

William Price Payne

Folk Religion and the Pentecostalism Surge in Latin America

Abstract

Latino Pentecostalism and the Roman Catholic Charismatic Movement have experienced massive numerical growth since becoming viable options for the masses in the late 1960s. Contextualization theory suggests that they have experienced exponential growth because they have become indigenous faith systems that mesh with Hispanic cultures and give folk practitioners functionally equivalent alternatives to the syncretistic practices associated with popular religion. Specifically, as a native religion that engages all aspects of the Latino worldview, Latino Pentecostalism operates at the level of a popular religion without being inherently syncretistic. In this regard, it can be described as “folk Christianity.”

Keywords: Latino Pentecostalism, Folk Religion, Roman Catholic Charismatic Movement, Syncretism, Latin America

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Introduction

Why have the Pentecostals and Catholic Charismatics sustained rapid numerical growth in Latin America in recent decades?¹ Doubtless, many factors have contributed to the exponential growth.² Amidst the cluster of nuanced explanations, contextualization theory suggests that Pentecostalism and the Roman Catholic Charismatic Movement have experienced exponential growth because they have become indigenous faith systems that easily mesh with Hispanic cultures and give folk practitioners functionally equivalent alternatives to the syncretistic³ practices associated with Latino popular religion.

Religiosity Indicators Associated with Folk Religion and the Mitigation of High Religion

Even though an overwhelming percentage of Hispanics identify with the Christian tradition and more than 50 percent self-identify as Charismatic or Pentecostal, a large proportion of the non-Protestant population still holds to beliefs and practices that are commonly associated with folk religion; that is, seeking help from folk healers with special powers (e.g., a *curandero*, *herbalista*, *bruja*, or *espiritista*), participating in spiritual cleansing services that use incense or herbs, and making offerings to spiritual beings other than God (Pew 2014b: 4-3 and 2014a: 110-116). One could add pilgrimages to sacred sites, use of empowered rituals, prayers to spiritual intermediaries, participation in religious processions that feature syncretistic practices, use of blessed objects, and wearing special clothing that symbolizes devotion to specific saints.

These external markers point to a worldview that takes the spirit world seriously and a felt need to have some control over it.⁴ John Lynch identifies the above practices and the accompanying beliefs with popular Catholicism in Latin America. He argues that they help the people make the abstract more concrete by redefining their everyday encounters with the supernatural in terms of the natural environment in which they live (2012: 172).

A popular Latino blogger who investigates folk phenomenon has suggested that the religious soul of Latin America is more spiritistic than Roman Catholic (Vasquez 2011). By spiritistic, he means spiritually oriented. Spiritually oriented should not be confused with the word “spiritual.” For example, it is common for a religiously unaffiliated American to say, “I am spiritual; not religious.” Latinos tend to be religiously spiritual. Most have an innate awareness of the spiritual dynamics of life. Due to the frequency of folk practices and the undergirding belief system associated with them, the Pew Report opines that Hispanics live their everyday lives with a strong sense of the spirit world (2014a:

110). This aspect of the Hispanic experience sharply contrasts with the rationalistic or natural worldview that dominates American popular culture.

The Pew Report (2014a: 54) also reveals that popular religion is an enduring feature of Hispanic culture. This extends to the Latino diaspora. For example, it shows that American Hispanics from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, and El Salvador practice folk religion with a similar frequency as those in their native lands. Because of their liminal existence, one would expect that new Hispanic immigrants to the United States would be more prone than established ones to engage in folk religious practices. Likewise, since time and distance separate established Hispanics from their native lands, lands in which folk religion is sewn into the fabric of the culture; one might assume that the incidence of folk practices would diminish to the extent that American Hispanics have assimilated into the dominant culture in the United States. However, the Pew report does not support either assumption. Rather, it shows that second and third generation American Hispanics practiced folk religion with the same intensity as recent immigrants. From this one could theorize that Hispanic immigrants resist assimilation into the public culture of America and/or that Hispanic culture helps to insulate Latinos from the aspects of the public culture that de-emphasize their native spirituality.

When religiosity indicators are teased out by nation, the research shows that Latin American nations have similar religious dynamics (Pew 2014b:40-50). Doubtlessly, the religious dynamics of each region have been shaped by a similar set of factors. The ubiquitous nature of the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America, the pervasive incidence of folk religion, a holistic worldview, a surging Pentecostalism, a cultural heritage that points back to the Iberian Peninsula, a similar experience with colonialism, and a popular mass media that transcends national boundaries are shared contextual factors that have helped to forge the socio-religious characteristics of Latin American nations.

Even still, Latin America is not culturally monolithic. In fact, it is an area of burgeoning religious diversity.⁵ For example, the Pentecostal surge has affected all of Latin America to some extent. To a lesser extent, the no-religious-preference group is also growing throughout Latin America. Since 1970, the unaffiliated category has grown from one to eight percent. Roman Catholicism has declined in proportion to the growth of Protestantism and the non-affiliated category.

In most cases, the countries that have experienced the strongest Protestant growth have also showed the largest growth with the unaffiliated category. This suggests a correlation between the diminishing social strength of Roman Catholicism and the growth of alternative traditions. In other words, as the Roman Catholic Church's hold on society lessens, Pentecostalism and the no-

religious-preference categories will become increasingly viable options for growing segments of the population. Still, this paper does not suggest that the expanding incidence of Latino Pentecostalism mitigates the social influence of the Roman Catholic Church. True, the recent numerical surge has given Protestants a higher social standing and more political influence. Recent elections in Brazil show this. Rather, this paper asserts that Latino Pentecostalism has grown fastest in places where the social influence of the dominant tradition has been lessened.

Furthermore, this paper acknowledges that secularism is a socio-political force that diminishes the social strength of the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America. The advance of secularism has allowed for the flourishing of religious diversity in places where it did not exist in past years. At the same time, it has lessened the social influence of official religion in every location where it has dominated. For that reason, Latino Protestants should not adopt a growth strategy that seeks to disestablish the Roman Catholicism by pushing for increased levels of secularism. Yes, disestablishment will diminish the socio-political influence of Catholicism. However, when secularism displaces the Roman Catholic Church from the core culture, Protestants will not be able to move to the core culture that is vacated by Catholicism.⁶ In the end, ideological secularism will function as the new “state” religion and Protestantism will remain on the outside.

Uruguay offers a perfect example of this. Since it enacted separation of church and state laws in 1861, the practice and influence of Roman Catholicism has greatly diminished. Today, only 42 percent of the population aligns with the Roman Catholic Church. Fifteen percent aligns with some form of Protestantism. A full 37 percent has no religious preference. Of that 37 percent, ten percent are strong atheists and three percent are weak atheists. Only 28 percent of Uruguayans avow that religion is important and a meager 13 percent attend church services, many of those are Protestant. In various ways, the ideological, social, religious, and political climate in Uruguay has become hostile to the public influence of organized religion. Today, Uruguay outwardly appears to be a non-religious island in a sea of Latin American religiosity (Pew 2014b: 14 and 17-18).

Despite the sustained progress of secularism and alternative faith systems in Latin America, the Roman Catholic Church still dominates the cultural landscape in the vast majority of locations. As has been shown, a large percentage of those who align with the Roman Catholic tradition also engage in folk practices. Insiders would argue that one cannot separate “formal Catholicism” from “informal Catholicism” because the latter has been woven into the former.

