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“RELIGIOUS MOBILITY AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS WITHIN
NEOPENTECOSTAL MEGA-CHURCHES IN LIMA, PERU”

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1 Introduction

Peru of the 21st century is characterized by an atmosphere of progress and upward social mobility among its different social classes. An economy growing at a rate of approximately 8% annually is reflected in all of Peru but especially in the capital city of Lima. Greater Lima, with more than nine million inhabitants, represents approximately 30% of the Peruvian population and a multicultural mix of people from the country's different provinces. Due to the existing centralism, Lima is the place where the Peruvian upper class live and the upwardly mobile migrate. The fast economic development has led to structural and cultural changes. The English language has become commercialized and is marketed to the masses. There is a "prestige factor" associated with being able to speak the language and being able to communicate in English is a basic requirement needed by those who wish to get a well-paid job in multi-national companies located in Peru and elsewhere. This current trend in Peru, and particularly in its capital city of Lima, must be taken into account when studying Evangelism - a religious minority group that represents no more than 12.5% of the national population (www.inei.gob.org). Within the evangelical landscape, the Pentecostal churches have the majority of followers worldwide. The purpose of this investigation is to study the emergence of a group called "Neopentecostals", as they are usually referred to by researchers, in Latin America and in Peru.

Neopentecostal churches nowadays are fast growing churches in the pluralized Latin American society and tend to influence other evangelical churches. They tend to attract people in the emerging social classes and their youngsters. They celebrate their faith in services characterized by spectacular light shows, entertaining sermons and music, all of which combine to create an atmosphere of a rock concert rather than a church service. These features contribute to the popularity of Neopentecostal churches, particularly among the younger generations aged 18 to 49, the central adult and reproductive ages. The Neopentecostal mega-churches in Lima form an interesting segment within the city's evangelical landscape. Although very little research has been done on these new evangelical groups, it's crucial that more attention be paid to them.

The term “Neopentecostalism” has a religious reference to Pentecostalism, while the prefix “neo” signifies a departure from Pentecostalism. The distance between Pentecostal ethics and its connected negation of “the world” can be described as a basic difference. Neopentecostals value social and economic success expressed through prosperity theology. The openness of Neopentecostals to social progress and success coincides with postmodern social categories. Prosperity theology can be viewed as a religious evolution that gives these churches a market advantage over other religious groups, especially in emerging social classes. Due to historical migratory patterns, Lima’s emerging social class consists of predominantly younger generations. Young people form the majority of Lima and Peru’s inhabitants and therefore represent a significant segment of its society (Arrellano/Burgos, 2010).

The target groups of Neopentecostals are the younger generations of Limeños (people who live in Lima), which are the benefactors of their country’s recent economic resurgence. This is an important aspect of the present investigation. The aforementioned societal segment does not only form a majority of Limeños but also can be depicted as dynamic sector of a quickly growing and rapidly developing country. That makes them a significant group within the religious landscape that is the focus of this present investigation - Lima’s Neopentecostal mega-churches. More than any other Protestant sector, Neopentecostalism has attracted the upper and upwardly mobile social classes, which distinguishes it from Pentecostalism, which has been described as a refuge of the impoverished masses in Latin American cities (Lalive D’Epinay, 1969).

A wealth of information exists on Pentecostalism; however, the success of Neopentecostal mega-churches in Peru requires further examination. This investigation aims to present a valuable contribution to the contemporary debate in the sociology of religion, including the description of Neopentecostalism’s growth and influence in Latin America. Collaborating with Peruvian researchers has fostered academic synergy and synchronicity in this regard.

This investigation shall contribute empirically to the existing research that exists on Neopentecostalism as a driver of social change in Latin America and abroad. Therefore the basic objective of the investigation is to explore Neopentecostalism in Peru as a new phenomenon within the wider field of Pentecostalism. Additionally, this investigation

seeks to provide further understanding of this phenomenon in light of the social conditions that characterize the current trend of economic growth and prosperity in Lima.

This investigation will outline the reasons for the attractiveness and success of Neopentecostal churches among the emerging social classes. It will also explore the connection between aesthetics, religious convictions, practice, and organizational structure. The present investigation focuses on the role of religion and how it forms the basis of social networks that promote social progress in terms of lifestyle, personal finance and time management which are reflected in the material possessions associated with prestige and success. Neopentecostal churches aim to attract followers within the framework of rapid economic development in the emerging social classes, while interpreting social and cultural changes of religious actors. Therefore, social backgrounds and mobility, religious biographies, motivations of participation and integration into church, as well as religious convictions and aesthetic elements, the organizational structure, products and the marketing of the churches are all key factors to be explored in the relationship between Neopentecostal lifestyles in Lima and the social position of religious actors.

Lima's Neopentecostal mega-churches, with their modern style, link the Christian faith to the event oriented postmodern commercial world that has reached developing countries. Neopentecostal mega-churches take the form of convention centers and converted cinemas and sporting centers halls. Moreover, their followers can choose from attending one or more of six services typical offered on a Sunday. Many of these followers are young, which is a divergence from of traditional churches around the world, which have experienced a decline in the numbers of the young generation attending services.

As pastor of a traditional Lutheran church in Peru, where one's own church forms a tiny segment inside an evangelical minority, what I observed in the mega-churches made me feel as though I had entered another world. Many evangelical churches are losing members. My research will show that many of these members have joined

Neopentecostal churches, which have become the most attractive churches within the contemporary evangelical landscape, especially for younger emerging social classes in Lima.

The title of the investigation implies the basic thesis of this investigation, namely that a religious movement exists within the evangelical landscape towards Neopentecostal churches as well as a movement within Neopentecostalism itself, both of which should be investigated. This religious movement is a reflection of social upward mobility, since the perceived socially higher class churches are the most attractive churches within Neopentecostalism. Two particular cases serve as evidence of the wave of international popularity that these churches are currently riding. Neopentecostal churches with foreign pastors and partially bilingual services reveal how the English language connotes prestige and international citizenship. Likewise, the use of international brands makes Lima's Neopentecostal churches more attractive. Thus, these churches promote international citizenship for their young socially emerging generations. This investigation aims to explain the relationship between the religious and the social mobility of religious actors. Members of Neopentecostal churches often come from an evangelical background. Within Neopentecostalism there exists a movement from some churches towards others. The necessity to link religious mobility to social classes is relevant because the Neopentecostal churches attract the segment of the population that is moving upwards.

I will investigate the social reality and the role of Neopentecostal mega-churches in social progress while attempting to explain these tendencies by illuminating the relationship between the goal of progress and typical movements of religious mobility towards and within Neopentecostal churches. A general socio-religious issue for the Peruvian social context will be the contemporary significance of religion through the tendencies that will be explored about Neopentecostalism.

Since the study's subject is a societal minority, statistical information is very limited, which makes quantitative research quite difficult. Therefore, the investigation will provide qualitative research finding for the religious landscape of Lima. It will also include a more specific quantitative component. The actual percentage of

Neopentecostals within the Protestant landscape will be examined in this investigation. In terms of the socio-demographic composition of Neopentecostal churches, it has to be pointed out that churches do not register their members, therefore fundamental data is missing. In light of the lack of this information, my research necessitates more precise quantitative analysis. Hence, the investigation includes a quantitative inquiry of 1920 people in Lima through the institute of opinion polls IOP that shall enrich the statistical database of religion for Lima, albeit only on a small scale.

Another interesting aspect of Neopentecostal churches in Peru is their political and public influence. Their founders and principal leaders are regularly seen in newspapers. Therefore Neopentecostalism is the evangelical sector in Lima that has public influence, due to its central location in Lima, the social, economic and political center of the country. They have access to money and mass media, or in a bourdieuan language: significant economic and social capital, which other evangelical sectors don't have. In this thesis, I will not focus on the Pentecostals' public presence in spite of how culturally relevant this may be.

Outlook of the investigation

The following chapter presents the theoretical framework of the investigation and gives an overview of the literature and the contemporary sociology of religion that serve to explain the investigation's central issues. It explains Lima in a local context for various religious actors. Furthermore, it introduces and explains the general term "evangelicals" in Peru and the position of Neopentecostals within the evangelical landscape. It also serves as an introduction to the problems that have been investigated and how the field of study can be theorized.

The third chapter focuses on Neopentecostalism in Peru and examines the particular churches that provide the cases for this study. In the following section, the methodology used to gather data is explained. The fourth chapter outlines the findings uncovered and the final chapter will serve as a summary of the findings of the study.

2 Neopentecostalism - Theoretical Grounding

2.1 Religious Pluralism in Latin America

This study is based on the sociology of religion. Since the emergence of religious pluralism caused by the massive growth of evangelical churches in the Roman Catholic world in the second half of the last century, the monopoly of Catholic Church has decreased to 81.3%. This percentage demonstrates that most religious actors in Peru are still members of the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, as the well-known theory of Charles Taylor (Taylor, 2007) suggests, religion in Latin America, including Peru, has become increasingly more individualized (Burdick, 1993; Martin 1990). Overall, religion in Lima has transformed from being a traditionally predetermined facet of life into a malleable and selectable entity. This fact should be taken into account throughout the study on religious mobility.

The “Theory of Secularization”, a complex mix of different empirical explanations for the declination of social significance of religion (Martin, 1978; Berger 1980; Wilson, 1982; Bruce, 2002; Dobbelaere, 2002; et.al.) can be neglected in the Latin American context, since on a global level, the theory of religious decline has been disproved, especially in light of the enormous growth of Protestantism in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Pentecostals forms the principal Christian denomination at the heart of this growth represent more than half the members of the Catholic Church. This trend proves that the paradigm shift toward a “process of religious resacralization” (Krech, 1999) and the “return of the sacred “appears in the form of a “revitalization of old living traditions“ (Casanova, 1994: 225). The emergence of religious pluralism as a new phenomenon is challenging the majority position of the Catholic Church in Latin America (Gill, 1999; Martin, 1990, 2005; Höllinger, 2006; Schäfer, 2008, 2009), as is the expansion of an open religious market that suggests a preference for the rational choice theories in Latin America.

The logic for explaining religious pluralization in Latin America is based on the two theories of anomy and competition. While the competition theory explains the growth

on the basis deficits in the majority (Catholic) church, the anomy-appraisal theory explains the growth of Protestant (especially Pentecostal) movements during times of crisis and can be interpreted in as either compensation or integration. Compensation suggests that religious actors gain compensation from suffering through times of conflict. The compensation therefore is of a causal nature while the thesis of integration is based on the successful adoption of better living standards by Protestants (Schäfer 2009). The anomy-appraisal theory predicates crisis and conflict and focuses on causal direction, while the competition or market theory, as part of the rational choice theory, focuses on action and purpose. The two basic explanatory theories, on a meta-level, differentiate between a causal orientated side and a focus on action of rational purpose on the other side. The market-theory is incorporated in the latter (Schäfer, 2009: 14-15). Steigenga shows that the assumed contradiction between these theories is not well founded. Rather, the different appraisals represent different perspectives of the same object. Causal arguments are based on macro-structures and are therefore demand-sided, while the latter represents the supply-sided perspective. The theories of Gill, 1998, 1999, 2003 and Chesnut, 2003 serve as examples.

The aspect of compensation in Latin America

Instead of diminishing the emergence of evangelicalism to a theory of competition, I would like to argue that the Latin American situation demands an integrative model of explanation that includes the micro and macro-aspects of empirical testing which also integrate the theory of deprivation in terms of correlation between socio-economic problems within society and their compensation through religion. Norris and Inglehart analyzed the impact of deprivation and found that the sense of a lack of existential security is the most significant reason for religiosity. Their empirically acquired macro-analysis identifies through socioeconomic welfare, that this element distinguishes countries and societies from each other in terms of religiosity (Norris/Inglehart, 2004). Empirical findings of religiosity in Latin America use the Gini-Index (the correlation between church attendance and social injustice), the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) which shows that exemplary democracies like Chile and Uruguay permit the idea of secularization, but in general the systems are highly corrupt, ineffective political systems with social inequality. The lack of

existential security speaks for a certain need for management of contingency or “sacred canopies”. According to Norris/Inglehart a higher level of socio-economic insecurity and religious pluralization are primary factors of religiosity (Pickel, 2011, 376). Social justice is still a contentious topic in Latin America and it is one reason why Christianity underwent a geographical shift, from the northern hemisphere to the developing countries, where church membership is much stronger because of the Pentecostal movement.

Given Peru’s social inequality, a weak state presence and corruption can be seen as factors of Pentecostal, as well as Neopentecostal growth, although not exclusively. Since the present investigation concentrates on Neopentecostalism and its presence in emerging social classes, the compensational aspect doesn’t play such an obvious role as it does in Pentecostalism.

All in all, the explanatory value of this theory shall not be neglected in the context of Latin America, and of Peru in particular. However, in the atmosphere of progress in contemporary Peru that exists today, the theory seems somewhat obsolete. Even though this theory will not explicitly serve as the study’s framework, its central issues will be touched upon in the following sections.

2.2 *The Market Theory*

Considering the connection between the behavior of Neopentecostals and business enterprises in the economic market place, the concept of market theory seems to be a valuable instrument to understand and explain the logic and activity of “religious firms”. The market theory serves as a bridge between the religious and economic field and is the theoretical framework of this investigation. Hitherto, the different aspects of the theory including its roots and history, as well as its application to the Latin American context shall be explained in the following text.

Historical and general introduction

The European scholar Berger, as the first detractor against the American concept of market theory, declared that religious pluralism sooner or later would cause secularization, because according to his former thesis, religious actors have to choose between “supply of sense” and “sacred canopies” – the term he uses to describe the function of religion in times of personal crisis, is comparable to Luhmann’s “Kontingenzbewältigung“ (Luhmann, 1977, Berger, 1967). According to Berger, it questions the certainty and also the credibility of each religious provider, causing an abstention from religion: the “heretical imperative” (Berger, 1980). Due to the “American exception” (the stable even-growing religiosity in the plural context of North America described by European scholars and later in the empirical cognition of the religious evolution in Latin America), Berger had to amend his assumptions of religious pluralism. The lack of religious vitality in a context of higher religious dispersion was disproved and has led to different expressions of what is referred to as market theory. Market theory shall only be referred to briefly, in order to give some background before moving on to its application in Latin America.

