back against those who brought it. If Mrs. Baker Eddy of Boston mingled the Bible with what she believed were contemporary notions of science and health, so too do many Africans.

What one perceives with regard to contemporary global Christianity is a spectrum of appropriations selected according to circumstance, with Pentecostalism appealing most to those who have quite recently detached themselves from local practices, obligations, and authorities, and are most anxious to find their footing in the modern world. They wish to draw a line under so recent a past. That is why in the African context in particular, but not only there, they can both incorporate previous practices and demonize them, or create a new version of a traditional

witchcraft eradication movement. A previous culture functions in a new format. It is in Africa too that modern communications technology makes possible large “imagined communities” of Pentecostals beyond the local memberships, so that Pentecostalism not only relates to local context but occupies and adapts to a much more extensive social space. That social space is mostly not defined by a homogeneous global character but, as David Maxwell points out in the African context, a distinct transnational regional identity.²⁴

One final element in this religious recombinant genesis includes fresh appropriations of the Old Testament (as well as a philo-Semitic tradition of Christian Zionism derived from readings of prophecy concerning the Jewish role in the end-times). The Old Testament narrative, with its emphasis on the origins of a people, can be transferred in such a way as actually to create new peoples, with or without territory. The Mormons, for example, are simultaneously scattered round the world and concentrated in a territory, while the Witnesses are aliens in all nations, often to their cost. One of the more dramatic cases of Judaizing is found in The Light of the World church, which is in diaspora over much of Mexico and the USA, but also has a temple and a Vatican City (or New Jerusalem) of its own in Guadalajara in the state of Jalisco. If one wants evidence of the creative appropriation of a fundamental biblical narrative and its relation to local cultural contexts one need look no further.