The distinction between Latino Roman Catholicism and popular Catholicism is porous and not exact. In fact, it varies depending on the geographic

and social locations of the participants. For this reason, even though one should acknowledge and describe the universal social phenomenon of Latino folk Catholicism, one should note that all religion is local religion even when the various local manifestations are tied to a larger tradition and share many of the same details. For example, many Latin American communities own the Catholic faith by having their own sacred places, particular saints, unique traditions, and distinct Virgin shrines (Lynch 2012: 171).⁷

In many places, the flavor and intensity of the folk practices goes beyond the pale of inculturation. Virginia Garrard-Burnett, an eminent historian with an emphasis on Latin American studies, has studied folk Catholicism in Guatemala and other places. She refers to the creolization of native Latino faiths with Roman Catholicism as a “new system of belief, indeed a new Christianity, that is neither fully European nor fully indigenous, but is rather an inextricable mixture of the two; a system that is altogether different from the lingering pre-Hispanic beliefs, carefully hidden from religious authorities, that centuries of Christian contact never fully snuffed out. . . . [They] include elements of animism and the worship of sacred geography. . . . [They] run parallel to Catholicism but do not necessarily compete with it” (2008: 75).

In order to appreciate the particulars of the resulting amalgamation, one must make allowance for varying host cultures. Specifically, folk Catholicism in the Caribbean (Santería) and Brazil (Candomblé) is more closely tied to western African indigenous religions than the folk Catholicism in the areas of Central and northern South America that was largely influenced by various native peoples.

Because of the domination of European immigrants on the demographics of the Cone region in southern Latin America,⁸ the minimal influence of indigenous peoples, and the growing influence of secularism, religiosity indicators related to formal religion are much lower in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay (Pew 2014b: 41-45). However, inhabitants of the Cone region engage in folk religion at the same rate as people from other parts of Latin America. For instance, approximately, 50 percent believe in the evil eye and seek to protect themselves from it. Even in secular Uruguay, 30 percent engage in regular practices associated with folk religion (Pew 2014b: 57-58). For example, throngs of Uruguayan devotees fill the streets for many miles during the peregrination and feast of the miracle working Saint Cono. He is a patron of good luck for gamblers and those who want material blessings.

This points to the pervasive influence of folk religion and illustrates why demographers should not measure religion merely in terms of high religion categories. Across Latin America, Hispanics show an openness to folk religion even when they do not practice a high religion. That is why the popular appeal of folk

religion is not diminished when the church loses social strength. A functional theory of culture would argue that folk religion endures because it satisfies essential social, psychological, or religious needs; needs that are not being directly satisfied by high religion. If this is true, official Roman Catholicism needs to be supplemented by folk Catholicism in Latin America in order to relate to the “spiritistic” soul of Latinos and meet needs related to everyday spirituality.

A Lesson from a Roman Catholic Priest in Peru

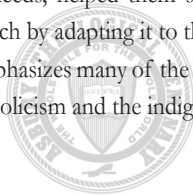
For ten weeks in the summer of 2007, I worked with a Roman Catholic priest in Ancón, Peru.⁹ On weekends he ministered to a large population of displaced people on the outskirts of Lima. His church was situated toward the top of a large outcropping of rock. The squatters who made the mountain their home came from rural areas with the hope of finding a job in Lima. Despite the fact that they were dispossessed of material belongings, they held tightly to their popular religion.

Curiously, even though the priest did not practice popular religion as such, happily he accommodated it by blessing ritual items and by encouraging the native spirituality. Since he was a devout priest with whom I had developed a positive rapport, I asked him why he did not lead the people away from folk religion and into a more pure form of Roman Catholicism.

He contended that all Christianity was inherently syncretistic and that “pure” Catholicism did not exist. Whenever the apostolic faith interacts with people who live in a particular culture, it accommodates the culture of the people. In fact, he said that Roman Catholicism has blended with and embraced the native spirituality of diverse populations. Furthermore, European Catholicism had already mixed itself with the native religions of Europe long before the Spanish brought their version of it to the Americas.¹⁰

Emphatically, he stated that European Catholicism did not fit the spiritual context of the majority population in Latin America and that it needed to be modified before the common people could embrace it as their own faith. He opined that as long as the people acknowledged Christ, honored the Virgin, and participated in the sacramental community, their popular piety was not a problem. To the contrary, it met felt needs, helped them satisfy spiritual impulses, and it enabled them to own the church by adapting it to their worldview context.¹¹

Justo González’ emphasizes many of the same points when he reflects on the encounter of Roman Catholicism and the indigenous faiths in Latin America.



Unavoidably, many of [the early converts in Latin America] came to identify some of the saints of the church with their own gods and brought to their worship and piety some of the practices they had learned from their ancestors. At first some of the [church leaders] objected to such practices But eventually the ecclesiastical leadership became reconciled with much of the popular belief and practice, arguing that these were means of the evangelization. . . . By the late twentieth century many had become convinced that most popular religion does not contradict the Catholic faith but is actually an expression of it. (2008: 6-7)

Inculturation: The Pope's Apostolic Exhortation to the Americas

To help me better understand what he was saying, the priest gave me a print copy of Pope John Paul II's *Apostolic Exhortation to the Church in the Americas* (1999). Under the category of "popular piety,"¹² the Pope substantially echoes the priest's comments and González' historical perspective. The Pope states that folk practices are an indication of the inculturation of the Catholic faith. Moreover, they are a means by which the faithful may encounter the living Christ even if the practices are not intricately connected to the doctrines of the church. Additionally, the Pope notes that the Synod Fathers have stressed the urgency of discovering in the manifestations of popular religiosity true spiritual values in order to enrich them with elements of genuine Catholic doctrine.

Ultimately, under the category of "Problem with the Sects," the Pope avers that the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America should make the most of the evangelizing possibilities of popular religiosity (Paul 1999:73). Such an endeavor will stave off secularism and a surging Pentecostal movement that is siphoning away large numbers of Roman Catholic faithful. The new emphasis is required because the official church has focused too exclusively on meeting physical needs and has neglected the deeper spiritual needs that make the faithful vulnerable to the proselytizing activities of the sects and new religious movements. The last comment was directed at liberationist priests who wanted to focus the church on social reform issues and political activism.

In sum, the Peruvian priest interpreted Pope John Paul II's message in a way that allowed him to facilitate folk practices. Like the Pope, he did not want his parishioners to turn to other faith systems in order to meet spiritual needs that official Roman Catholicism did not sufficiently engage. Additionally, he believed that the folk practices were compatible with the Roman Catholic faith and that they could be a means by which the people could encounter God. Furthermore, he maintained that syncretism was a necessary accommodation to the pre-Christian worldview that permeated parts of Latin America.¹³ Obviously, this priest did not

speak for all priests. However, his example and the teaching of the Pope show how the Roman Catholic Church's leadership has attempted to work in tandem with folk religion.

Approaching Popular Religiosity: an Example from Costa Rica

For seven weeks in 2015, I lived with a large family in a small house in Costa Rica. During this time I interviewed Pentecostals, Roman Catholics, and folk practitioners about their spirituality.¹⁴ Some of the conversations were intensely personal and very emotional. Underneath the veneer of everyday life, I discovered spiritually aware people who were very articulate about their experiences with God and the supernatural. I also observed an entrenched religiosity that was buoyed by a generalized openness to folk religion. Based on my interview data and observations, I will describe the Latino religiosity that I encountered.