The theory of rational choice, religious market and the thesis of pluralization are key aspects related to the theory-complex, which states that pluralism invigorates the vitality of religious institutions, thus causing more participation (Davie, 2007). American scholars usually opt for the appraisal of the universal theory of rational choice to secularization, which accentuates each of the market theory’s core elements. All rational choice models require a structure of opportunities in a social situation where rational individuals choose a religious community after calculating its costs and benefits for their subjectively compiled list of preferences. This stands contrary to the secularization theory as a “new paradigm” in the sociology of religion (Finke/Stark, 2000: 27) which is based on the experiences of empirically observed religiosity as a stable and vital subsystem due to the condition of religious plurality and the adoption of the religious market centered on the subjective action of people (Finke/Stark, 2003: 99). The anthropological constant of religion as expression of universal human necessity, such as security or sense of life, leads to the fundamental existence of religiosity of an individual’s psychological impetus, not a social one as Durkheim stated (Stark/Brainbridge,

1987: 25), which supposes a constant religious demand and therefore a choice of products (Stark/Finke, 2000). Since the demand is individualized, there are different preferences in the acceptance of the religious offer. Religious action arises from “cost/benefit calculations and is therefore rational behavior“ (Stark/Finke, 2000: 56). Stark/Brainbridge state that religion provides compensation for existential human problems and possesses a monopoly on ultimate questions, because “...the most general compensators can be supported only by supernatural explanations”. Consequently, this definition of religion is similar to Luhmann’s “Kontingenzbewältigung” who described religions as “compensator systems that rest on supernatural assumptions” (Stark/Brainbridge, 1987: 39-40). A consequence for monopoly religious institutions, like majority churches, is the difficulty they have in adapting to a changing environment.

The research findings of Iannaccone enhance the theory of rational choice by focusing on the relationship between religious pluralization and religious vitality. Religious competition is understood to be a necessary condition for religious vitality because “...no single religious firm can satisfy all market niches” (Finke/Stark, 2003: 100-101). Iannaccone states in his “economic theory of religion” that competition is a core element of denominations functioning as religious firms in the religious market, each one interested in improving their position in the market at the expense of the others. This is especially true for religious institutions with high social barriers and exclusive membership that, through stringent admission policies, solve the free-rider problem and are very attractive for people looking for the highest benefits. Therefore, costly sects show rapid growth (Finke/Stark, 2006: 249). Offering an exclusive reward in this life and beyond, they exclude people with lesser commitment, consolidate their group’s identity and guarantee exclusivity and desirability of membership. The empowering effort and practical theological value of the Rational Choice Theory compared to the fatalistic Secularization Theory (Pickel, 2011) should be highlighted.

This overview shall provide basic information for Latin America. Before moving forward, some general criticisms surrounding these theories will be discussed.

General Criticism

The Rational Choice Theory and its derivatives have received criticism, especially from European scholars, for their one-sided, non-historical perspective that neglects cultural and historical reasons for naturally integrating into a certain church. Furthermore, the theory focuses on the exceptional situation of an immigrant nation to a global level (Bruce, 2002). The questions that this theory tries to answer are micro-sociological in nature. It has been proven that the rational choice approach has a very broad and general view of social phenomena and has often had to adjust to the empirical abnormalities justified by bounded rationality. In particular, Hamilton criticized the reward orientation of religious people that the rational choice model assumes: "...it still fails to account for why people come to think they can get the rewards they desire by supernatural sources in the first place...It is not at all clear why many religious beliefs should constitute compensation of some kind." (Hamilton, 2001: 221-222). Burdick further reduces the market model to spiritual opportunism that solves concrete problems (Burdick, 1993: 8).

In my opinion, the market theory fails to question the conditions for religious demand. Another problem is the plural religious vitality within Catholicism, which despite being a monopolistic religion, tries to cater to a wide range of market niches. Predominantly Catholic nations show a high religious vitality, and it is debatable to what extent this proves an internal pluralism within Catholicism (Pickel, 2001). In the case of Peru, Catholicism still plays a very significant role in all its different facets from the power of conservative Opus Dei on one side to Base communities founded on liberation theology on the other side. Catholicism by no means is a monolithic block, but rather hosts a diversity that is similar to that of the evangelical landscape.

It could be argued that the concept of the market theory is flawed in its theoretical axiom that religious decisions are based on economic cost/benefit calculations by the religious actors in general. This basic flaw in the theory is itself an indication of the "blind spot" of market theories in general; the motivations, interests and necessities of religious actors are not their focus. The market theory nevertheless, explains motivation, interests and activities of religious firms. In particular, Neopentecostal churches and their market behaviors confirm the value of the theory for these types of religious

communities. Conversely, the theory's strength and focus help to reveal its own flaws. This shall not be neglected in the following section, which focuses on the application of the market theory in the Latin American pluralized religious market.

2.3 Market Theory in Latin America – Chesnut

Since Neopentecostalism is not committed to religious traditions, but is adaptive to human needs in particular times and places, its success has to take into account the societal conditions of a fragmented society characterized by strong social inequality, a weak state and widespread corruption. The attraction of Neopentecostalism among higher and emerging social classes can be analogically compared to firms in the economic market. When discussing Neopentecostalism, it is appropriate to focus on the market theory, which according to Cleary (2007) is essential for Neopentecostals, because their theology is based on prosperity. Corten, who has investigated Neopentecostals, also concentrates on market theory (Corten, 2001). Therefore, market theory forms a useful theoretical entry point into Neopentecostalism.

A general strength of Chesnut's works on religious pluralization is that he highlights the social usage of religious practices and their significance in terms of beliefs and symbolic practice. In doing so, he encompasses the role of the Holy Spirit, faith healing, exorcism as well as prosperity theology. Corten, on the contrary, does not connect religious needs to the particular religious practices (Corten, 2001: 110). In Chesnut's empirical research concerning the social usage of faith healing in Brazilian Pentecostal churches, he says that cognitive religious content has to be physically symbolized (Chesnut 1997). In the context of poverty, faith healing provides physical and psychological health. The religious interpretation of a crisis generates religious demand. Chesnut highlights the theoretical and methodological challenge of integrating multiple life dimensions (body, emotion, and cognition) into the research of religious practice. He explains how religious convictions can help followers cope with social experiences.

This study will employ Chesnut's advanced application of the market theory for Latin America "competitive spirits", which is based on the rational choice approach of Stark/Bainbridge and analyzes the success stories of faith based organizations forming the upper echelon of the Latin American religious marketplace which includes Pentecostals, the CCR (Catholic Charismatic Renewal) and the religion of the African Diaspora, which flourishes in countries with a strong African heritage as it does in Brazil. Chesnut selected the most competitive religious firms in Latin America (Chesnut, 2003: 14) for his study. The Latin American context of religious pluralism, according to Chesnut, shows that the religious economy is more than spiritual opportunism; it is "a powerful theoretical paradigm for understanding why certain faith-based organizations thrive while others stagnate and fail." (Chesnut, 2003: 7). In general, Chesnut's thesis for the religious market in Latin America can be summarized by the following: The strong consumer demand for faith healing among the popular classes throughout Latin America has led to the mass appeal of faith based organizations that produce it most efficiently.

From Catholic strategic market orientation to religious pluralism

Anthony Gill's "Rendering to Cesar" applies the economic model to an analysis of religion in Latin America and explains that out of religious competition within Protestantism, Latin American bishops have emerged, who are dedicated to the improving living conditions of the poor, especially in those countries where Protestantism has grown quickly. Gill discovered that historically, the church's main goal was to maintain a harmonious relationship with any elite political faction in power, even if this required neglecting the poor masses (Gill, 1998: 19-70). Chesnut states that active Catholics are often concentrated in the middle and upper classes as a result of the church's focus on societal elites with the highest financial and religious capital (Chesnut, 2003: 39). Even though this investigation will not focus on Catholicism, the aforementioned phenomenon indicates that even Neopentecostalism focusing on higher social classes, does not reach the elites of Latin American societies.

This example highlights the need to comprehend the fundamental principles of the market model. In Latin America, Catholicism held a privileged position as a religious

monopoly introduced by the Spanish and Catholics continued to impose their faith in independent nations until the middle of the twentieth century. As a fundamental principle, Stark/Bainbridge stated that religious monopolies are more passive, because the state secured the religious market and the lack of competition, which consequently leads to a lack of quality control and a large amount of nominal believers that feel culturally connected but participate irregularly (Stark/Mc. Cann, 1993: 130).

The pluralistic market that developed after the legal establishment of religious liberty in most Latin American countries during the 1920s has grown rapidly in the second half of the 20th century. Unlike in a religious monopoly, a free religious market is characterized by competition that enforces religious firms to offer products according to consumer tastes. Chesnut points out, that consumers can choose from a variety of Pentecostal options available to them according to their class, gender, age, etc (Chesnut, 2003: 61). Chesnut states the fact that there are hundreds if not thousands of distinct Pentecostal denominations, is not a coincidence but rather an organizational charisma in congruence with the logic of commercial economy. The benefit of such an unrivaled position is a “...high degree of specialization and niche marketing that targets specific sets of consumers.” (Chesnut, 2003: 59).

What on first sight looks like complete chaos (Hollenweger), proves to be a market advantage, as only fragmented, independent religious enterprises are flexible enough to adapt to changing dynamics easily. This will be especially true for Neopentecostal churches given their flexible religious convictions.

Chesnut points out, that the logic of supply and demand is valid in religious economics as well. He uses four criteria that form instruments of description and determine the success of different brands on the religious market.

2.3.1 The four market criteria of success

Products, marketing, sales representation and organizational structure are the four criteria of success that Chesnut uses for his analysis of the different religious producers and serve as the basis on which he structures his findings. These criteria seem very practical in structuring the observations of services made in this investigation, and

therefore have to be explained in greater detail. Chesnut's findings from his investigation of churches highlight topics and themes that play an important role in the field study of Neopentecostalism in Lima.

Products

Unlike monopolistic firms that function with the principle that one size fits all, as Chesnut calls it, religious enterprises in a pluralist economy specialize and design their products so that they are targeted at specific sectors of society. Since Latin American societies are often highly fragmented, this aspect plays an important role in understanding the variety of Protestant products available (Chesnut, 2003: 10-13).

Religious firms that do not deliver attractive products cannot survive in the market or are forced into a small market niche of religious consumers. Therefore, cost-effectiveness is important to obtain the greatest amount of religious consumers. According to Chesnut, pneuma-centrism (spirit-centrism) is a rather effective product in the Latin American religious market. Chesnut explains the success of pneuma-centric religious enterprises in Latin America by focusing on faith healing. He draws a clear line to its dialectical relationship to poverty based illnesses within the popular classes in Latin America. Although faith healing is not a new product in a Catholic context (in which people believe in the healing powers of saints and the virgin in their various religious expressions), Chesnut states that religious enterprises have to offer both novelty and familiarity to keep consumers comfortable - the product, "must offer novelty that piques consumer interest enough to draw them away from the Catholic product" (Chesnut, 2003: 44).

Surveys in different Latin American contexts indicate that Pentecostal faith healing has proven to be an improved product that attracts new costumers to its brand of faith because it provides a perceived cure for illness or life threatening conditions. Due to their working conditions in an informal economy, absence of insurance and denied access to medical care, impoverished families faced with serious illness tend to be attracted by religious firms that offer faith healing for physical and emotional improvement. Alcoholism, another common reason for conversion, can be classified within the category of illness (Chesnut, 2003: 44-47). In general, religious actors speak about positive personal transformations after being converted.

One important statement Chesnut makes about the criteria of a new religious product is that it "...must prove useful in their daily lives." (Chesnut, 2003: 44). He points out the dialectical relationship between religious products and social reality (Chesnut, 2003: 49). An important ritual praxis of spirit-centered religion is exorcism, which is a type of faith healing. We must evaluate Neopentecostals' ritual praxis and discover further religious products. An important Neopentecostal product is prosperity theology, a phenomenon that will play a major role in my study.

Marketing

While the product itself forms the first criterion, marketing forms a second significant element of a product's success in the marketplace. "The way in which a particular product is packaged and advertised often has greater bearing on its sales than the actual qualities of the product itself" (Chesnut, 2003: 50). In this regard, Chesnut sites the beer brand, Corona, and describes how it was marketed as "a Cancun vacation in a bottle". He fails to mention religious brands which use visual enticement to attract religious consumers. Of all the Neopentecostal churches in Lima, perhaps the trendiest has a palm tree in its logo, which isn't a common design for a church. It will be shown that aesthetic elements indeed play a crucial role in the marketing of Neopentecostalism. Chesnut mentions marketing in the form of slogans like "Stop suffering" and emotional forms of music such as "ballads, pop songs, and regional rhythms" combined with evangelical lyrics. For Neopentecostals, other popular music genres such as rock and alternative rock play a role in marketing, as the investigation will show.

Chesnut distinguishes between low- and high-tech media, used for marketing. Since Pentecostalism recruits most of its members from within families, low tech media includes home visits and intimate contact between church members. The attraction of a certain church, introduced by friends, family members, and working colleagues is important for Neopentecostals as well. High-tech marketing is described by Chesnut as Pentecostal-owned radio and television stations, as well as advertisements on their own webpages which play an important role as more Peruvians connect to the internet. The media presence of religious firms who intend to reach the emerging classes cannot be restricted to their own channels. A significant method of marketing for Neopentecostals seems to be the penetration of secular media through their influence on political

outcomes. Chesnut remarks that the services and the performance of these services are a natural extension of marketing. The use of high-tech media for services and other activities constitutes a form of marketing.

Neopentecostal churches reflect affluent consumer societies by the way their products are packaged and advertised, (Chesnut, 2003: 50).

Sales Representatives

The third criteria of a church's success, according to Chesnut, are sales representatives. Chesnut touches upon an important concept entitled "Army of Amateurs". He suggests that the difference between sales representatives in Pentecostalism compared to Catholicism and mainline Protestant churches, is the role of lay people and pastors with little education who state that they are motivated and believe in their products. Chesnut makes reference to credibility that is gained by testimonies made by members to convince their family, friends, and people in similar life-situations to join their church by explaining how they improved their own lives. Chesnut points out the significance of lay leaders, whose testimony is of particular value for evangelization. The role of lay people as sales representatives in the field of Neopentecostalism shall be important in the investigation.