The father of the home in which I lived practiced Pentecostalism. He left the Roman Catholic Church in 2008 because he needed spiritual discipline and spiritual power to change his life. Before becoming a Pentecostal, he drank 32 bottles of beer every day. His brothers, sister, and mother all became ardent Pentecostals at the same time.¹⁵ They read the bible, pray often, listen to praise music, attend mid-week prayer services, desire spiritual empowerment, embrace aspects of the prosperity gospel, and tithe. Home conversations often revolved around religious themes. Their Pentecostal faith influences all aspects of their lives to include their social interactions with non-Pentecostals.

The mother of the home where I lived staunchly held to her Roman Catholic faith. She respected the Pentecostal church and fully supported her husband's participation in it. She also listened to praise music and loved to pepper me with questions about God, the bible, and spiritual gifts. She even experienced the strong presence of God when she requested prayer for healing. However, she held to her folk Catholicism because she feared that something bad would happen to the family if she became Pentecostal.¹⁶

The stores in the town sold a mixture of indigenous and Roman Catholic religious items. The items included herbs for traditional healing, blessed trinkets for good luck, objects to protect people from the evil eye, material to ward off malignant spirits, various saint statues, and a vast assortment of Virgin Mary bric-a-brac. Many items invoked the power of the seven archangels. Saint paraphernalia to include small statues usually had a dual meaning that the people understood. Locals referred to the items collectively as *brujeria* (witchery and magic). The various shops that sold the accouterments did a brisk business.

The people with whom I spoke distinguished between folk healers, shamans, and witches. They knew of imagined witches but they did not know their names. Supposedly, they congregated on a local mountain. They were more common in past times. They said that people did not openly visit a witch in daylight hours. Witches were chaotic and untrustworthy. They could cause harm to people.¹⁷

On the other hand, the people held the folk healers in high regard. The *curanderos* protected and/or healed people from the effects of witchcraft, spells, evil spirits, and disease.¹⁸ They used a combination of herbs, divination, channeling, prayers, ritual items, and spells to manipulate the supernatural in order to help people who had spiritual, physical, financial, emotional, or mental problems. In short, they maintained an equilibrium between the spiritual and natural worlds.

People eagerly recounted anecdotal stories that extolled the spiritual prowess of *curanderos*. One *curandero* told a woman that she would encounter two snakes on the path down from the mountain but neither would hurt her. It happened just like he foretold. A Roman Catholic immigrant from Peru told me that a folk healer caused a little rodent to crawl over her body. Then, he killed it, dissected it, and divined her problem.¹⁹ Afterward, he performed a ritual to fix her problem. The folk healer made the right diagnosis and cured her. One retired folk healer told me that the spirits would talk to her so that she could tell people what they needed to do. She was good at diagnosing illnesses and identifying malignant spirits.

Many of the people who attended the local Roman Catholic Church openly boasted that they also visited the local healers, bought merchandise from the stores that sold *brujería*, and used rituals associated with the pre-Christian native religion. In fact, they told me that members of the local evangelical/Pentecostal churches also used the *curanderos* when no one was watching even though they publically disavowed them. This was a point of sharp contention because many Pentecostal leaders preached against the Catholic Church.

I should note that Roman Catholic Charismatics were not opposed to folk Catholicism. Additionally, they distinguished themselves from Pentecostals by virtue of their devotion to Mary and the saints. Even though they love to worship Jesus and made good use of the spiritual gifts, they also spoke of Marian visions and prophecies. Most used saint paraphernalia. In interviews they spoke about visions, dreams, demons, angels, dead black hens, invisible dogs, and spirit guides. Some claimed supernatural abilities. Repeatedly, they invoked the memory of Padre Pío de Pietrelcina. He had the stigmata, manifested extraordinary gifts, and suffered greatly.²⁰ In a continuum between native religions and the missionary churches, Catholic Charismatics would be center-left.

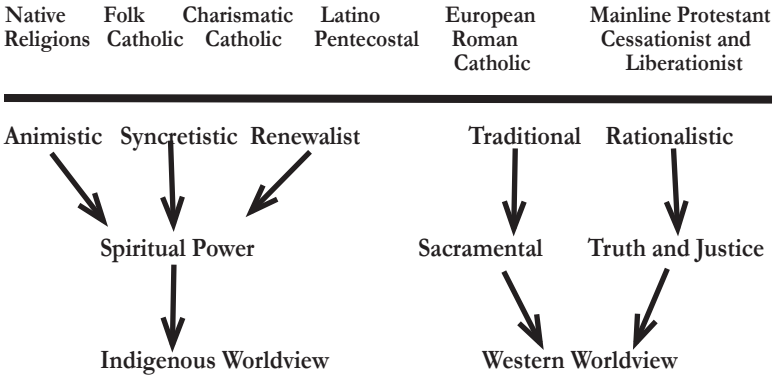


Figure 1: Continuum between Native Religions and Missionary Churches

The Flaw of the Excluded Middle

Anthropologist Paul Hiebert (1982) coined the term “excluded middle.” In short, he shows that the traditional worldview of modern Western Christianity divides reality between high religion and the natural world. High religion is the domain of the institutional church. It focuses on professional clergy, right doctrine, ethics, worship services, sacraments, church buildings, and the like. Clergy maintain the tradition and encourage conformity. They perform rites of passage, offer comfort, give encouragement, dispense sage advice, and provide pastoral services. Although they talk about the spiritual world, most of what they do focuses on the natural world.

Even though the typical Western Christian acknowledges God via prayer and other spiritual activities, most do not live with a God consciousness (i.e., spiritual orientation) that invades every aspect of their daily lives. This leads to a dualistic existence in which the average western Christian spends the vast majority of his or her life living as a practical atheist. In fact, the mainline churches of the West do not deal with issues associated with demonization, inner healing, curses, misfortune, or the evil eye. Furthermore, they do not have an operating category for the everyday supernatural to include angels, demons, ancestors, and witchcraft.²¹

Instead, the dominant forces of science, reason, and the worldview of naturalism mitigate an emphasis on everyday supernaturalism. For example, when one gets sick, the person will go to a medical clinic. Clergy will comfort the sick and offer prayers for emotional and spiritual wellbeing instead of providing a direct spiritual intervention. Indeed, the medical care providers are the healers of the body and the clergy are the caretakers of the soul. In light of this body/spirit dualism, few

specialists have the training or standing to integrate holistic healing. Furthermore, the “professionals” look upon those who attempt to implement holistic therapies that integrate body and spirit with suspicion.

On the other hand, folk religionists in Latin America focus on the area between high religion and the natural world. They address the “excluded middle” in practical ways. Typically, the religious specialists belong to the dominant faith but are not recognized as clergy or medical professionals. They are folk healers with spiritual powers, secret knowledge, and great wisdom. They interact with personal spiritual beings and impersonal spiritual forces that have power over human affairs.

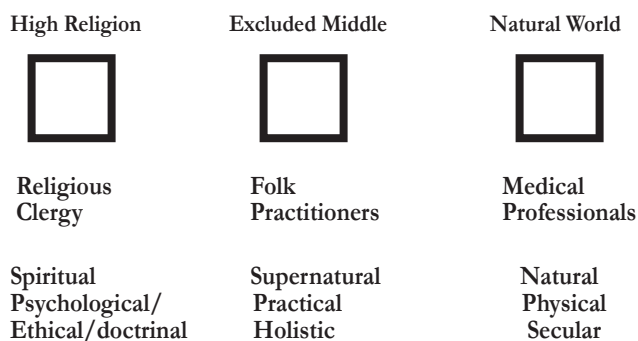


Figure 2: Continuum between High Religion and the Natural World

Conquest, Imposition, and Evangelism

Before the arrival of the European powers, the indigenous peoples of Latin America operated under an animistic worldview. They blended high religion, the middle zone, and the natural world into a seamless way of life. Religious specialists treated the body and the soul. They also served as mediators between the natural and the spiritual. They could divine causes for misfortune and could lead the people in rituals for wellbeing. Everyday spirituality attempted to maintain a harmonious relationship with the spirit world and often consisted of worshiping lesser spirits. Usually, the high god or the great creator was distant and irrelevant to everyday life. There was no separation between the sacred and the profane, (i.e., a natural/supernatural dualism). Everything was integrated.

When the European conquerors arrived, they established Roman Catholicism and required the people to convert to it. Partly this was due to the *reconquista* mindset that had seized the religious imagination of the Iberian Peninsula after the Moors were finally expelled in 1492. In the aftermath, Spain believed that

it had a divine mandate to evangelize the pagans and to eradicate false religions through conquest.²² Additionally, Franciscans believed that the millennium was at hand and wanted to convert the world in preparation for the coming of Christ. Others were inspired by a “noble savage” mentality. Since the native peoples were unencumbered by the heresies, corruptions, and sins of Europe, they could be fashioned into a pure church (Lynch 2012: 13-15).

The evangelistic mandate, eschatological vision, and desire to create a pure church gave baptism a new urgency. In 1529, a Franciscan missionary wrote “I and the brother who was with me baptized in this province of Mexico upwards of 200,000 persons – so many in fact that I cannot give an accurate estimate of the number. Often we baptize in a single day 14,000 people” (Vidmar, 2005: 244). By 1533, the sixty or so Franciscans who were in Mexico claimed to have baptized 1.2 million Indians. By 1536, another 3.8 million had been baptized (González 2008: 50-52).

Unfortunately, the friars did not fully evangelize the new converts by making them Christ disciples or by wholly engaging their worldview with the gospel before they baptized them. In fact, most were “annexed” into the church instead of converted to Christ.²³ When one considers the size of the mission field, the sense of urgency, and the limited numbers of friars, one will realize that it was next to impossible to disciple millions of newly baptized people.²⁴ Regardless, because of the lack of discipleship training, some converts maintained dual religious systems in which they moved between Roman Catholicism and the native faiths without attempting to integrate the two. In most cases, Roman Catholicism and the native faiths were syncretized. In so doing, the people maintained native spiritual categories in the guise of Roman Catholic symbols like the Virgin Mary and the saints.²⁵

John MacKay’s *The Other Spanish Christ* (1933) explores the place of the resultant Jesus in popular Latino Catholicism. Even though he wrote 80 years ago, much of what he said still resonates. Under the category of “The Creole Christ,” he argues that devotion to Jesus focuses primarily on his birth and his death (i.e., incarnation and atonement or baby Jesus and suffering Savior). In both instances, Christ is weak and easily patronized. The life and teaching of the virile Jesus are largely ignored. In fact, when it comes to dealing with the daily needs of life, people tend to go through the Virgin Mary and the Saints because they are more accessible than Jesus.²⁶

MacKay offers an interesting discussion on material images of Christ (statues, pictures, and the like) that are attributed spiritual power and used like fetishes. The material objects are adored and cherished in the same way as images of the Virgin and Saints because they have practical value in terms of popular religion

categories. In this way, the material objects serve as a buffer between the individual and the living Christ.

For example, during the festival of *El Señor de Los Milagros* in Lima, throngs of people perambulate behind a painting of Jesus. The painting has a mysterious origin and has healing powers. Those desiring to be healed make vows to it and wear a purplish robe for upwards to two years as a sign of devotion. Ironically, those who follow behind it in possession often pray to the Virgin Mary, the Saints, and to the painting itself. The resurrected Christ who walked with the disciples on the Emmaus Road or touched the sick with his loving hands remains a distant and largely clouded God (1933: 113-117).²⁷

It should be noted that Mary apparitions appealed to the native religions and enabled the early Catholic mission in Latin America to have great evangelistic success (Paul 1999: para 11).²⁸ In fact, most Latin American countries have their own Virgin visitation stories and shrines that date to the early time of evangelization. Often, Mary provided a religious and cultural bridge between the European colonizers and the native peoples. The bridge allowed for the mixing of Roman Catholicism with local traditions. The apparitions and subsequent blending are a main reason why the Christian faith was accepted and modified by the native peoples.²⁹ Marian visions still occur with great frequency throughout Latin America.³⁰

Philip Jenkins, a historian of religion, explores the relationship between the emergence of folk Catholicism and the successful evangelization of Latin America. Despite the fact that some missionary orders heroically advocated on behalf of the native peoples, he argues that the Roman Catholic mission strategy to the Americas established churches that largely disregarded the indigenous culture. This led to religious blending. Surprisingly, the resultant syncretism enabled long-term success. By the time that the church adapted the liturgy and the sacraments to the native context via inculturation, the native peoples had already created their own religious synthesis that focused on syncretistic devotion to saints and the Virgin Mary. Such activities did not require official clergy and allowed the people to connect Catholicism to their native faith systems. Through this unintentional blending, the Roman Catholic Church's accommodation to the culture of the people ensured its establishment throughout Latin America (Jenkins, 2011: 38-39).



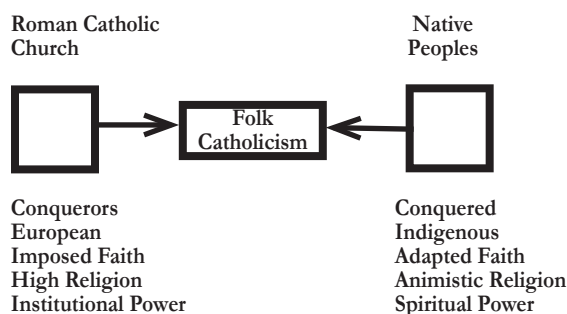


Figure 3: The Genesis of Folk Catholicism

Santería and Latino Folk Catholicism

Anthropologist Jacob Loewen served in Latin America for 30 years as a missionary and bible translator. Like the Peruvian priest, he observed that the Latino populations with which he worked syncretized the Christian faith to their context in the same way that European Christians had syncretized the faith to the Greco-Roman religious context before it was exported to the New World. In reference to folk Catholicism, he states that in Latin America many local specialized deities of the pre-Christian era were saved from oblivion by being rebaptized with the name of a Catholic saint (1986: 9).³¹ This is especially obvious in areas where Latinos practices Santería (e.g., Cuba and Miami, Florida).

Santería is a Latino syncretistic folk religion that blends Spanish Catholicism with West African religion instead of the indigenous religions of Central and South America. In many ways, it is very similar to other forms of Hispanic folk Catholicism. For example, one could easily substitute Afro-Caribbean for Native Peoples in figure 3 without changing anything else on the illustration. Granted, Santería differs in terms of the specifics. However, it shares a common worldview, employs parallel rituals, and has a similar pattern of integrating the Holy Mother and the saints into a native cosmology. When the example of Santería is compared to the other instances of Latino folk Catholicism, one will begin to discern the blurred contours of a pervasive Latin American folk spirituality.

While working as the pastor for a large Cuban refugee camp in Panama from 1994-1995, I observed Santería on a daily basis. For example, after celebrating a Christmas Eve service, a band took the stage and sang songs in a language that I did not understand. When I inquired, the people told me that it was Yoruba. For 450 years, specialists within the Cuban society had maintained the language

and religion of their African ancestors. Likewise, many of the same people who attended Mass also employed the services of the shamanistic priest. On many occasions, the *santeros* attempted to sacrifice chickens in the camp. The practice was banned for sanitary reasons.³² Additionally, I observed men who dressed up like San Lázaro on December 17. San Lázaro is a poor trickster god and a Roman Catholic saint. He is one of the many gods/saints in the popular religion of Cuba.