According to Chesnut, Pentecostal pastors as professional sales representatives prove themselves to be successful, because they tend to share the same nationality and social class as their prospective converts. This sets them apart from Catholic clergy, often foreign priests who as highly theologically prepared, are better educated than many of their flock. In an attempt to distinguish the levels of investigation, the fact that being equal in different life-dimensions plays a role in the cultural, educational, and social components must be considered. Neopentecostalism targets emerging social classes striving for progress in a peripheral context. In a country such as Peru, the role of foreign pastors, particularly from the northern hemisphere, may be slightly different.

Emerging classes are accustomed to foreign elements because the educated classes tend to have received foreign education in private schools and universities. In addition, they

appreciate a foreign language as a distinctive element that separates them from the popular masses. The topic will be explained further, when the topic of lifestyles is addressed. An examination of Limenean lifestyles shall give more insight into the problems that foreign sales representatives face and why they might be of special value.

Apart from the foreign sales representatives, Chesnut points out that clergy that is much closer to the members in social and educational terms etc. are better sales representatives than their highly theologically prepared counterparts. Hence, theological and pastoral training is another element that will have to be examined in this investigation.

While the traditional churches give priority to theological and philosophical reflection in the training of their professional sales representatives, we can assume that Pentecostal (and Neopentecostal churches alike) focus on practically or market oriented training that evokes people's emotions rhetorically, instead of reflecting on biblical and theological doctrines.

Chesnut also sheds light on the problem of an elderly clergy in traditional Catholic churches compared to the much younger clergy in the Charismatic Movement (Chesnut, 2003: 56-59). The attractive force of younger clergy in Charismatic churches should not be overlooked. In my opinion, another principal difference not mentioned by Chesnut should be highlighted. Catholic priests, due to their vow of celibacy, are trained to abstain from the lifestyle of the "world" in a way that is difficult for believers to identify with. On the other hand, Neopentecostal clergy, many of whom are married and have families of their own, promote the idea of partnership and family life, which helps to build authenticity and fosters identification with church members. The characteristics of Neopentecostal pastors and lay clergy shall henceforth be examined.

Another competitive advantage of majority churches that Chesnut mentions is the means of earning a salary. Chesnut highlights a crucial element of proselytizing faiths: member maximization does not take place only for the sake of saving souls but also for the collection of an increased amount of tithes and donations. The emphasis on financial aspects to maintain the sales representatives seems to be a significant factor of competition within Neopentecostalism. If a pastor's salary depends on direct tithes and

offerings of members, logic motivates him to increase the number of his flock and/or to focus on attracting groups with higher financial incomes. Consequently, pastors of Pentecostal and Neopentecostal churches in Latin America are also skilled fundraisers (Chesnut, 2003: 56-59). This investigation will show how the necessity of fundraising is combined with religious content and ritual customs, especially in Neopentecostal churches.

Organizational Structure

The fourth criterion of a church's success according to Chesnut, is organizational structure. According to the economic concept of profit maximization, commercial enterprises need to structure its operations in efficient, cost-effective manner in order to maximize profits. This is also true of successful churches. Chesnut mentions the high degree of specialization and niche marketing used to target specific groups of consumers. Using the example of the Assemblies of God, Chesnut introduces the term of "participatory authoritarianism" to refer to the dialectical model of high level lay participation that takes place in an authoritarian structure, where the principal pastor makes the decisions (Chesnut, 2003: 59-63). Using the example of IURD, Chesnut speaks of "extreme authoritarianism" (Chesnut, 2003: 61). Chesnut sees authoritarianism as an attractive force, since popular classes are accustomed to such relationships in the secular world and are not actually looking for egalitarianism in their spiritual life. These observations lead to questions about how Neopentecostal churches serving emerging social classes are structured and organized. Considering the higher education and international orientation of the target groups of Neopentecostal churches, one might suspect that existing authoritarianism is expressed more subtly than in Pentecostal churches. The organizational structure of these churches must take into account the structure of services, lay participation, and gender equality.

Not just going shopping

The aesthetic aspects and market orientation of postmodern aesthetics show that religious firms are highly market oriented; they know their "consumers" and aim to provide perfectly tailored products to them. Chesnut's four characteristics of success in

the religious market are helpful to structure the analysis of the observations and interviews conducted and can serve to demonstrate the reasons for the success of Neopentecostals. The comparison of religious organizations to business enterprises can help to explore their products, marketing, sales representatives and organizational structures and help to portray Neopentecostal churches as profit making institutions.

The general criticism of the market theory as a tool of analysis of the religious marketplace is that it fails to reflect the conditions of “demand” and behavior of religious actors, who cannot be simply referred to as “consumers”. They are not just going shopping, as the investigation will show. The crucial element of belonging plays an important role in the highly participative Neopentecostal churches, as this study will clearly demonstrate. The market theory does not consider the social contexts and lifestyles of religious actors. Hence, the market theory does not help to explain the relationship between religious mobility and social context. The empirical research will show that religious actors are not going to Neopentecostal churches as they go to supermarkets, where they buy products to satisfy their consumer needs. The phenomenon of inner movement, for that matter, does not maintain that the market supports such a mentality. Neopentecostal religious actors identify themselves to a high extent with their church due to the fact that Neopentecostals control many aspects of their follower’s lives. As such, Neopentecostal churches should not be compared to shopping centers.

2.4 Market Share and Turnover – Explaining Religious Mobility

Another aspect that plays a role in the market theory is the phenomenon of “turnover”: that is, people leaving and others entering the religious group. This process is one of great fluctuation. The thesis will explain these tendencies because there are typical forms of mobility that shall be described within the frame of certain groups which is closely related to the topic of “market share”. This term describes the percentage of religious actors in an area that belong to a particular denomination or religious group. According to Finke/Stark: “Individual groups will be more energetic and generate higher levels of commitment to the degree that they have a marginal market position,

i.e. they lack market share.” (Finke/Stark, 2000: 219). Olson points out that groups who have small market share usually have higher levels of commitment from its members. Empirically this was measured by variables such as attendance rate, financial giving and applicants for seminaries per member. Olson confirms that support for this can be seen in the market logic itself, since market share serves as inverse indicator of the religious competition that the religious group faces (Olson, 2008: 102). He states that smaller groups face religious competition from other groups. In contrast to passive monopolies, religious leaders of small groups aim to work harder and more creatively in order to compete in the market, to attract new members and to prevent their current followers from drifting away. Empirical research has to explain the market share of these specific religious groups. Olson raises the question of how this phenomenon happens and how it responds to a shift between different religious groups.

The present investigation deals with religious mobility and the causes of turnover in the churches studied. Olson states that when people move, they are most likely to move to religiously similar groups, since according to other investigations, people tend to stay within the same denomination, changing only their congregation, especially when the percentage of market share is large, meaning that there are many denominations nearby. Olson uses a study on Baptist congregations to explain this hypothesis, but only to support his own explanation of market share results which does not rely upon the notion of religious competition and leader efforts. He calls his thesis “membership turnover explanation” (Olson, 2008: 103). It is logical, that a small religious (or non-religious) group has a much higher potential to grow quickly in the future, than a large group that has already experienced such growth and therefore does not have as big of a pool of non-members available. He uses the example of two areas, A and B. While A is comprised of 80% Mormons, B has only 20% and therefore a much higher growth potential. Aggressive evangelism could result in a 100% growth, which simply is not possible in area A. Even if both areas gain the same number of members, the proportion would be larger in area B. Hence, the rates of new members joining a group can be inversely related to the actual size of the group. According to Olson this explanation is important because he relates the in-switching and out-switching of a group to the commitment of its members. Therefore the membership turnover and commitment level of religious groups are closely related, since the least committed members are usually

the ones that leave a group while the ones that join are the most committed (potential) members. “Both the process of joining and leaving act as filters on the commitment level of current members” (Olson, 2008: 105). Olson speaks of a two-sided process. The first side is defined by market share, which affects rates of membership turnover and the second side reflects rates of turnover. In this sense, market share and current membership commitment levels, help to sustain the logic of religious economies. My reason for drawing attention to this model will become clear when I discuss my theory of mobility within Neopentecostal churches in Peru. The groups investigated are numerically small and require a high commitment by their members. Followers switching from one church to another, is an aspect of the observations that has to be considered. As I have stated in my previous explanations on market theory, we must consider the social aspects surrounding church turnover.

2.5 Understanding religious choices through religious taste

As the market theory explains in the context of religious pluralization, religion becomes, as Taylor describes it, an eligible good instead of being considered a question of origin and family background. Even though I have focused my investigation on a minority group in Latin America and Peru, there already exists a tendency for people to select their religion. They make a religious choice, a “decision to affiliate with a particular religious group (church)” (Köhrsen, 2008) and pick a certain form of faith which can be compared to selecting goods in the market. Köhrsen borrows the concept of “taste” from Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1984) in order to apply it to the field of religion. The concept of religious taste can help to understand the behavior of believers in terms of religious plurality.

According to Bourdieu “taste” explains the “correlation between the consumption of particular cultural products and social classes”. For Bourdieu, taste is socially inherited. Therefore social positions that reflect different educational, economic, and social resources tend to prefer different cultural products. A second aspect that determines religious taste according to Bourdieu is “religious socialization” in the upbringing of a child. Köhrsen includes the impact of religious markets on religious taste through

“fashion cycles”. Fashion cycles are defined as dynamics of what is “in” and what is “out” for particular groups of consumers and are generated by the market’s power struggle. “In the case of religion, fashion cycles define which types of practices (styles) are religiously legitimate and fashionable for certain social groups and which are not” (Köhrsen, 2008, 4). It shall be shown that the concept of religious taste can be seen as an affinity for a particular religious style, and it is worth mentioning, but it cannot determine religious choice. A weakness of this concept, as mentioned by the theories of religious marketplaces in general, is the description of the believer as a mere consumer.

2.6 *Religious economy and religious actors – Bastian*

Bastian uncovers the weakness of the finalist rational choice model for Latin America and exposes the difference between the market theory and the religious field developed by Bourdieu. He believes that it is not possible to harmonize the two different perspectives. The problem Bastian brings to light is very relevant for the present investigation, which is interested in the social aspects of Neopentecostalism.

Bastian explains the logic of Pentecostal churches and their behaviors on the plural market in a profound way that can help to explain the forms of inner mobility between the different churches. Bastian speaks of a “culture of performance whose main criterion is the number of members” (Bastian, 2008: 176). Market logic dictates an indirect relationship between the number of church members and social status. Accordingly, we can conclude that the greater number of church members there are, the poorer the average member is likely to be. Consequently the contrary would also be true, that if a church targets members with high status that are financially better off, it does not need to focus on the number of members to such a high extent. It remains to be seen whether Neopentecostals’ focus on emerging social classes supports this thesis.

Bastian includes the aspect of accelerated urbanization, (immigration into Latin American major cities) which has caused cultural hybridization in his work. He discovered that hybridization, also found in the eclecticism of Pentecostal practices, is different from syncretism. “...the notion of hybridism indicates rather the juxtaposition

of different registers of borrowings, including the contents of beliefs, the forms of transmission and communication, recourse to both the most archaic and the most modern mediations, and the eclectic and pragmatic use of the models joined to market logic” (Bastian, 2008: 176-177). In a transnational marketplace, different religious producers adopt the latest craze that has proven successful in another part of the world into one’s own practice. Certain churches become trendsetters and their practices are adopted on a national scale because of the market pressure of innovation. The example of G12, a concept of cells of twelve people in a pyramidal spreading, can serve to show this trend. G12 originated in South Korea, made its way to Colombia and was first introduced in Peru by Agua Viva and was adopted as a principle to structure prayer cells by other Neopentecostal and Pentecostal churches (Lecaros, 2013: 107).

According to Bastian, the Neopentecostal logic can be understood through the postmodern leitmotif of “patchwork”, as a flexible adoption of very different religious convictions and practices that borrow elements from popular culture, redefine original protestant modes of belief and practices and hitherto bridge “...archaism and hypermodernity in a floating universe of references.” The issue of religion and post-modernism has to be explored. In traditional churches, religious actors define themselves through a certain doctrine. It needs to be considered how Neopentecostal churches that employ a flexible patchwork of convictions and practices generate identification among their followers.

Given that Neopentecostals function under the concept of “hybridism”, and the fact that affiliation is rather flexible, members might be predisposed to religious mobility so that the dividing lines between churches become fluid and malleable.

Bastian’s very dense but short descriptions about Pentecostals can help to fill the gaps on the consumer’s side that the market theory of Chesnut does not address. Bastian puts emphasis on the role of the commercial culture of mass media in the evangelical landscape. Churches indeed broadcast on their own radio and TV stations, but the media presence also penetrates their own culture of services by an “increasing theatricalization of the conduct of the preachers, the appearance of religious presenters...” (Bastian, 2008: 183). The “theatricalization” as Bastian calls it, forms a part of the category

“sales representatives” and “marketing” for Chestnut. My research on Neopentecostal churches incorporates the phenomenon’s various aesthetic elements. Prosperity theology, which Chesnut simply names a product, for Bastian serves as predominant discourse that implies a “sacralization of the market by social sectors that are experiencing insecurity and flexibility” (Bastian, 2008:183). He specifies that the product attracts the middle classes that are at risk of economic conjuncture. “They find in this symbol both the confirmation of their relative economic success and access to the traditional discourse of the retributive religion...” (Bastian, 2008: 185).

Bastian manages to include social aspects and to connect the economic model to the model of the religious field developed by Bourdieu. The role of prosperity theology has to be investigated, along with the question about whether it leads, as Bastian states, to a “sacralization of the market” and commercialism. Furthermore, Bastian makes note of the innovative usage of mass media combined with the promotion of renewed symbolic products and intense community life, which promotes transnational expansion and forms a variety of organizational networks that use modern techniques of communication such as Facebook, Twitter etc. The economy of religion establishes efficiency and performance on the basis of usefulness. Bastian acknowledges a relatively explanatory value of the market theory; however, he rejects the theory’s ability to explain the relationships and interactions of religious organizations with the state, among other things.

This investigation aims to explore the relationship between social contexts and the behavior of religious actors within the evangelical sector; therefore, church members cannot simply be depicted as consumers. Bastian recognizes the explanatory value of Bourdieu’s theory for the study of religious actors, but does not use it for his empirical research. His descriptions highlight an existing dilemma, but cannot actually be used as an alternative theory or as the basis of empirical research.