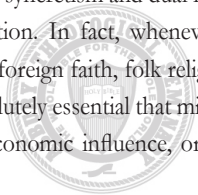
In Cuba proper, *Santeros* flock (and crawl) to the Roman Catholic Basilica of el Cobre in order to pay homage to the Lady of Charity (Virgin Mary) who is also believed to be the African goddess, Oshún. The image of the Black Virgin is a national treasure. Three poor people found it floating in the sea after the Virgin Mary miraculously saved them from a violent storm. Many believe that it was a divine gift to the Cuban people. As such, practitioners of Santería and Roman Catholic priests encourage devotion to it. In 1998, Pope John Paul II crowned the Lady of Charity as the Patroness of Cuba and personally venerated it. Pope Francis recently enshrined a Lady of Charity statue in the Vatican garden.

In a recent article about the Pope's 2015 pastoral visit to Cuba, a high ranking leader of Cuban Santería says that Santería and Roman Catholicism need each other. The leader attends Mass regularly, partakes of the Sacrament, and considers herself to be a good Catholic. She contends, "Catholicism is present in all manifestations of Santería. In the end, they have the same purpose" (VOA News, 2015). Sixty percent of Cubans are baptized Catholic. An equal amount practices Santería in Cuba. About 33 percent of Catholic Cubans are Charismatic (Pew 2014a: 109).

Santería is also popular with the Cuban diaspora in Florida. While working with a Cuban newspaper³³ in Florida from 1978-1981, I observed Santería altars and folk practices with established immigrants in the USA. Santería has staying power with the immigrants and their descendants because it resonates with the Cuban worldview, captures the essence of the Cuban personality, and has been integrated into the Cuban society.³⁴ In this regard, it is similar to other manifestations of Latino folk Catholicism.

The Priority to Contextualization

Of course, religious syncretism and dual religious systems are not unique to the Roman Catholic tradition. In fact, whenever Christianity is forced on a population or is adopted as a foreign faith, folk religion in the form of syncretism emerges. That is why it is absolutely essential that missionaries avoid the temptation to use positions of power, economic influence, or other non-spiritual incentives



to achieve quick results. This also points to a more important theological fact. Non-Christian peoples have to be evangelized in ways that engage their existing worldview categories to include those areas that deal with the spirit world.

Additionally, when the missionaries make the faith accessible through evangelism, church planting, leadership training, and translating the gospel message into the language and culture of the people, they must realize that they cannot contextualize the faith. Those being evangelized have to do that. For that reason, the people must be the leaders in their own evangelization. Simply stated, transplanted Christianity and forced conversions lead to compromised Christianity.

Anthropologist Charles Kraft argues that folk religion is the biggest problem in the global Church. Speaking of Roman Catholic, Protestant, and non-aligned traditions, he says that believers continue to go to the shamans and diviners because the Christian faith they received fails to deal with the excluded middle. For Kraft, the solution to folk Christianity, dual religious systems, and an encroaching secularism is “Christianity with power” (2015).³⁵ In fact; Latino Pentecostalism is Christianity with power (Payne 2013: 87-106).³⁶

In a brilliantly written piece, Kraft argues that syncretistic Catholicism has many parallels to the Pentecostal worldview and practice. After defining and describing animism and its practices, he affirms a Christus Victor theology that avows the reality of the spirit world and spiritual warfare. He contends that Pentecostalism distinguishes itself and its practices from animistic folk religion because it focuses exclusively on Jesus as the one who delivers the faithful from bondage to the spirit world. An emphasis on the spirit world is not problematic as long as the emphasis remains Christocentric and biblically founded. The greater danger is for Christians to embrace a naturalistic theology that causes them to ignore the spirit realm (Kraft 2015: 116-131).

New Trends in Religious Demographics in Latin America

This leads to my penultimate point. In Latin America, folk Catholicism is an indigenous faith that has been thoroughly contextualized by the Hispanic peoples. It is owned by them and it is expressed in terms of their cultural categories. Because of this, it answers all the questions that a religion should answer as it orients the people to the natural and spiritual realms. In fact, it is embedded in the core culture. From that perspective it functions as an ordering device for the society.

Up until 1909, when the Methodist Episcopal Church mission in Valparaiso Chile experienced a spontaneous Pentecostal revival with supernatural manifestations and the releasing of sign gifts, folk Catholicism had no Christian rivals in Latin America.³⁷ However, since the Pentecostal seed was planted in Chile,

the Spirit of Pentecost has popped up all across Latin America. Most notably, since 1970, it has been dramatically manifested in the Catholic Charismatic Movement.³⁸

According to Edward Cleary's, *The Rise of Charismatic Catholicism in Latin America* (2011), the Charismatic Movement is the dominant force in Latin American Catholicism. Over 60 percent (45 million) of Roman Catholics in Brazil identify as Charismatic (Chesnut 2013). In Panama, over 70 percent of Roman Catholics call themselves Charismatic. In the USA, 52 percent of Hispanic Catholics claim to be Charismatic. Thirty-one percent of them say they have received a direct revelation from God. Seventy-one percent say that the worship services that they attend include people displaying signs of excitement and enthusiasm, such as clapping or jumping. Fifty-nine percent of churchgoing charismatic Catholics say their services include speaking in tongues, prophesying, or praying for deliverance or healing (Pew 2014a: 97).

Even though there are more Charismatic Catholics than Pentecostals in Latin America, Latino Pentecostalism is also surging. In the 1960s, 90 percent of Latin America's population was Roman Catholic. Today, only 69 percent of adults identify as Catholic. The membership of the Roman Catholic Church continues to decline as growing numbers of Latinos affiliate with Pentecostal style churches (Pew 2014b :14). The Center for the Study of Global Christianity echoes this fact. It states that Latino renewalists³⁹ have grown from 12.8 million in 1970 to 181.3 million in 2010 and are expected to grow to 203.0 million by 2020 (2013: 54).

The trend to Pentecostalism is most striking in Central America. In Honduras there are more self-identified Protestants than Roman Catholics! Additionally, the vast majority of Protestants is Pentecostal (70 percent) or attends churches that feature Pentecostal style worship services.⁴⁰

When one combines the numbers of Latinos who have become Protestant or Charismatic, it is clear that folk Catholicism is losing its grip on the region.⁴¹ This represents a major religious demographic sea change of massive proportions. The statistical data requires an explanation.

Pentecostalism and the Rebirth of Christianity in Latin America

I suggest that Pentecostalism and the Catholic Charismatic Movement have grown large because they function as an indigenous religion that allows practitioners to engage all aspects of the Latino culture to include its worldview and its aesthetic heart. Pentecostalism gives believers a close and personal relationship with God in worship and connects them to a charismatic body of believers through which the spiritual gifts operate. By means of the spiritual gifts and personal worship experiences, the church enables the believers to engage Hiebert's "excluded middle."

In a satisfactory and alluring way, Pentecostalism appeals to the temperament, soul, and life orientation of the Latino populations.

The Pew Research Center came to a similar conclusion. “Pentecostalism’s compatibility with indigenous religions enhanced its appeal among Latin Americans. By emphasizing personal contact with the divine through faith healing, speaking in tongues and prophesying, Pentecostalism attracts those who share an affinity with indigenous religions that traditionally incorporate beliefs and practices associated with direct communication with the ‘spirit world’” (2014b: 26).

The Roman Catholic Charismatic Movement in Latin America has discovered Kraft’s Christianity with Power. However, it continues to hold to many practices that are associated with folk Catholicism (see figure 1). For this reason, it has a strong appeal to Hispanic Catholics who want Pentecost but do not want to abandon the Roman Catholic Church. On the other hand, Latino Pentecostals reject folk Catholicism without rejecting the dominant worldview that undergirds it. In some ways, Latino Pentecostalism is a protest movement against the dominant tradition and its blending with the indigenous faiths. Like folk Catholicism, Latino Pentecostalism answers cultural needs and has adapted to cultural forms. In one sense, it has allowed Latinos to reclaim a native cultural identity while reasserting their right to do theology independent from dominant ecclesial structures. Because of this, it serves as a force for Christian renewal throughout Latin America.⁴²

In sum, Latino Pentecostalism is growing because it is fully Christian, has spiritual power, connects practitioners to God in a personal way, delivers people from sin, frees people from spiritual bondages, provides an alternative community, speaks the language of the culture, lessens the gap between the clergy and the laity, and functions as an indigenous religion.



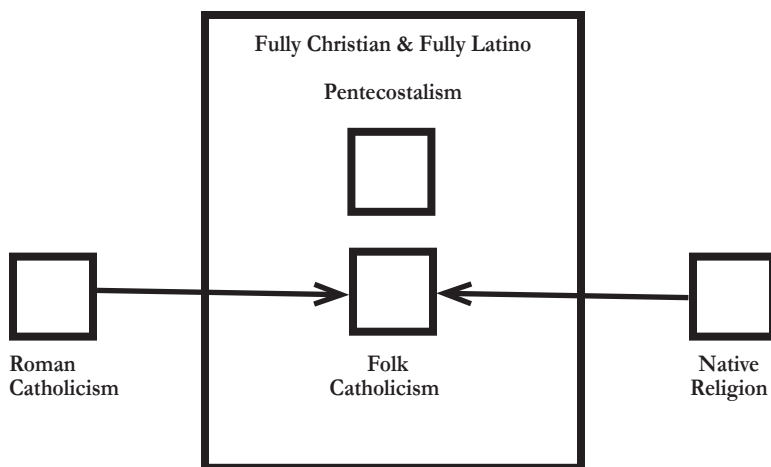


Figure 4: Indigenous Christianity in Latin America

Conclusion

Today, there are three forms of indigenous Christianity in Latin America; folk Catholicism, the Catholic Charismatic Movement, and Latino Pentecostalism. Folk Catholicism is syncretistic. Pentecostalism may seem syncretistic to the western outsider because it is a native religion that engages all aspects of the Latino worldview. In this regard, it functions at the level of a popular religion and could be described as “folk Christianity.” Ultimately, it is a renewal movement that has the potential to evangelize the unchurched masses and liberate Latino Christianity from syncretistic practices associated with popular religiosity. If the current trends continue, this generation will witness the rebirthing of Christianity in Latin America.

End Notes

¹ According to a recent Pew report 46 percent of American Latino Catholics attend churches that evidence Charismatic practices such as speaking in tongues, praying for miracles, and receiving prophesies. Forty percent of Catholics throughout Latin America associate with the Charismatic Movement. Hispanic Charismatic Catholics encourage spiritual gifts, enjoy spiritually charged worship that emphasizes the personal experience of God, often receive direct revelations from God, and have witnessed or participated in a deliverance service. In Panama, Brazil, Honduras, Dominican Republic and El Salvador, more than 50 percent of Catholics self-identify with the Charismatic movement. (Pew 2014b: 15-16 and 64-68).

Pentecostal churches also have enjoyed strong growth in the same countries ranging from 41 to 23 percent of the population (Pew 2014b: 14). Some have referred to the Pentecostal boom in Latin America. Today, 19 percent of the total population identifies as Protestant. The vast majority does not attend historic Protestant denominations. Seventy-five percent of them claim to be Pentecostal. Regardless of the name on the church or the individual self-identification of the participants, almost all Latino Protestants could be described as charismatic or Pentecostal (Pew 2014b: 7-8, and 15-16).

² E. A. Wilson (2003: 35-42) reviews social science explanations for the phenomenon of Pentecostal growth in Brazil and Latin America. Also, Samuel Escobar carefully examines sociological factors for the growth of Protestantism in Latin America in *Changing Tides: Latin America & World Mission Today* (2002: 77-87). Pew suggests that Latino Pentecostalism appeals to the masses because it emphasizes personal contact with the Divine, spiritual empowerment, an indigenous worldview, and upward social and economic mobility. The latter is often associated with the promulgation of the prosperity gospel (2014b: 26-27).

³ Many social scientists reject the use of the term “syncretism” because it has negative connotations and assumes that two systems of religion are being blended. In its place, they use “religious creolization.” The latter phrase assumes that a new system of belief has been formed. It is an independent category and not a mere blending of two dominant systems. Jesuits since the time of the Rites Controversy have struggled with the issue of syncretism. Many have argued that the term confuses the larger issue. They prefer to use the term “inculturation” and assume that syncretism may be a necessary accommodation to the cultural context. See Peter Schineller, S.J., “Inculturation and Syncretism: What is the Real Issue?” (1992: 50-54). This paper employs the term syncretism because it is the word that evangelical missiology uses to describe the blending of faith systems when practitioners maintain an official relationship to Christianity.

⁴ Gailyn Van Rheenen has a helpful article that describes and contrasts the worldviews of animism, secularism and theism (1993: 169-171). From my experience, I would contend that most Latinos operate under an eclectic worldview that blends elements of animism, secularism and theism. In fact, one could graph Latino worldview orientations in terms of the emphases each gives to the three main categories.

⁵ For example, most Hispanics prefer to self-identify by country of origin. Also, more people in South America speak Portuguese than Spanish. Additionally, over 15 million speak indigenous languages in Central and South America. One could argue that the term “Latin America” as employed by North Americans represents an artificial construct that minimizes cultural diversity and assumes a homogeneity that does not exist. The term was coined by the French in the mid-nineteenth century in tandem with a colonialistic agenda. This paper will not explore the massive literature on this topic. However, it will note that the phrase is a popular way for Hispanic leaders and intellectuals to describe their common identity. “*La Raza Hispánica*” (the Spanish race) is a possible synonym that has been employed by politicians and those in the Latino diaspora to describe a common Latino social existence.

⁶ While teaching on this topic at the Biblical Seminary in Medellín, Colombia in 2015, many students wanted to encourage the growth of secularism

because they had personal grievances against the established religion. In Colombia and other places in Latin America, Roman Catholicism has used its favored status as the state church to minimize and persecute Protestants. However, I argued that secularism is not the friend of Protestantism and that it is a double-edged sword that would ultimately hurt the cause of Christ.

⁷ Lynch offers an excellent social analysis of popular religion in Latin America (2012: 168-176).

⁸ The Amerindians were largely exterminated from the area. However, DNA studies show that they still compose 17 percent of the regional gene pool, mainly in Chile. Argentina is 87 percent European white. It has received large numbers of immigrants from Italy and Germany. Even Pope Francis from Argentina is the son of Italian immigrants. Uruguay is 88 percent European and 92 percent urban. Chile is 52 percent white and 43 percent mestizo (Berglee 2013, section 6.4).

⁹ The priest is the Rev. Roberto Moncada Palacios. P Roberto Moncada Palacios. Born: 15 Nov 1949. Ordained: 27 April 1998. Tlf: 9-647-0487 romopa@hotmail.com.