Since the present investigation aims to explore typical ways of religious mobility within the evangelical landscape and within Neopentecostalism, it will not only demonstrate the activity of the religious producers, firms or churches, but also will look at the “consumer” side of this landscape. The exhaustive efforts of Limenean religious actors

to further social progression must be taken into account as well. In general, Bastian's criteria can be helpful in explaining some aspects of this behavior.

2.7 Neopentecostalism and the Spirit of Capitalism – Weber

The locus classicus within the sociology of religion, which addresses social progress and protestant religion, is described in Weber's work "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" (1905). Weber describes how the Calvinist doctrine of predestination generates a lifestyle that on the one hand, is determined through hard work and on the other hand, through asceticism. He demonstrates how faith can act as the foundation of a mode of methodological rational living.

Since success in one's profession is symbol of being predestined in the religious sense, the protestant ethic, particularly in the form of Calvinism, favors capitalism because it encourages people to prosper, save, strive for success etc. Given Neopentecostalism's emphasis on prosperity, one could ask whether this religious group has certain similarities to Puritanism described by Weber. This apparent similarity does not reflect reality in Peruvian context, which differs considerably from the context of capitalism, which Weber describes. The "sons and daughters of the king" as prosperity theology names the members, contrary to the Puritans in Weber's work, seem to feel the necessity to show their material blessings through their lavish houses, fancy cars, designer clothes etc. Another strong difference exists in terms of religious convictions. While prosperity through savings and an ascetic lifestyle was merely a bilateral product of the religious convictions rooted in leading an ordered life based on Christian scripture, prosperity in Neopentecostalism becomes the transcended objective of their lives for religious actors. At first, Weber's perceptions show a certain connection with prosperity theology, but due to the very different context, his thesis cannot serve as the theoretical framework needed to understand Neopentecostals.

2.8 Challenges for the present investigation

In light of the previous explanations I want to point out the necessity to overcome the contradiction that exists between supply-sided and demand-sided theories. The weak side of the market model and the whole rational choice theory in general, supposes fixed preferences of constant demand which lead to a culture in which values are diminished to compulsion. Therefore the theory doesn't explain religious action (Weber, 1922). Bastian speaks of a tension between the economic model of rational choice and the model of the religious field advanced by Bourdieu who rejects the "utilitarian finality of rational choice" (Bastian, 2008: 175). Only by connecting both theoretical concepts, are we able to explain the interaction among the religious actors in the religious community.

As the former section has shown, market theory needs to reflect the conditions for a religious demand. The relationship between societal structure and religious practice cannot be explained through mechanical market functions or as an inflexible coherence of societal structure and cognitive contents. The value of the market theory is evident but it doesn't take into account the role of religious actors. According to Bastian, a low economic status and the maximization of members are related. The different cases of Lima's Neopentecostalism will show that huge lower class mass churches exist on the one side of this spectrum and more exclusive churches that cater to the well-off social classes can be found on the other. The reality raises the question of a possible status oriented mission, which does not aim to attract masses, but a more specific clientele of "up and comers". The postmodern Leitmotiv "patchwork" shall be used to characterize the religious convictions of Neopentecostals. While providing actual religious essence, different grades of flexibility of religious convictions shall be explored. In terms of market share, it has been determined that the direction of religious mobility is from bigger churches towards smaller churches. This fact will be an important factor in analyzing religious mobility. Therefore the comparatively younger and smaller churches are the destination of this mobility. Hence the direction of religious mobility within Neopentecostalism should lead from larger to smaller churches, because the smaller ones work harder and in a more creative way to attract new members. It has to be

empirically determined what kind of creative methods Neopentecostal churches employ to attract these members. According to the market share theory, religious actors move within religiously similar groups. The religious mobility within Neopentecostalism in Lima shall support this tendency. As Chesnut points out, believers are looking for new stimulating factors within a certain level of familiarity. Consequently, the direction of religious mobility will have to be explained in terms of familiarity and continuance. Olson's market share and turnover theory can help to explain religious mobility, but it needs to take into account social aspects, which shall be discussed in the following section. Therefore the lifestyles of religious actors can be used to understand the demand side of religious mobility and serves as another level of theoretical framing for the present investigation.

2.9 Religious Mobility and lifestyles

While the classical Limenean lifestyle-studies, such as the social movements by Tovar (Tovar Samanez, 1982) or the classical work of Degregori (Degregori, 1986), analyze the process of transformation in the 1980s and describe the battle for citizenship of Lima's immigrants, the lifestyle-study by the economists Rolando Arellano and David Burgos focuses on consumer behavior in Lima and gives an insight into Lima as a contemporary developing intercultural mega-city. As far as I am concerned, this consumer study and distinction of different lifestyles according to gender and age groups, districts, migrants and classical inhabitants does not only explain economical consumers behavior but is a way to understand preferences in terms of religious offers. Arellano's description is based on the variable of "consumption" and doesn't consider the conditions Lima's citizen live in. In addition, these conditions are not changing to such an extent as the economic growth would suggest. Henceforth Arellano's approach was strongly criticized by Limenean sociologists. But as a matter of fact, the types of lifestyles Arellano distinguishes between can help to understand how Neopentecostalism is gaining ground among the emerging social classes. As it was previously disclosed, Neopentecostal churches in Lima are gaining power on the increasingly pluralized religious market and are highly competitive. In this regard, their market oriented behavior is similar to that of firms that operate in the consumer

marketplace. Therefore the consumer theory for Lima developed by Arellano seems to be appropriate to explore the growth strategies of Neopentecostal firms. Arellano's principles of market strategy seem to apply to religious enterprises because Neopentecostals are able to adapt their products to any type of need, but this requires that the religious market is studied profoundly, just as businesses utilize market research to better know their customers in an attempt to satisfy their needs (Arellano/Burgos, 2010: 195). Arellano's research is consumer oriented and depicts citizens as consumers, similar to the theories of religious economics. Therefore analogies can be drawn on the consumer side. The strength of Arellano's study is its focus on the Limenean context. His consumer lifestyles analysis takes into account the historical situation of the "City of Kings". Similarities between religious lifestyles and consumer preferences for some evangelical churches can help to explain movement towards certain churches at the expense of others. Another lifestyle-study used specifically to describe religious milieus (applying, in a certain way, the social theory of Bourdieu) was developed in a study by the University of Hannover and sheds light on social milieus and church in Germany. The milieu-research of Arellano is somewhat similar to the milieu-study of Vögele in Germany and shall be used for the context of Lima with the social theory of Bourdieu according to the Hanoverian study (Hauschildt, 1998). I will give a short introduction of the terminology used by Bourdieu before moving deeply into Limenean history of the 20th century and a discussion of how it has shaped the Limenean society of the present day.

Central Concepts in the social theory of Bourdieu

The approach of Bourdieu can be explained through the central concepts of "habitus", "practice", "field" and "capital". Habitus can be defined as an imminent law that is imprinted on individuals as identical experiences and forms a condition for social practices (Bourdieu, 1979: 139 -142). The habitus forms the core element of Bourdieu's terminology. He refers to it as a unity endowing principle at the base of all forms of practice (Bourdieu, 1982: 283). Bourdieu dissociates from structuralism and points out that the different societies develop a class specific habitus that is characterized by different patterns of thinking and behavior. Because of their class structure, individuals have different opportunities based on their "life determiners" including education

(cultural capital), material resources (economical capital) as well as influential social relations (social capital). In other words, habitus is an unconscious functional adaptation to structurally existing opportunities within an individual's social class and can be defined as a social construction of reality that is rooted in class position, which forms the perception, thinking, taste, postures, etc. of people in that class. Social actors behave rationally and strategically within the unconscious limits, generated by habitus. Their social position determines access to the different forms of capital within the different fields of practice. Bourdieu's emphasis on relationships instead of structure makes his social theory dynamic. Habitus functions as principle of organization for action and therefore permits the analysis of symbols in the background of societal practices and its conditions. Symbols can be described as operators of practical logic, which regulates the processes that comprise the different fields of practice.

Given the phenomenon of inner religious mobility it will necessary to explain the situation of competition within the evangelical landscape in Peru to find out more about the market power of actors as it has been done for other countries based on the market theory of religion (Chesnut, 2003; Gill, 1999, 2003). The dynamic focus on relationships makes it important to address the challenges of globalization and multiculturalism in a global context.

Interferences for Limenean Lifestyles

For the present investigation it shall be useful to build on the consumer oriented lifestyle-study of Arellano, which can be applied to religious actors and identities in terms of their dispositions (habitus) and preferences according to social positions and necessities. It follows that social, cultural and/or economic capital, determines religious taste - factors people consider when choosing a particular church. The following section offers explanations that serve to give further understanding of the historical background of Lima as a Latin American mega-city, which has experienced tremendous growth in the last century leading to over population, which in turn, has created new and different lifestyles and preferences for its population.

Being evangelical in Peru is associated with a different lifestyle that goes beyond actual religious content. Therefore the concept of lifestyle is a useful instrument to determine social class. In a fragmented society with high social inequality, new religious communities such as the Neopentecostal churches, reflect societal issues and changes because particular religious priorities directly respond to the primary social necessities of religious actors. According to Luhmann's term "Kontingenzbewältigung", coping with crisis is a priority of the religious field.

2.9.1 Lima and Lifestyles as factor for religious taste

Especially since the 1950s, the Peruvian capital has been invaded by masses of immigrants from the provinces who settled in so called "conos", the con-urban districts that encircle the historical district and form the largest part of Lima. Their inhabitants make up two-thirds of the capital's population. Lima in the 21st century has become a multicultural mega-city that represents almost 30% of the country's population (Arellano/Burgos, 2010: 54). Consequently, Lima is the melting pot for the multicultural diverse Peruvian population. The cono-districts have become the predominant part of Lima and the people who live there can no longer be depicted as marginal. While the usual A to E class-scale defines individuals exclusively through their economic capital, Arellano's lifestyle scheme is more helpful to describe preferences of social actors on the economic market, and also serves to explain the relationship between religious preferences and social contexts, given the unique circumstances of Lima. Arellano's scheme of lifestyles shall shed light on the social positions and different forms of capital held by members in Lima's highly market oriented churches.

The connection between the social disposition of interests of actors and the religious differences between different types of Pentecostals is the focus of this research which aims to provide answers to the question of why people of different social backgrounds choose to participate in a particular Neopentecostal church. Therefore Arellano's consumer study and distinctions of different lifestyles according to gender and age groups, districts, migrants and classical inhabitants can help to explain how religious

taste and preferences is connected to consumer behavior in the economic market. The phenomenon of inner religious mobility underlines the idea that religious actors in Neopentecostal churches are consuming something that changes with social necessities. In order to understand the religious market of Lima, it is important to consider the unique situation and issues that characterize contemporary Lima through an investigation of its history and development.

The two Limas, a historical overview

Founded by the Spaniards, Peru's capital was moved from the Andes and the former Inca capital city of Cusco to the coastal desert. In 1535 the conqueror Francisco Pizarro founded the City of Kings (la Ciudad de los Reyes), as it was then known. The word city implies a condition for citizenship; this is also the case in Spanish (ciudad – ciudadanía). The population of the indigenous republic of the Peruvian provinces that lived outside of the "City of Kings", definitely contributed to the strong ethnic identity that continues to exist in present day Peru. The first wave of immigrants from the rural areas to the city took place in the time of industrialization, predominantly during 1940s when people from provincial middle classes migrated to Lima in large numbers. Especially after the political and social reforms of Velasco ("Neo-Indigenismo") which started in 1968, the impoverished indigenous masses reclaimed their right of citizenship by entering the capital in masses in hopes of finding better living conditions. The political violence and terrorism caused by the Shining Path (throughout the 1980s) and the lack of basic security in some cities like Ayacucho heightened the wave of migration into the capital. Lima's growing poverty-belt was beyond the reach of government, and informality in all societal dimensions was the consequence of the massive invasion of people from the provinces in to the city. Without material resources, immigrants ignored state laws in order to survive in a "dog eat dog" environment. A key-term used to describe Lima's development is the "desborde popular" (Matos Mar, 1984), which refers to the masses of immigrants that were passing through the borders of the city, "desborde" at this time. The massive invasion of the people has shaped the landscape, which surrounds the city center. The "desborde popular" provoked a crisis for the state, since it generated its own form of thinking in all

different fields of practice. This was reflected in religion through the creation of informal sects and cults like “Sarita Colonia” (Hernández, 2007: 55-68). Matos Mar maintains that in 1984, Lima’s population was very polarized. While 80% were living under the condition of poverty and extreme poverty, about 20% lived in middle class and upper class residential sectors of the city. In the 44 years from 1940 to 1984, Lima’s population grew almost tenfold. This demographical transformation caused major changes for the city, its society and the country as a whole. In 1984 more than 50% of the urban population and more than 30% of the total population of Peru lived in Lima, which managed the dynamics of the country through a political and economic centralism that was initiated in the 16th century by the Spaniards.¹

Due to its explosive growth, the development of Lima’s infrastructure resulted in benefits for its inhabitants at the expense of those people who lived in other parts of the country. This distinction still plays a role in migratory trends today, although to a lesser extent. In 2010 Lima had 29.4% of the total population of the country. One cannot understand Lima without the immigration which led to its overpopulation. The inhabitants of the con-urban districts can no longer be considered marginal or indigenous people from the provinces that discriminatively are called “cholos” by others. Over the decades the former urban inhabitants “classical Limeños” and the “Neolimeños” have created a new city with very different lifestyles. Arellano states that Lima’s youth has created a new sense and metamorphosis of “Lima chola” that does not distinguish between the city’s urban center and its outskirts “conos”.

The con-urban districts, the territory used to be considered as incontrollable and anarchistic in the past, have become creative and are filled with a spirit of progression and social mobility. Today, Lima reflects both its Creole identity as well as the Andean mentality and is culturally nourished by the diversity of its people from the country’s different geographical zones including the major serrana (referring to the Andean Sierra), coastal (the coastal provinces) as well as selvática (referring to the selva-

¹ Las multitudes de origen provinciano, desbordes en el espacio urbano, determinan profundas alteraciones en el estilo de vida de la capital y dan un nuevo rostro a la ciudad.” Matos Mar 1984, 72-73.

rainforest). Hence the city can be considered to be a synthesis of different kinds of people which mirrors the diversity of Peru.