¹⁰ An excellent text on the blending of Christianity with the native religions in Europe is Stephen Benko's *The Virgin Goddess: Studies in the Pagan and Christian Roots of Mariology* (2003). Ondina and Justo González opine, "In Latin America, as elsewhere, people have always received and interpreted Christianity within the framework of their own world view – much as in northern European lands" (2008: 6). Even though the masses were baptized, "ancestral customs and beliefs survived and were combined with the faith taught by the church. Ancient gods were identified with the Virgin and the saints, and ancient forms of worship were now directed toward these specific saints" (2008: 6-7).

¹¹ Much has been written on the topic on contextualization as it relates to the missionary task. Other terms include indigenization, accommodation, inculturation, enculturation, and translatability of the gospel. Timothy Tennent offers a helpful review of the terms and their history in *Invitation to World Missions* (2010, 323-353). Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (1994) describes the various terms and offers a history of the concept. Under, "Mission as Contextualization," David Bosch also explores the terms and their development. See *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (2011, 420-432). I recommend Paul Hiebert's work on critical contextualization and beyond contextualization in *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (1994, 75-106). He distinguishes between good contextualization and problematic syncretism. Serious students should read the many articles on contextualization in Ralph Winters' and Steven Hawthorne's *Perspectives on World Christian Movement* (2008). The following statement represents a global evangelical perspective (Lausanne Covenant 2015, <http://www.lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant>). "The development of strategies for world evangelization calls for imaginative pioneering methods. Under God, the result will be the rise of churches deeply rooted in Christ and closely related to their culture. Culture must always be tested and judged by Scripture. Because men and women are God's creatures, some of their culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because they are fallen, all of it is tainted with sin and some of it is demonic. The gospel does not presuppose the superiority of any culture to another, but evaluates all cultures according to its own criteria of truth and righteousness, and insists on moral absolutes in every culture. Missions have all too frequently exported with the

gospel an alien culture and churches have sometimes been in bondage to culture rather than to Scripture. Christ's evangelists must humbly seek to empty themselves of all but their personal authenticity in order to become the servants of others, and churches must seek to transform and enrich culture, all for the glory of God.¹²

¹² In the Roman Catholic Church, popular piety is a technical term that refers to the various forms of prayer and worship that are inspired by their culture rather than by the official liturgy (Paul 1999, "Popular Piety," paragraph 16).

¹³ Robert Schreiter, C.P.P.S, an eminent Roman Catholic scholar and missiologist, carefully dissects issues associated with folk Catholicism and syncretism in *Constructing Local Theologies* (1993, 122-159). According to Robert Schreiter, "Syncretism and dual religious systems are problems for only certain members of the church. . . . Many Christians are able to live with syncretism or dual religious systems without any real difficulty" (1985: 151). Steven Bevans, SVD, also explores these issues in *Models of Contextual Theology*, especially under his discussion of the synthetic model (2002, 88-102). A classic Roman Catholic text on this topic is Louis Luzbetak's *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology* (1989, 292-373).

¹⁴ Every morning, I spoke to pensioners who gathered in the market area of Santa Ana. During the day, I spoke to teachers, administrators, groundskeepers, guards, and adult students at a school that I attended. In the evenings, I returned to the market area. I also spoke to people in San Jose and tourist areas. I recorded data from 86 conversations.

¹⁵ Donald McGavran (1990:139-142) observed the same phenomenon in India. He referred to it as a people movement.

¹⁶ Also, the legalistic teaching on tithing greatly annoyed her. Often she reminded me that the Roman Catholic Church received an offering and did not require people to pay a tithe. I heard a similar critique from a host of other people. Curiously, one nominal Catholic that I interviewed desperately desired to attend an evangelical church. He asked me to pray for God to bless his business because he could not afford to pay the tithe.

¹⁷ In *Witchcraft and Welfare: Spiritual Capital and the Business of Magic in Modern Puerto Rico*, Raquel Romberg (2003) describes the life of a *brija*. She is portrayed as part magician, part priestess, and part social worker. She helps people by channeling the benevolent forces of her spirit guides.

¹⁸ For a very insightful understanding of *curandero*, see the following interview with curandero Charles Garcia at <http://bearmedicineherbals.com/doc.html>.

¹⁹ This video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IF-SWv31380>) shows a folk healer using an egg to discern if a person suffers from the evil eye. A variety of random people speak about the practice. Many sound like testimonials in favor of folk healing. In America, 40 percent of Latinos believe in the evil eye (Pew 2014a: 110-116). The percentage is much higher in parts of Latin America. In a separate video a woman tells people how to determine if they have been victimized by the evil eye. First, pour water into a bowl. Afterward, with your index finger, drip three drops of cooking oil in the water. If the drops expand, you have a positive

result. To fix the problem, throw the water in the toilet and recite the Hail Mary three times. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BpNNs_MP0s.

²⁰ His gifts included the ability to see peoples' conscience during confession, to cure the sick with prayer, to be in two places at the same time, to give off a holy odor like a fragrant flower, and to cry when reciting the Rosary.

²¹ At a recent missiology conference, I watched a prominent American Missiologist who teaches anthropology arguing with a host of global missiologists. He contended that witch is an abusive social category that wrongly stigmatizes vulnerable woman. The global missiologists contended that they had encountered real witches with great spiritual powers. The American missiologist did not accept this.

²² For example, the 1513 *Requerimiento* was read to native people in the area of modern Mexico. It demanded that they accept Spanish rule and allow the missionaries to preach to them to the end that they convert to Christianity. Those who did not submit and convert would be forced to obey both the church and the state under threat of war and slavery (González 2008: 47).

²³ It should be acknowledge that Dominicans, Augustinians, and Jesuits did attempt to train the converts and eradicate pagan practices before baptizing them. They also tended to advocate for the welfare of the indigenous peoples and the Caribbean slaves. In time, the cultural war was abandoned and the native spirituality was no longer challenged (González 2008: 50-54).

²⁴ As time went on and more friars arrived, the missionaries attempted to teach the entire catechism to include complex theological dogma to include who God was, the Virgin Mary, the immortality of the soul, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, the mortal sins, and the works of mercy. A similar process simultaneously occurred in Asia. However, the long-term effectiveness of the training was minimized by the contradictory behavior of the Europeans, a striking lack of missionaries, and by the inability to dislodge the native religions.

²⁵ "Appearances could often deceive, and just when the friars thought they had a breakthrough and achieved outward conformity they discovered that 'at night the Indians continued to meet and call upon the devil and celebrate his feasts with many and diverse ancient rites.' The going was hard, a struggle against the inherent strength of Indian religion" (Lynch 2012: 13).

²⁶ "The common people feel more at their ease and more confident of success, if they present their pleas to the Santos Menores [lesser saints], the quality of whose life was less different than their own. The ordinary worshipper is a practical polytheist whose pantheon is presided over by Our Lady. She alone has never lost her crown. The Virgin is the real divinity of popular religion. The Trinity crowns her and the saints lead up to her" (MacKay 1933: 112-113).

²⁷ MacKay concludes "The Creole Christ" section with these words: "Hitherto the true lordship of Christ has not been acknowledged in South American [folk Catholicism]. He has been known as the Lord of the Sepulchre [sic] and the Lord of Good Harvests, as the archetype of the wounded lover and the material pledge of immortality; He has been known, too, as the possessor of a magic name.