Arellano discovered that a determined income and its usually related letters from A (rich) to E (poor), cannot be the only criteria of consumer behavior because it neglects an individual's capability of selection and their lifestyle. Arellano doesn't make any reference to poverty in his system, but refers to commercial development throughout his investigation. His optimistic attitude is related in many ways to the prosperity theology of Neopentecostals. Liberation theology would put a finger into the wound of poverty, digging for its roots; whereas prosperity theology does not address poverty at all, it only looks straight forward towards the future. These facts will be taken in account when examining Arellano's consumer lifestyles.

Consumer-Life styles in Lima

The capital city of Lima is practically and historically subdivided into five major sectors named: Lima Central (central Lima), Lima Norte (the northern part), Lima Este (eastern Lima), Lima Sur (southern Lima) and the independent province of Callao. The so called "conos" districts form the majority in terms of territory and population. In order to demonstrate their integration into the city it is not appropriate to name them "conos", but since it is still common, the term will be used throughout this study. Nowadays, Lima's population is comprised of so called "classical Limeños" whose family origins are rooted in central Lima and Mestizos, a term which describes people of mixed European and native Peruvian ancestry. In the census of 1938, Mestizos represented the majority of Limeños. While in today's Lima, due to the immigration from the provinces, especially the Andean regions, the so called "cholos" (a defamatory term used by the Hispanic creoles to discriminate against indigenous people or people with a native indigenous background) have become the majority. People with immigrant backgrounds are referred to as "Neo-Limeños". Arellano observed tendencies of different cultural characteristics of the different generations of Limeños and Neolimeños (Arellano/Burgos, 2010: 65). In the investigation I prefer to use the English translation "Neolimeneans" and "classical Limeneans".

Neolimeneans – Three generations

Arellano distinguishes between three different generations with very different identities. The first generation (often elderly people) came from the provinces and suffered from defamation as “cholos” by the city inhabitants who wanted them to go back to where they came from. The second generation of people in their 40s can be characterized by their mixed cultural features. They work hard for recognition and have adopted the clothes, as well as local eating habits of people of the coast which includes foods such as the famous pollo a la brasa (roasted chicken) and salchipapas (French fries covered with sliced hot dogs). They popularized new forms of music such as tropical andino, which classical Limeans refer to as “música chicha”. The third generation of young adults forms an important demographical majority of Limeneans and the members of this group consider themselves to be Limeneans in every respect. They fill the universities and other educational centers in the historical districts of Lima and others that have sprung up in the conos. Arellano is convinced that the process of interculturalization has taken hold in the third generation. As cosmopolitan young adults, they appreciate international music with a national touch. According to Arellano the third Neolimenean generation forms a bridge between migrants and classical Limeneans (Arellano/Burgos, 2010: 65-70).

Classical Limeneans

The term “classical Limeneans” refers to groups of people without migratory background who live in the traditional districts of central Lima. If they have an immigrant background, they belong to the middle class provincial wave that migrated to the city before the 1950s and was welcomed in the capital.

The first generations are senior citizens, who shaped the coastal sport clubs into fashionable beach locations such as La Punta, Miraflores etc. When “their” neighborhoods were “invaded” by a new wave of immigrants they moved to Miraflores and afterwards to upscale, more exclusive residential areas such as La Molina and parts

of Surco. As owners of business or professionals, they associate immigrants with labor intensive jobs performed by gardeners, painters, housemaids etc. They turned away from any connection they may have to the Andean traditions of Peru and adopted a lifestyle in which anything foreign such is opening accepted.

Limeneans of the second generation comprised of people in their 40's, are influenced by their parents, and have relationships with migrants of their generation through the jobs they do. In some cases they admire the Neolimeneans' success and desire to move forward. (Arellano/Burgos, 2010: 72). This generation lived through the military dictatorship and economic crisis of the early 90s. Arellano states that this generation aspires to migrate to foreign countries. Consequently, their international cultural expression is reflected in their preference for international, but mainly Anglo-Saxon music, brands and a global vision.

The third generation of young adults does seem interested into what happens in the conos, going to the same universities and visiting the same places of delectation.

The explanations demonstrate that the society in Lima is socially and ethnically very fragmented, but as Arellano points out, the gap between the second and third groups is much smaller than that which exists between the first and the third.

Lima representing different parts of Peru

Only 12, 7 % of Lima's current inhabitants can confirm that they have ancestors that were born in Lima. Even in central Lima, inhabitants with provincial ancestors form the majority with 87, 3%, while in the con-urban districts there are no classical Limeneans. In general 78, 1 % of Lima's population has ancestral roots in the provinces and as such, the people in Lima represent all different areas of Peru (Arellano/Burgos, 2010: 76-79). The different conos can be distinguished by the people of different regions of Peru, who live there which Arellano describes. While people in the north of Lima predominantly come from Northern provinces such as Ancash, La Libertad and Cajamarca, the south was settled by people from Ayacucho and Apurimac and the east was settled by people from the central Andean region (Arellano/Burgos, 2010: 78-79).

All these different aspects have to be taken into account, when speaking about Limenean lifestyles.

The lifestyles of Limeneans

The topic of lifestyles in Lima is discussed in other literature by Carlos Iván Degregori for instance, considering Neo-Pentecostalism the lifestyles mentioned by Arellano seem to be useful.

Arellano distinguishes a segment of the population which he calls “sophisticated” according to their lifestyle, which presents about 7, 7% of Lima’s total population, and reflects the economic high end of Limeneans who earn well above the average Peruvian income and for the most part, are also younger than the average. On the other end of the socio economic spectrum are what he calls “the resigned” (7, 2%). This group forms the group of people with the highest indigenous origin, is generally older than the average and has low incomes. Most of the population of Lima is located in the middle between these two extremes. In the broad field of the majority of inhabitants Arellano distinguishes between two different groups, which he divides into segments of different genders. While the masculine groups are divided into “Progressive” (20, 8%) and “Adapted” (19, 8%), the female counterparts are divided into “Modernists” (25, 3%) and “Conservatives” (19, 1%). I believe the progressives and modernists are similar, in that both strive for progression and socio-economic advancement. “They are extremely practical, modern and tend to study short term careers so that they can start earning as early as possible” (Arellano/Burgos, 2010: 84).

In describing the females, Arellano concentrates on their core characteristics such as their use of makeup, personal realization as good mothers, a preference for brand-products and their hatred of machismo. Personally, I find his distinction stereotypic, because in my experience in Lima, young women show the same behavior as their male counterparts. An economic consumer study to distinguish gender preferences in consumer buying habits may be useful in this respect, but I feel it is irrelevant for determining religious tastes and therefore shall not be considered to be necessary.

Similar tendencies can be seen in his category of “conservatives“, who are described as very traditionally religious people, dedicated to soap operas, use less make up etc. The

adapted male type is equally conformist, aiming to maintain his status quo or progress within a traditional framework he has difficulty adapting to drastic changes.

The advantage of the lifestyle framework developed by Arellano is that it dissociates itself from the common perspective, which simply describes the con-urban districts as class C to E, as poor. He tries to discover what categories of lifestyles allow for a more dynamic perspective rather than only providing a distinction of social actors under economic criteria. The classification according to lifestyles shows that all different lifestyles are present in almost every district of Lima and this reflects the attitudes of individuals to a greater extent than just their economic category. These factors provide important background information for the preferences of a particular Neopentecostal church when trying to recruit new members. As churches, members do not have to pay entry charges unlike in clubs, schools etc., The habitus of members for particular churches cannot be defined by a static economic class, but can be better characterized by a flexible scheme of lifestyles.

The progressive and modernist segments are emerging most significantly in contemporary Lima among members of the younger generations, especially in the poorer south, which shows that that poverty does not necessarily mean that there is no desire to progress. On the other hand, the conservative segment tends to diminish is decreasing in numbers.

Interferences for the present investigation

The different class lifestyles suggest which group has a stronger habitus for Neopentecostal churches and which prefer a certain church within the religious field.

The lifestyles of people who are members of Neopentecostal churches have lifestyles that can be used to characterize them as being “Sophisticated”, “Progressives” and a subsection of this group, the “Moderns”.

The lifestyle of the “Sophisticated”, can be described as rather “exclusive” (Arellano/Burgos, 2010: 95-97) with its origin basically in the classical Limenean

lineage, while the “Progressives” come from the conos and therefore have a social background of migration. These groups come from very different social backgrounds, but are hard-working and believe education leads to progression.

Especially given the basic phenomenon of inner religious mobility within the field Neopentecostalism, lifestyles can predict certain church elements that will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

While the elder and indigenous people with a “resigned” lifestyle constitute the kind of believer one finds in so called “low class” Pentecostal churches in the poorer outskirts of Lima, the other extreme, members of the young, already prosperous “sophisticated” group show a disposition for one of the most popular Neopentecostal churches in exclusive upper class neighborhoods and districts of Lima, for instance Camino de Vida in Monterrico. Lifestyles in the middle, demonstrate that preferences are not merely a question of possessions but also attitudes. The progressives and conservatives might have the same financial and material resources, but have aspirations in different directions. Neopentecostal churches, given their focus on progression, probably attract more progressives who have a strong desire and potential for social progress, than conservatives.

An important factor for progression is the social capital gained in the religious home. The participative alignment in Neopentecostal churches is like the experience one has when at home. The church is seen as “a home away from home” because it is the place where people make social networks and gain social capital. Given the three different generations of Neolimeneans (the majority of Limeneans), in terms of age, the last generation has probably the strongest habitus to be attracted by Neopentecostal churches, since they are the ones who are progressing and are striving for social ascension and as Arellano puts it, “filling the universities”, despite the fact that their ancestors received hardly any secondary school education. Different educational and future economic levels could determine different religious niches in an open religious market. While social progress in northern European societies would not necessarily mean the breaking down of religious traditions, in a societal context of societal change and social inequality, religion becomes another factor of distinction and status, which

provides further evidence of the validity of the market theory in understanding pluralistic religious markets. Religious attachments and tastes differ between generations and influence other bonds including those to one's friends and family. This investigation will explore these dimensions.

In a way the phenomenon makes it easier to choose between religious offers, and avoid the problems typically present in traditional mainline churches such as the ongoing struggle between people with different tastes in music, which if the tradition of organ music is adhered to, would make it difficult to attract youngsters to these churches.

2.9.2 Internationalization and fragmented society

Arellano explains the massive flight of talents as a recent phenomenon in the country. Especially younger generations of Limeneans show a tendency to emigrate. 2010, 36% of Limeneans manifested the intention to emigrate to another country like the USA, Japan, Argentina, Spain or Italy. Arellano states, that it is very uncommon to encounter a Limenean who does not have at least one family member who emigrated to a foreign country. These emigrants have an influence on the atmosphere in the Peruvian capital; especially if they are successful, because this may convince others to leave as well. Arellano adds that this phenomenon was previously common among classical Limeneans from higher socio-economic classes. Nowadays, it is popular among in all social classes in Lima. Arellano draws an analogy to inner Peruvian migration. The inhabitants of the South of Lima are the least likely to emigrate, because they were the last to migrate to the capital. In the older eastern Lima and the classical central sections of Lima, the intention to emigrate is almost 40%. A similar tendency also exists among the youth of social elites in the provinces that aspire to live in the capital. Since emigrants, remain strongly connected to their family members in Lima, their families desire a lifestyle back home similar to that of family members living in foreign countries, predominantly in the USA. Technological advances in communication like Skype and Twitter, have further reinforced this desire among the young. Neopentecostal churches respond to these aspirations to adopt US American culture among the youth by promoting US brands, music and customs. I am convinced that the success of these

churches in Peru and especially in Lima, is closely connected to the tendency towards emigration.

But even though the desire to emigrate to a North American and Northern European countries exists, we should not mix emigration with the desire that many people have for an international lifestyle while living in Lima, which means they want access to the American way of life but without leaving Peru. This is a symbolic escape from a peripheral context that Peru still represents internationally. A general desire for an American lifestyle among the young and progressing classes is reflected in the increased consumption of American products and services. In Neopentecostal churches, many of which are led by American missionaries, or as Chesnut calls them “sales representatives” it seems to be a force of attraction drawing in the youth. How these churches do this, will be demonstrated later on in this thesis.² The foreign origin of “sales representatives”, other foreign elements and symbols in Peruvian Neopentecostal churches therefore have to be analyzed taking into account Limenean lifestyles.

The phenomenon of mobility has to be analyzed in a context of social and cultural change in light of Limenean history, in which many Limeneans underwent a rapid change in their lifestyles. The lesser existence of boundaries in religious terms can be considered to be a consequence of the whole atmosphere of social change and migration of people who find it hard to connect the cross of Motupe (a local sanctuary from the Sierra, worshipped in the northern outskirts of Lima) to a lifestyle of social progression and globalization. International elements and symbols seem to be more to the liking of those people. An examination of Chesnut’s focus on Pentecostalism and transnational networks has led to the question of why there are foreign elements within Neopentecostalism. Limenean lifestyles reflect preferences for foreign, especially American, forms of education and consumption. Altamirano speaks of a melting pot, a “universalización de la cultura” (Altamirano, 1992: 171).

A cultural element that seems to play a role in the context of Peru is the so called: “trauma de la conquista”. According to Commission of Truth and Reconciliation, it still exists in the minds of the majority of Peruvians not only among the marginalized (CVR,

² Arellano/Burgos is analyzing the “fuga de talentos”, the aspirations of professionals of higher social strata that emigrate to foreign countries. Arellano/Burgos 2010, 188-189.

2004: 54, 62). Therefore in my opinion, recognition plays an important role for the religious actor's preferences for the different Neopentecostal options and mobility within them. Nugent talks of an Oedipus complex, which he uses to describe discrimination on the basis of the colonial matrix, which does not need to be explained in detail. The necessity of international citizenship and stepping out of marginality of a developing country seems to be a necessity which can be understood given the background of the former explanations.

The success of Neopentecostalism seems to be rooted in foreign elements in the USA and the Peruvian economy, as well as its promotion of an international lifestyle for actors living in a rapidly developing world metropolis. One motive for adopting Neopentecostalism seems to be international recognition (Lecaros, 2013). It seems like Neopentecostals do not want to be identified with a country where people are considered poor and indigenous (as is the Peruvian stereotype). In other words their "reference group", according to the classical term by Robert K. Merton, is the northern developed hemisphere. Stepping out of marginality does not mean that these actors actually intend to emigrate, but it can be interpreted to mean that they strive to belong to the group of social elites living the American way of life, which distinguishes them from the poor masses. Hence the attractive force of international social networks has to be examined in its relation to different Limenean lifestyles and the dispositions of each for a particular Neopentecostal church as well as the mobility between different evangelical and Neopentecostal churches. These aspects form the background necessary to understand the attracting force of social networks and international citizenship. Contrary to Arellano's investigation on emigration, published in 2010, we cannot ignore the consequences of the ongoing economic crisis in Europe and how it affected Latin Americans particularly Peruvians, which Arellano could not yet describe because it is a recent phenomenon. There is a tendency of younger emigrants to go back to Peru because of the high level of youth unemployment in southern European countries. Working opportunities have become more numerous nowadays in Peru than in Spain for instance. This "home coming" has become a new phenomenon of migration due to the financial crisis in many European countries, which should not be neglected.

As was mentioned before, Arellano paints a positive and very optimistic picture of the actual Limenean society which does not consider the isolation and fragmentation among the different social classes that exist due to the enormous cultural, ethnical, socio-economical differences. Kogan speaks of different islands that lack any connection. Often people in social groups relate exclusively with their own kind and this means they cannot accumulate social capital and the notion of inequality is perpetuated (Kogan, 2012: 41).³ The fragmentation restricts access to resources in different life dimensions. These social structures of fragmentation are best seen in geographical enclaves of social clubs, beaches and schools in the affluent areas of Lima. Social access is dependent on the answers to such questions as: “In which school did you study?” (Kogan, 2012: 41). In Lima there is a boom of private schools even in poorer areas, because parents desire a higher life quality for their children, through education that leads to prosperity. The tendency in education could draw parallels to the religious field. The issue of reference groups and cultural inferiority seems an appropriate basis to analyze churches in a religious market within a highly fragmented society. While the majority church aims to unite different social realities the new situation of a free religious market causes niche marketing in the religious field. Different churches work in different social niches. The question connected is whether religion, particularly Neopentecostal churches, the object of research, presents another element of societal fragmentation or whether it serves as a bridge between the different social islands.

Therefore belonging to a particular church, could form another distinctive aspect of social “islands”. With this in mind, it is of interest to determine where churches are located and the cultural and ethnical socio-economical features of its pastors and members. It shall be investigated, how different churches manage to present opportunities for interchange in contrast to exclusive beaches, clubs and particular private schools. In terms of networks and the necessity of social networks that function as favorable factors for upward social mobility, the role of churches shall be investigated.

Church-membership in socially higher echelon churches generates the opportunity to socialize with people within Lima’s higher social classes and foreigners. Therefore the

³ “Los grupos sociales que se relacionan exclusivamente con sus pares no logran acumular capital social, y adicionalmente generan la perpetuación de las desigualdades sociales.”

religious community can become a source of prestige, which shall be explained. Due to clientelism, social networks are considered an axis of reference groups similar to the education one has received and the school one went to. I would like to avoid touching upon the complex issue of “racism”, which is well discussed in Peru and preferring to speak about ethnicity, instead. The typical criteria on which ethnicity in Peru are based are: language, territory, culture, the level of poverty or wealth and physical features (Kogan, 2012: 29). Belonging to a certain territory, the school one went to, the club one is member of, form little social islands that mark one’s social status in Peru. “A society that is constituted privileged through social groups that are sustained in racial/ethnic and/or socio-economical homogeneity shows isolated islands with a lack of connections and possibilities of interchange and social mobility” (Kogan, 2012: 41).⁴ The consequences for churches within such a fragmented society and an attitude of cultural inferiority will become apparent throughout this study. For me, as investigator, ethnicity has to be taken into account because it is a reason why someone is welcomed into a church or not.

2.10 Hypotheses developed on the theoretical background

As this study will show, Neopentecostal churches grow within the evangelical framework, recruiting its members also from other evangelical groups, as well as from the official church (Catholic) with the intention to invigorate other evangelical churches with strong market oriented strategies. How can the phenomenon be described? Do typical ways of mobility between different churches exist? What are the religious and social factors of the inner mobility that favor this tendency?

This investigation concentrates on religious mobility as an inner-evangelical phenomenon where religious actors move from certain churches to others, but at the same time it is interested in determining whether a direct mobility from Catholicism towards Neopentecostal churches exists. Historically evangelical churches generally

⁴ “Una sociedad constituida privilegiadamente a partir de grupos sociales sustentados en la homogeneidad racial, étnica y/o socioeconómica, nos muestra como islotes aislados con escasa vinculación y posibilidades de intercambio y movilidad social.”

gained ground among lower social classes. Since the Neopentecostal mega-churches seem to attract more people in the higher social classes than traditional evangelical and Pentecostal churches, one might suspect that these churches also attract non-practicing Catholics. In general terms this phenomenon can be depicted as an evangelical one, a tendency among the minority which occurs, particularly in socially higher echelon Neopentecostal churches.

The first type of mobility is mobility from traditional churches towards Evangelical mega-churches, which in the present investigation will be referred to as Neopentecostal churches. The second type of mobility is the one alluded in the title, the inner- mobility of Neopentecostal's mobility towards socially higher echelon churches. These trends are the focal points of the hypothesis in this present investigation.

1. The detected religious mobility within evangelical and within the Neopentecostal framework can be explained by a quest of social progress. Social progress is promoted by Neopentecostal churches on a material level as well as on a symbolical level.
2. Social networks woven within the Neopentecostal churches form factors that favor an upward social mobility and encourage religious actors to participate.
2. Religious actors of emerging social classes act according to their desire to step out of the marginality of a developing country to achieve international and national recognition. In the context of cultural and social change, rapid development and an atmosphere of progress due to a growing economy, religious actors strive to gain social progress according to their lifestyle. Religious actors, by switching churches use them as springboards for social progression. Therefore religious mobility towards and within Neopentecostalism is tied to social mobility.
3. The Neopentecostal churches, like commercial enterprises enforce and fulfill the needs of their target groups (a significant sector of Peruvian society - emerging social classes), while strategically striving for their own prosperity and recognition within society through their adaptation of products, marketing, sales representatives and organizational structure.
4. The phenomenon stated in the previous point has been enforced by various factors, including:

- (a.) the “conversion” factor, which becomes more flexible and leads to a highly flexible sense of belonging.
- (b.) the missing doctrinal tradition and flexible religious convictions are highly emotionally and prosperity oriented

3 Neopentecostals in Lima - Methodological Design

The following chapter will define the objective of research, putting the Neopentecostal mega-churches in parity with plural evangelical landscape and includes an introduction on Peruvian evangelical church history in order to locate Neopentecostalism within a historical framework. After an introduction of parities, I will explain the criteria of Steigenga that form the frame of reference to distinguish different groups according to their history, basic religious convictions and practices. An actual typology is very hard to achieve and not necessary according to the object of study, but contrasting certain distinctions is inevitable, especially given the impression of the Peruvian media that a homogeneous unity called “los evangélicos” exist. In truth, what this term refers to are the groups of evangelical mega-churches who possess the economic and social capital to organize events such as public service announcements with the Peruvian president. Secondly, I will summarize the results of the review of literature and a general distinction will be made between churches to clarify the meaning of the term Neopentecostalism. Thirdly, I will distinguish between the groups subsumed under this term while focusing on the selected cases in Lima. The questions that I will seek to answer are: Which are the churches that are actually referred to under the term Neopentecostals? Which are actual churches that are the focus of the present investigation and why did I choose them? Lastly, an introduction to the methodology used in this study will be explained using the table below which shows the methodological framework of the hypothesis that shall be explained through the analysis.

For the following section, it seems appropriate to provide an overview of the many abbreviations used. The chart below shall be of helpful in this regard.

Chart of abbreviations

Name of church/organization	abbreviation
Concilio Nacional Evangélico de Perú	CONEP
Unión Nacional de Iglesias Cristianas Evangélicas del Perú	UNICEP
Catholic Charismatic Renewal	CCR
Asambleas de Dios	AD
Misión Misionera Mundial	MMM
Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus	IURD
Iglesia Evangélica del Perú	IEP
Alianza Cristiana y Misionera	Alianza Cristiana
Comunidad Cristiana Agua Viva	Agua Viva
Iglesia Bíblica Emmanuel	Emmanuel
Camino de Vida	CDV
Potential Church	Potential

3.1 Approximation towards the pluralism within the evangelical spectrum

A Northern European feels pretty much at home when reading in the newspaper that “the evangelicals” are supporting a certain political party or that certain politicians and their party represent “evangélicos“. In reality the religious entities described by the term evangelical, are indeed Neopentecostals that by no means express evangelical Protestant traditions. Due to their influence within Peruvian public media, Neopentecostals often represent Evangelicals as a whole, even though numerically they are a small minority inside the larger group of evangelicals in Peru. Therefore the term evangelicals shall be used in a general sense in order to develop a basic parity of different evangelical church types in Peru. The homogenization of evangelicals does not seem to reflect the differences between highly distinctive churches. Therefore, a scientific distinction on the basis of social and religious practices is necessary.

The census in Peru asks about religious adherence mainly under the terms of “Catholic“ or “Evangelical“ as a very general term for Latin American Protestants, in addition to “other religions” and “without religion”, according to the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (<http://www.inei.gob.pe>). This expresses the fact that there is no particular distinction between evangelicals in Peru. The term “protestante“, distinguishes the historic churches that originated in the Reformation but it is not widely used (Stoll, 1990). The universal term “Protestantism“ on an international level does not serve as a distinction but rather marks an inclusive expression for one of the three major divisions within Christianity: Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Protestantism. The last division includes all evangelical churches of Christian origin. The term “evangelical“ will be used as an umbrella term for all different kinds of Protestants.

The term “charismatic” is often confusing because it is used for evangelicals and Catholics alike but it usually refers to a certain form of renewal movement within Catholicism. I will therefore omit it while studying the evangelical field. When it appears, it refers to the Catholic renewal movement.

The term “evangelical” therefore, by no means connotes a homogenous group, nor a unity of different churches, but rather a potpourri of churches such as Pentecostal, Neo-Pentecostals, a number of churches whose origins isn’t clear as well as a small number of churches that grew out of the Reformation and have very different historical lineages.

In a sense, the mass media are overwhelmed with the massive wave of religious pluralism which has reached Latin America and has caused misunderstandings in terms of religious identification. Homogenization of “evangelicals“ by political parties and the media seem to ignore the informal and mainly oral traditions of communication and cleavages that characterize these religious groups while at the same time, makes it more difficult to distinguish between them within the colorful landscape of diversity.

Observations show that people usually associate evangelicals with a certain lifestyle, rather than specific theological profiles rooted in the term evangelical. This is reflected by the general description of Evangelicals as non-drinkers, non-smokers and non-dancers. The term “evangelical church” includes a multitude of different religious

phenomena with very distinctive social, political and theological perspectives even within one denomination.

In order to shed light on the Neopentecostal phenomenon in Peru one needs to consider the historical origins, distinctive religious convictions and practices as well as organizational and governmental ecclesiastical structures. Therefore one must search for a classification that shows some form of borders that are very fluid and often invisible, which makes it difficult. Even in the same denomination, one can find various theological profiles which are based on different missions from different cultural contexts. In some cases, churches with the same vision employed missions from various denominations to form national churches rooted in Peru.

Internal differences and the Pentecostalization (Steigenga, 2001) of traditional churches complicate the construction of a typology even more (Schäfer, 2009). Attempts for the Latin American context have been made by Stoll (Stoll, 1990), Steigenga (Steigenga, 2001, 2007) and following the model of Escobar (Escobar, 1994), Wynarczyk (Wynarczyk, 2003), Martin (Martin, 2002), Cleary (Cleary, 2007), Schäfer (Schäfer, 1992, 2009), et al.

Apart from religious criteria, the problem with most of the typologies is that social variables are missing. However, including social criteria in typologies is important because social variables are a way of establishing differences within the general field of Neopentecostals. For the present investigation the question of conversion shall play a role as well, because a new tendency seems to be that once a new member enters, he or she becomes part of the church by being asked to participate immediately, instead of partaking in an elaborate event of conversion, as they do in most evangelical churches. Typological factors will be differentiated in the following section.

“Church” according to Weber

Weber distinguishes between church and sect; a church is an established institutional organization with a formal and bureaucratic administration in a religious hierarchy. In contrast, a sect is a small group of committed members, who are loosely organized but

who usually stand together in protest towards the majority church and feel spiritually “superior”. A feature of distinction is the type of leadership. The sect depends on a charismatic leader, who imposes his own worldview and logic to his followers.

Howard Becker prefers the distinction between “denominations” and “cults”. Denominations are developed institutionalized sects that have some level of respect by churches. Cults are heretical, belong to a church, but have their own ideas about things such as spiritualism. The intention of this thesis, if religious communities are churches, is to understand and explore the differences between them.

Organizational forms

In order to explore the organizational forms of the investigated institutions we need to consider a few generally distinguished forms. The most distinctive forms of organization are exhibited in the structure of Episcopal churches that have a bishop who is elected by the assembly, as is the case in the Anglican and Methodist churches. The Presbyterian Church has a council of elders. An influential church in Peru (the Alianza Cristiana y Misionera) uses this system. The last model presents the congregational government of autonomous local congregations that do not receive orders from missions or national churches. The Baptists represent a classical Congregationalist type of church system that some Pentecostals have adopted.

The Peruvian umbrella organizations differ from each other for organizational rather than religious reasons. While the CONEP claims to be the organization for the nationally organized churches that do have local congregations, the UNICEP mostly has members that are newly established churches which can be described as non-denominational, autonomous churches that are not connected to other congregations. The newer evangelical mega-churches are represented by the UNICEP. Neopentecostal churches all have different forms of organization that shall be explored in the field study. These forms are mentioned only because it is necessary to gain an understanding of the parity of Neopentecostal churches to other churches. An aim of this investigation is to distinguish churches into different groups in an attempt to more closely examine them.

3.1.1 Differentiation of Steigenga

In order to differentiate the churches of the present investigation, operative criteria are necessary and these are present in the typology of Steigenga. While he introduces the criteria to distinguish between different evangelical churches, I want to point out that these criteria can also serve to illuminate differences within Neopentecostalism. Steigenga developed his criteria in order to compare and contrast religious convictions and political action. He names three major criteria that can help to distinguish different groups including historical origin (especially that of missions), major religious convictions and practices. His criterion is valuable to define Neopentecostalism in Peru. He divides Neopentecostalism into three groups: mainstream or established Protestants, Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals (Steigenga, 2001: 7-12). Therefore the groups, Steigenga distinguishes between using his criteria serves to characterize Neopentecostalism in Peru. The history of all evangelical churches in Peru will be examined to gain an overview of their background. Then the focus will switch to Neopentecostalism. Therefore it seems very important to know the history of churches in Peru and the different convictions and practices of evangelicals before examining the newest group of Neopentecostals that is developing and gaining influence within the evangelical landscape.