But he remains to be known as Jesus, the Savior from sin and the Lord of all Life” (1933:117). Fortunately, that has been challenged by a budding Protestantism and the Catholic Charismatic Movement that has rediscovered a personal Jesus without neglecting the Virgin Mary.

²⁸ “How can we fail to emphasize the role which belongs to the Virgin Mary in relation to the pilgrim Church in America journeying towards its encounter with the Lord? Indeed, the Most Blessed Virgin ‘is linked in a special way to the birth of the Church in the history of the peoples of America; through Mary they came to encounter the Lord.’ Throughout the continent, from the time of the first evangelization, the presence of the Mother of God has been strongly felt, thanks to the efforts of the missionaries. In their preaching, ‘the Gospel was proclaimed by presenting the Virgin Mary as its highest realization. From the beginning — invoked as Our Lady of Guadalupe — Mary, by her motherly and merciful figure, was a great sign of the closeness of the Father and of Jesus Christ, with whom she invites us to enter into communion.’ The appearance of Mary to the native Juan Diego on the hill of Tepeyac in 1531 had a decisive effect on evangelization. This influence goes beyond the boundaries of Mexico, spreading to the whole continent. America, which historically has been and is a melting pot of peoples, has recognized ‘in the mestiza face of the Virgin of Tepeyac, in Blessed Mary of Guadalupe, a great example of perfectly inculturated evangelization.’ Therefore, not only in Central and South, but also in North America as well, the Virgin of Guadalupe is venerated as Queen of all America” (Paul 1999: paragraph 11).

²⁹ See Mary O’Connor, “The Virgin of Guadalupe and the Economics of Symbolic Behavior” (1989: 105-11) and Jacques Lafaye, *Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe, The Formation of Mexican National Consciousness* (1976).

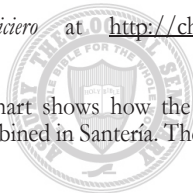
³⁰ One woman with whom I spoke in Costa Rica described a Marian visitation that was witnessed by thousands of people in 1996. According to her, the visitation was preceded by prophetic messages. On the first Tuesday of every month, the faithful traveled to Sara Piqui in Costa Rica to witness the appearance in the sky. On one occasion, the Virgin stopped the sun. Gold glitter often manifested on the people. *Marian Apparitions of the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries* contains a chronological list of Mary apparitions from 1900-2011 <http://campus.udayton.edu/mary/resources/aprtable.html>.

³¹ Other classic articles on this topic are William Madsen, “Christo-Paganism: A Study of Mexican Religious Syncretism” (1957: 108-180) and Melvin Herskovitz, “African Gods and Catholic Saints in New World Religious Belief,” (1937: 635-643).

³² For a sociological interpretation of the liminal aspects of this refugee camp, see William Payne’s “Religious Community in a Cuban Refugee Camp: Bringing Order out of Chaos” (1997: 133-154).

³³ See *El Noticiero* at <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn99026940/>.

³⁴ The following chart shows how the Yoruba gods and the Roman Catholic saints have been combined in Santería. The chart also shows the attributes of each god/saint.



Orisha or Yoruba God	Roman Catholic Saint	Ascribed Attribute
Agayu	San Cristóbal	Fatherhood
Babalúaye	San Lázaro	Sickness
Eleggua	San Antonio de Padua	Removing spells
Ibeji	San Cosme y San Damián	Children
Inle	San Rafael	Medicine
Obatalá	Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes	Clarity
Orgún	San Pedro	Iron
Olokún	Nuestra Señora de la Regla	Profundity
Orula	San Francisco	Wisdom and fate
Osanyin	San José	Herbs
Oshosi	San Norberto	Hunting and Protection
Oshún	Nuestra Señora de la Caridad	Erotic Love
Oya	Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria	Death
Shangó	Santa Bárbara	Force
Yemayá	Nuestra Señora de Regla	Motherhood

Source: ¿La santería es un ritual católico? (Is Santería a Catholic Ritual?) <http://www.mscperu.org/biblioteca/1esoterismo/santeria.htm>

³⁵ “It is unfortunate that Christians all over the world are practicing a Christianity devoid of the ability to deal with the spirit world. They are practicing the powerless Christianity the missionaries brought them. . . . Thus, largely because of deficiencies in the worldviews of the missionaries who helped them come to faith but rendered their faith powerless, the Christianity practiced in much of the world is animistic.” Charles Kraft, *The Evangelical’s Guide to Spiritual Warfare* (2015: 50-51).

³⁶ William Payne, “Discerning an Integral Latino Pentecostal Theology of Liberation” (2013: 87-106). In particular, see the sections on “Characteristics of Latino Pentecostalism” (92-94) and “The Exodus Story (94-96) which shows how the Latino Pentecostal hermeneutic is applied to a text.

³⁷ For more information on the Pentecostal revival in Chile, see Willis Collins Hoover and Mario G. Hoover, *History of the Pentecostal Revival in Chile* (2000). See also a Spanish language version of the founding at http://www.iglesiamaipu.cl/index.php?tipo=pagina&pagina_codigo=7. Juan Sepúlveda offers a detailed analysis of how Latino Pentecostalism differs from American Pentecostalism. He also describes the primary characteristics of Latino Pentecostalism. He is from Chile and writes on the sociology of religion and the Chilean Pentecostal Methodist Church. See “Theological Characteristics of an Indigenous Pentecostalism: Chile,” (1996): 49-61) and “Indigenous Pentecostalism and the Chilean Experience,” (1999: 111-34).

³⁸ For a country-by-country statistical analysis of Latino Pentecostalism, see Cliff Holland’s “The Latin American Socio-Religious Studies Program / Programa Latinoamericano de Estudios Sociorreligiosos” (PROLADES) at <http://prolades.com/>.

³⁹ “Renewalist practices — such as receiving divine healings or direct revelations, witnessing the devil or evil spirits being driven out of a person, or speaking or praying in tongues — are particularly common among Pentecostal Protestants. Roughly two-thirds of Latino Pentecostals say they have received a divine healing of an illness or injury (64%) or a direct revelation from God (64%). About six-in-ten say they have witnessed an exorcism (59%) and about half say they have spoken or prayed in tongues (49%)” (Pew 2014a: 95).

⁴⁰ Cliff Holland, the director of the Latin American Socio-Religious Studies Program told me that 75 percent of Latino Pentecostals do not speak in tongues. That percentage also includes Pentecostal pastors. He suggested that one becomes Pentecostal in Latin America when one attends a Pentecostal church. While preaching in various Pentecostal Holiness churches in Costa Rica, I asked the people in the various congregations if they had been baptized with the Holy Spirit or spoke in tongues. Most responded in the negative. Additionally, many of the Pentecostal students at the Biblical Seminary of Colombia in Medellín also affirmed that they did not speak in tongues. Other non-Pentecostal students quietly affirmed that they did speak in tongues. The actual distinction between a person who self-identifies as Pentecostal and one who attends a non-Pentecostal church may be minimal.

⁴¹ Ninety-five percent of Latino Roman Catholic Charismatics have a high view of the Virgin and still pray to her. However, they no longer need to supplement their Christianity with the other attributes of folk religion. Plus, they have rediscovered a personal Jesus and strongly affirm the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

⁴² “Nativistic movements like Latino Pentecostalism seek to reclaim a cultural identity that has been lost or denied. They begin to blossom in the final stages of colonialism. Oftentimes, they restate the faith in such a way as to bring it into line with cultural ideals. In the restating of the faith, the believers separate themselves from the ‘landlords’ and take responsibility for their own religion” (Schreiter 1993: 13).

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