Mainstream Protestants

The term “mainstream Protestants”, used by Steigenga includes different groups according to their time of arrival to Latin America. The first group of immigrant churches came at the beginning of the 19th century and did not proselytize as one of their central goals. They were primarily churches serving immigrant communities – English Anglicans, German Lutherans, Welsh Methodists etc. In the second wave of immigrant churches, the focus changed slightly. Missionaries (Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptist) arrived in Peru at the end of the 19th century with the intention to evangelize. The majority of missions arrived after World War II. Some of them like, “Regions beyond Missionary Union” (RBMU) or “Evangelical Union of South America” (EUSA) did not fit the mold of the others. Some missions were connected to

new denominations such as Alianza Cristiana y Misionera and Nazarenos, and played an important role in Peru, as they continue to do today. All of them share the majority of doctrines such as salvation through Christ, a belief in the trinity and the unconditioned mercy as well as the divine inspiration of the scripture. The role of the pastor depends on the church. All these churches can be classified as “evangelicos”. This term is used to distinguish this group from Catholicism and Pentecostalism. Therefore in this investigation these churches will be referred to as evangelical churches which are distinct from Pentecostal churches. In light of the fact that most of these churches developed on the structure of evangelical churches, this group shall not be neglected. Neopentecostals often recruit their members from evangelical churches, to which they often appear closely connected in terms of religious convictions and practices as they are to Pentecostal churches. This will be discussed, when defining Neopentecostalism in Peru.

Pentecostals

Pentecostalism, which arrived in Peru the beginning of the 20th century, is the most influential Christian religious movement worldwide, but especially in developing countries Cleary estimated a number of 400-500 million Pentecostals.

In Latin America, Pentecostalism was introduced by worldwide Pentecostal movements such as the spiritual revivalism of Topeka in Kansas by Charles Parham in 1901; Azusa in Los Angeles 1906-1909. The first Latin American countries to receive Pentecostal churches were Chile, Brazil and Argentina 1910; Peru 1911; Mexico 1914; Guatemala and Puerto Rico 1916.

Pentecostalism in Peru took hold because of the hard work of foreign missionaries such as the Assembly of God (Asambleas de Dios, AD) from Springfield and the Church of God (Iglesia de Dios) in Cleveland (Steigenga, 2001: 66). Until the present day the AD is the largest evangelical church in Peru. With about one million members, they form by far the largest church of the CONEP. They have spread around the country mostly in lower class, poorer areas. Divisions inside these missions have formed other splinter churches such as the “Iglesia Evangélica Pentecostal de Perú” and the “Iglesia Evangélica Pentecostal Misionera” that both derived from the AD. Stewart-Gambio

states that Latin American Pentecostalism developed its characteristics almost without any US-American influence (Steward-Gambio, 1997: 229). There are many reasons why Pentecostalism has generated a complex network of new groups. Diversity of organization, according to Steward-Gambio is, “essentially a matter of the decentralization of similar, if not identical groups that combine their efforts under one denominational administrative umbrella without damage to their beliefs and practices.” (Steward-Gambio, 1997: 232).

The strongest religious conviction among these churches is the second coming of Christ, that may occur in a post-millenarianism way after the kingdom of God rules for 1000 years on earth; or in a pre-milleniarist way, which concentrates on the present and interprets societal problems such as poverty, corruption, natural disasters etc. as an indication that the second coming of Christ is close at hand. The three works of grace form another important aspect of Pentecostalism. The first is a personal conversion, experienced and often referred to as “being born again”. The second gift is the sanctification, forgiveness of sins and acceptance of the perfect love of Christ which includes empowerment by the Holy Spirit through glossolalia and divine healing, for instance.

Wynarczyk uses a Pentecostal typology in order to differentiate three different groups including:

1. The Classical Pentecostals of missionary origin such as the “Asambleas de Dios” and “Iglesia de Dios” that are connected to a mother church. They take the form of networks of congregations linked to a complex organizational system.
2. The Neo-classical Pentecostals that originated from a cleavage at the beginning of the 2nd World War. They are organized in networks of congregations.
3. The last group is comprised of autonomous Pentecostal churches that often are established because of cleavages that are different from the one mentioned in point 2. Motivations of founding actors often include feelings of inferiority which lead these actors to form their own church. These churches seldom have more than 200 members and are usually found in peripheral districts of larger cities.

Summarizing the group Steigenga calls “mainstream Protestants” includes all different churches, which consider themselves “evangelical” and even though their expression of faith differs significantly in one form or another, their convictions and practices can be easily subsumed under the term “mainstream”. It is worth mentioning, that after World War II, a significant number of these churches were established and this has continued to the present day. All of them were built up through foreign missions, with the exception of some ethnical churches, and have been established based on local realities. In the present day, these churches are comprised of people who are founding members of the church or are second generation members.

Both forms have been described and investigated thoroughly. Therefore a brief overview shall be sufficient to disclose the objective of the present investigation: Neopentecostalism, which has not been investigated to such an extent in Peru, includes groups that differ significantly with regards to the three criteria of Steigenga: religious conviction, practice and history.

The three groups of Pentecostals defined by Wynarczyk might help to uncover the differences between the structures of different groups within Neopentecostalism as well, since he mentions conditions for their establishment, which mainstream churches do not have, and all of them were established through foreign missions. The criteria of differentiation used by Wynarczyk represent the different ways these groups were established. These criteria can be applied to Neopentecostal churches as well and shall be explained in the next section, which concentrates on Neopentecostalism.

3.2 *Neopentecostalism vs. Pentecostalism*

Social criteria

In Lima, most of the older cinemas have been abandoned and replaced by modern, more lucrative cinematic chains. Many of these buildings function today as Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches and reveal very different aspects of two very different realities. The evangelistic center of the Assembly of God, the largest evangelical church in Peru and the classical preeminent Pentecostal church, show through their

ancient architecture and traditional old glamour facade, that its best days have passed. In contrast the perfectly renovated Neopentecostal mega-church of Agua Viva is filled to capacity. The divergence between these two culturally and historically different churches in Lima is evident. Unlike Pentecostal churches, Neopentecostal churches are not concentrated in the margins of Latin American cities because they want to attract ambitious people from different social classes who aspire to move up the social-economic ladder in Latin American cities. Hence social criteria shall be considered when distinguishing between Pentecostalism and Neopentecostalism. Other criteria include religious convictions and practices which are the focus of the section that follows.

Religious convictions and practices

The doctrine and practice of Neopentecostal churches usually shows certain similarities to Pentecostal churches, but Neopentecostals do not adopt the ascetic norms of behavior and world escapism of Pentecostalism (Wynarczyk, 2001: 45). Often they are considered as a “light” form of Pentecostal churches. Aesthetic elements such as spectacular multimedia presentations are common in these church services.

Instead of promoting the negation of “world”, Neopentecostals value social and economic success. The theological background is obviously different - in short, the eschatological difference between Neopentecostalism and Pentecostalism, is Neopentecostals are not waiting around for the second coming of Christ, but wish to construct the kingdom of God in this world, which is called “theology of the present kingdom”, as Algranti calls it in Argentina (Algranti, 2010: 21).

In contrast to Pentecostals, Neopentecostals show a strong interest in state politics. Leaders of Neopentecostal churches are active on the political stage and therefore are familiar figures in the national media. Neopentecostalism imposes religion onto all social spheres of life: culture, media, economy, politics, family, sexuality, health, etc. Algranti draws parallels to other religious groups such as radical Islam, which is a highly dynamic global player. A religious minority claims to be capable of forcing

change in a society by applying the teachings of the “gospel” to the different spheres of society, as the religious actors determine the transmission of Christian values (Algranti, 2010: 22). Even though the public influence of Neopentecostals will not be the focus of the present investigation, it is worth mentioning because claims to be able to transform society are often named as a task of the church by religious actors in interviews.

When contrasting Neopentecostalism and Pentecostalism it should be remembered that Neopentecostals influence traditional Pentecostal churches and other evangelical churches in Latin America through evangelism and their emphasis on prosperity as an element of religious conviction. Founded on the Calvinist predestination teachings, prosperity theology asserts that material well-being is a sign of being blessed. The prosperity theology, which is connected to the theology of the present kingdom, is an important component in the relationship followers have towards the world and their Pentecostal heritage. Particular characteristics shall be elicited in the field study.

Problems of terminology

Problems based on in terminological differences have to be mentioned. “Neopentecostals“, as I mentioned before, implies a connection to Pentecostalism but shows a schism through the prefix “neo”. Neopentecostalism does not correspond to the self-description of the religious actors and representatives, who call themselves “carismaticos” or “cristianos”. Furthermore Pentecostals themselves don’t like this term, since it suggests a close connection of the churches described with their own religious identification as Pentecostal churches.

A review of the Peruvian literature reveals the terminological problem. Without going into detail as to why, Bernardo Campos positions Neopentecostalism closer to Catholicism than to Protestantism (Campos, 1997: 28). Indeed there is one aspect of Neopentecostalism that has more in common with the CCR (Catholic Charismatic Renewal) than with Pentecostalism, namely the social target group. This group is comprised of people predominantly located in the middle and upper middle classes and therefore stands in contrast to the aim of Pentecostal churches to attract the marginalized, lower classes. Therefore some Peruvian scholars including Oscar Amat

(Interview 28.04.2012) call them “Carismaticos” rather than Neopentecostals since their emphasis on charisma in their teachings and practice. Internationally the term “nuevos carismáticos” or “neo-carismáticos” is used by other authors as well (Moriarty, 1992; Quebedeaux 1983) to describe the third wave of Pentecostalism.

To avoid possible confusion with the Catholic charismatic sector this investigation will use the term “Neopentecostals”. Admittedly, this term has associated problems, especially because it does not represent a self-definition of the religious actors, but it is used in the international socio-religious literature in general. This unclear definition might provide a clue in determining their predisposition towards religious migration particularly among young adults who move from Evangelical to Pentecostal churches and within Neopentecostal churches as well. As I mentioned before, scholars speak of Neopentecostals within the Protestant field, in order to distinguish these groups from Catholicism and from other Protestants. Hence this term suggests a proximity to Pentecostalism or at least the historical roots within Pentecostalism. However, Neopentecostalism is actually a new form of Pentecostalism. The historical background is used to clarify the confessional heritage in greater detail in the next section.

Historical heritages

Historically, Neopentecostal churches emerged in the 1970s and have grown at a faster rate than the “classical traditional” Pentecostal churches which were founded in the from the Azusa street movement. Recently the emergence of these churches has been referred to as the as the “third wave” of the Protestant movement. People who belong to this movement define themselves as “Charismatics”. The so-called “Charismatics” developed as a new Christian movement about 1960 in Van Nuys, California within Protestant churches and later within the Catholic Church. The Limenean cases will represent the diversity of Peru’s historical heritage as well. Because of the different denominational backgrounds, some churches have more in common with traditional evangelical churches than Pentecostals.

Freston mentions the historical heritage in the different waves of Pentecostalism and speaks of an adaption to societal changes in redefining the relationship between society

and religious innovation. Change, in contrast to the position held in Pentecostalism, is depicted as process, in which a religious group resolves its relationship towards society in form of a third wave of Pentecostalism (Freston, 1999: 147). The new wave, which he calls Neopentecostalism, gains a more dynamical relation of conviction and practice. Instead of depicting “world” as place of contamination and danger it becomes place to exercise power and bring about positive change (Garcia-Ruiz, 2006: 179) based on “theology of the present kingdom”.

Freston concentrates empirically on the Brazilian case of the Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus (Freston, 2000: 3) which has become the preeminent Neopentecostal church in literature. Chesnut also explains a fundamental difference between the two movements by using the example of the classical Pentecostals represented by the Assembly of God and their emphasis on faith healing compared to the Neopentecostal churches represented by the IURD, that specialize in exorcism as a specific form of faith healing (Chestnut, 2003: 12-13). Since the field of Neopentecostalism is quite diverse, a distinction between different Neopentecostal churches is necessary.

3.3 *Neopentecostals in Peru*

In general, Peru and more specifically its capital city of Lima, is a place of contrasts which can serve as a case study for explaining the relationship between Neopentecostalism and social contexts. Unlike the Pentecostal churches, the Neopentecostal churches do not concentrate their recruitment efforts on the margins of Latin American cities, but rather are gaining ground in elite districts, in an effort to attract many progressive and ambitious people from different social classes who aspire to climb the ladder of economic success. Highly distinctive life-realities exist in the Peruvian capital marked by the wide gap in lifestyles. The Peruvian case presents inequality between rich and poor that is higher than in any other Latin American country (Huamán, 2007: 383). Visits to Pentecostal and Neopentecostal churches, gives one the impression that members of the church represent to groups of people living in two different parallel worlds.

In Peru, the IURD is despised by the umbrella organization that represents this sector before the state. Other churches, which show similar religious convictions and practices, have been snubbed by UNICEP (Unión Nacional de Iglesias Cristianas Evangélicas del Perú), which has publicly excluded this group of Neopentecostals as sects for their enchanted mentality. Apart from their mind set, financial problems often permeate these churches. In official documents UNICEP accuses IURD, of having caused various corruption scandals in Peru and characterizes it as an abusive and fraudulent sect. (<http://infocatolica.com/blog/infories.php/0908170116-los-evangelicos-rechazan-a-pa>).

Neopentecostals are gaining popularity with catchy slogans such as “Pare de sufrir – stop suffering”. They use prosperity theology in a particular form that follows a simple logic: Give as much as you can to your church and you will be blessed. The blessings promised to faithful Neopentecostals take the form of material blessings in the lives of believers as if by magic. The IURD forms a case study par excellence because it has been researched more than any other Neopentecostal church and has gained influence all over the world. Therefore it is not surprising that the term “Neopentecostals” is commonly associated with the IURD - as the definition of Freston and Chesnut show. I am convinced that in the Peruvian context, where IURD and its derivatives play a minor role, we must distinguish between different Neopentecostal groups similarly to the three groups that Wynczyk defines within Pentecostalism. Therefore it is inevitable that the social criteria are applied here as well. The IURD-type-churches attract marginalized people similarly to Pentecostal churches in Peru. The slogan “pare de sufrir” puts an emphasis on suffering. Of course there are many kinds of suffering in terms of health, personal conflicts, and conflicts in relationships such as marital discord etc., but the material dimension cannot be underestimated. I suspect that in the new middle class, a church that accentuates any kind of suffering is of little appeal, since it does not represent the mindset of the ambitious, younger, success oriented classes. In their anticipation of social ascension and prosperity, they are not inclined to look back or look at their current life reality as ongoing. Speaking of suffering distracts them from their objective to prosper not only materially, but in all the different dimensions of life. Hence we have to ask how far Freston’s definition can be applied to a group of churches that these social classes are attracted to. These churches are growing in Peru, attracting

young urban professionals and are gaining influence among evangelicals. They form the subject of study in the present investigation.

Amat's refusal to call the mega-churches "Neopentecostals" is understandable. Their historical emergence as part of a renewal movement within mainline churches, places them in terms of religious convictions and practices, closer to historical mainline churches than Pentecostal churches. We could ask whether the term "Neo-Evangelicalism" would not be more adequate for those groups, because there are obvious differences in their practices and convictions from Pentecostalism. Manifestations of the spirit are not common in this group because their self-claim is to be moderate and aim not to isolate new believers. The absence of these kinds of practices, suggests that the target group of believers will be found among more educated classes, who would be turned away by such practices. Although their religious practice employs prosperity theology, these churches function differently and have different beliefs than the IURD-group. An examination of this group in Peru will show that prosperity theology cannot be restricted to a "ritual offering of money", but rather prioritizes prosperity theologically into different aspects of life - economic wealth, health and professional success. It is therefore not surprising that these churches offer its members courses on how to be successful and how to manage time and money. Sermons emphasize the importance of self-discipline in order to gain prosperity. Sometimes a sermon teaches practical things such as how to write a successful letter of application to an enterprise. Those are the practices and convictions that fill the mega-churches in Lima. Whereas in Puritanism and Pietism, prosperity was an implicit and natural side effect of a devoted Christian life - religion provides a form of "coaching" for its members with the goal to lead a life of prosperity. The empirical research will have to use proper variables to demonstrate these characteristics of "Neopentecostalism" in Lima in a pragmatic way.

As has been shown, terminology is a problem and could serve as the basis of entire investigation on Neopentecostals. In order not to distract from the objective and to avoid using yet another term, I will simply use the term Neopentecostals in order not to confuse Protestants with the Catholic Charismatic movement. The group of churches that are focused on in the present investigation will be called "mega-churches". It is

important to keep in mind that historically, in terms of their convictions and practices, this group of Neopentecostals is closer to mainstream Protestant churches than to Pentecostal churches. This investigation will show that their recruits are often ex-members of mainstream Protestant churches. Nevertheless, their emphasis on prosperity theology and their focus on multimedia as part of their services, reveal similar elements they share with the IURD group. In terms of religious convictions, the power of the Holy Spirit plays an important role in all of them. The dedication of children, rather than baptism, shows a similarity to the holiness movement of Pentecostalism. The absence of sacraments in general, not celebrating Holy Communion or liturgical elements such as the Lord's Prayer, or a credo in terms of practice and conviction show a closer connection to Pentecostalism than to mainstream Protestantism. Hitherto it makes sense to talk about Neopentecostalism in general terms, including the mega-churches in Lima that are gaining influence in Peru on a national political and public level by targeting an influential social groups and the young urban professionals and others who wish to be a part of this group. Nevertheless it's important to distinguish the group of Neopentecostals that will be investigated from the "IURD-group" in terms of social criteria as well as in religious convictions and practice.

Lima's mega-churches are more moderate, rational and sophisticated in their discourse than the IURD-group and attract people in the higher social classes.

Historically, the group investigated was founded in Peru. Even though there are worldwide networks and financial help and training from foreign churches, they did not play a role in building up the church, but helped to strengthen a personal friendship between the founder and foreign churches. It will have to be investigated on a case by case basis how the church at the focus of the investigation emerged historically.

The literature shows, that demarcation between Neopentecostalism and Pentecostalism as well as towards other evangelical churches is not very clear. The transnational networks are one factor among others that have led to demarcation. In Peru the G12, a US inspired, Korean originated pyramid structure of evangelization through small groups called cells, has reached the largest Neopentecostal church (Agua Viva) through its transnational relationship to a Columbian church that has caused other evangelical as well as Pentecostal churches like Assemblies of God to adopt it as well. New

instruments of evangelization tend to reach Peru through Neopentecostal churches and their transnational connections. In addition, their influence on the public and politics forms an important element of Neopentecostalism in Peru that shall not be overlooked will be further explored in this study.

3.3.1 Tendencies of distinction of Neopentecostals in Peru

The role that the modern media play for the purpose of massive evangelization on the Neopentecostal private radio and TV stations is remarkable. Bastian speaks of a “Culture of performance” with the aim of attracting more members (Bastian, 2008: 176). These churches combine audiovisual shows with mass meetings announced in the media. This strategy is unique and as such, distinguishes these churches from Pentecostalism as well. The inner distinction between the IURD group and the “Limenean mega-churches” forms a background. Throughout the investigation, I will simply speak of Neopentecostals, but it seems important to distinguish between their beliefs in order to explain the Limenean cases. As has been mentioned, IURD and their Peruvian branch are not recognized as a church in the evangelical landscape by UNICEP because of their perceived economic abuse of members. This shall form an element of distinction of this church from others.

A Neopentecostal group that is not despised by UNICEP, but rather forms its largest member church is the “Movimiento Misionero Mundial” (MMM). In an attempt to distinguish between Neopentecostals, it is worth mentioning the “MMM-group” differs considerably in its religious convictions and practices from the mega churches. MMM is more Pentecostal and more rigid in their moral values than Pentecostals.

The socioeconomic and ethnic profile of its members shows that they do not belong to the Neopentecostal group that attract the new ambitious middle-class or emerging social classes, but do attract often elderly, mostly indigenous and obviously poor people in the lower social class. This suggests that MMM wishes to attract people with a conservative and resigned lifestyle rather than a progressive one. MMM is present in low social classes on the margins of Lima. While visiting their main church in a rather run down area in the district La Victoria, I felt like I was in another world. Due to the existence of

its local churches in marginal parts of Peruvian cities, MMM attracts members of the D and E class. Hence one can deduce that MMM does not target the progressing social classes that are willing to spend hours in traffic to attend a mega-church. MMM is mostly present on the margins of the city among D-E class. In terms of social criteria, the MMM differs a lot from the mega-churches.

Unlike the IURD, UNICEP considers and accepts MMM as a church although for Raquel Gago, the executive director of UNICEP, the MMM has a marginal role within UNICEP, because it is basically the voice of the third Neopentecostal group, the non-denominational mega-churches. Furthermore, MMM on an organizational level is not non-denominational but rather is organized as an international church which has branches in different countries.

Therefore, I perceive the existence of three groups of Neopentecostals in Lima: the “IURD-group”, the “MMM-group” and the “mega-churches”. All differ in their historical establishment in Peru as well as in their religious convictions and practices. The “Limenean mega church” group is the focus of the present investigation and it will be the one referred to when talking about Neopentecostalism in Peru.

Wynarczyk’s definition of Argentinean Neopentecostalism seems to be more relevant for the group that dominates the Peruvian context. He calls them trendsetters for having introduced a moderate prosperity theology to traditional churches and their presence in the middle classes as well as in the segment of youth (Wynarczyk, 1995, et. al.). In my opinion, it needs to be pointed out that the mega-church group actually has a lot in common with traditional evangelical churches. Besides promoting prosperity theology in a multi-dimensional manner, they have not suffered financial scandals and therefore want to distinguish themselves from those which have by stressing that they are serious and innovative churches within the evangelical landscape of Peru. Compared to the other two types of churches, they represent a new movement within the traditional evangelical churches. Therefore when referring to the mega-churches as Neopentecostals it is very important to underscore the fact that the mega-church group has very little in common with the (in)famous IURD group, on the contrary they tend to be widely respected Christians who are copied by traditional evangelicals.

Social contexts play an enormous role for the phenomenon of Neopentecostal growth and its distinction from Pentecostalism, but it needs to be pointed out that we cannot apply the rule: Neopentecostals in general attract emerging social classes. As the

distinction of Pentecostalism into three groups has shown, only the “Limenean mega-church” group actually shows tendencies in this regard. As a result, we can say the newest evangelical type, Neopentecostalism gains to attract the current “winners” of the growing economy and those who aspire to prosper in the future.

The strong diversification into groups is not surprising if we look at the market logic. While a monopolist religious firm represents societal unity, a diversification of religious products in the context of high social inequality, causes religious firms to adapt their products to the needs of different social classes and lifestyles. Findings from other studies have shown how differences in highly fragmented Latin American societies are reflected in their preferences for different Pentecostal churches on the religious market. This has been proven for other Latin American contexts as early as the 1980s (Schäfer, 2003; et.al.). This investigation focuses on the social contexts of Neopentecostal movements in contemporary Lima. The social disposition of religious actors undoubtedly play a major role to explain the massive growth of different Pentecostal and Neopentecostal churches in Latin America and raises the question of what their role in developing democracies in Latin American countries is. The emerging middle class shows the greatest preference for Neopentecostal churches; therefore it seems obvious to focus on this group to determine what their appeal is to people in this sector of the social framework.

3.4 *Neopentecostal churches in Lima - the Cases*

3.4.1 General Introduction

The four churches investigated serve as examples to profile the diverse Neopentecostal landscape in Lima. All belong to the group of Neopentecostals introduced in the last section that is distinct from the IURD and MMM groups. The mega-church group will be referred to when speaking of Neopentecostals in Lima by simply naming them “Neopentecostals”. Since membership in these churches is approaching the level of other churches, they are experiencing similar problems. Due to the mutual imitation that occurs within the pluralized religious field in an informal, spontaneously and associative cultural context, it is almost impossible to clearly identify distinctive

religious attributes. Once a particular church develops a new strategy to attract religious actors, others adopt it freely into its own practice, usually without prior reflection and justification. This happens without respecting the distinctions and limitations that exist between Neopentecostalism and Pentecostalism. The selected cases are considered trendsetters for other smaller, lesser known churches which are influenced by different transnational partners and other Peruvian Neopentecostal and Pentecostal churches. Social contexts will form important criteria of distinction, but social contexts cannot be simply described in terms of social classes. Rather they need to be explored considering their dynamic relational patterns and flexible identities that characterize the Neopentecostal churches as well as the Peruvian culture. The different churches investigated respond to the market logic described in the former chapter. They compete with each other and want to attract different social classes, or more appropriately said, people of distinct Limenean lifestyles, described by Arellano. The distinctions that form the empirical variables of the investigation are well established. The different churches can be distinguished for instance in aesthetic terms of the type of music, usage of multimedia, clothes, rhetoric etc. found in each.

The cases I selected for the field study had to fulfill the following criteria in order to correspond to the Peruvian Neopentecostals that will be investigated:

1. Involvement in public affairs, because that is an indication of its power of influence. The public field is referred to as mission field, where churches feel obliged to promote “ethics” in a form of a world transformation. Therefore it is worth mentioning that like the US Christian right, churches in Peru favor, without exception, neoliberal politics such as the politics of Fujimori, Castañeda and Alan Garcia.
2. The membership and/or an influential role in the UNICEP, as the umbrella organization of non-denominational emerging churches not included in the CONEP, is important. CONEP is the traditional representative organization of evangelical churches (including Pentecostal churches) in Peru. The field study shows that having a close relationship with the UNICEP would serve to be a better criterion, since UNICEP is a relatively new organization (founded in 2003).
3. A third criterion is success in attracting a high percentage of the younger generations, who can be seen as a dynamic factor of society. It should not be surprising that the ambitious young generation is most likely to be attracted by prosperity theology.

Little research has been done on Neopentecostals in Peru so far. To guarantee a cross section of diversity as well as guarantee significant cases, I interviewed investigators and researchers as well as experts and well known personalities within the evangelical landscape, in an effort to ensure the cases used are representative.

The churches shall be introduced in the order they have been analyzed, so that it does not confuse the reader.

3.4.2 Agua Viva

The first case introduced is Agua Viva. Agua Viva, founded in 1986, is an important church for the emerging classes. The Comunidad Cristiana Agua Viva, has approximately 100.000 members. Most of them live in Lima, but Agua Viva has branches in other Peruvian cities. It is worth mentioning that Agua Viva underwent a transformation from Pentecostalism towards Neopentecostalism which caused it to modify its style. This is a typical outcome of the process of adoption and imitation that takes place among the evangelical churches in Peru and Latin America. Since all religious enterprises want to have success in the pluralized religious market, they “borrow” marketing strategies from one another, as was mentioned earlier. Agua Viva is the largest church within the Neopentecostal churches studied in Lima. After receiving recommendations of Peruvian researches to include it as UNICEP church, I discovered that Agua Viva is not official member of UNICEP, but CONEP. Due to this fact, Agua Viva was the first church of its type in Lima. Even local pastors and lay leaders are under the impression that Agua Viva belongs to UNICEP. Principal Pastor’s wife, Mirtha Lazo confirms that Agua Viva, apart from being a formal member in CONEP, has characteristics similar to churches in UNICEP. Pulpit interchange with other churches of this group that I observed, confirms this. Its obvious relationship to the influential UNICEP churches is very strong, whereas MMM is actually by far, the largest member of UNICEP, but as the distinction of Neopentecostal groups has shown, MMM even though being member of UNICEP, MMM is quite isolated compared to main trendsetters within UNICEP (including Agua Viva), which are closely related,

even visiting each other for guest sermons etc. Agua Viva, which for historical reasons does not belong to UNICEP, is actually the largest non-denominational church in Lima and therefore forms an important case for the investigation.

The cases investigated are all renewal movements within traditional evangelical churches or as in the case of Agua Viva, within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

Its founders are upper middle class white Peruvian families who had participated in the Catholic Charismatic movement in the late 1980s which was inspired by a missionary campaign. They decided to form their own church, which due to their social position, differed from the existing Pentecostal movement in the margins of Lima. This analysis will provide more detail about the church. These historical details shall be sufficient.

As I mentioned previously, the non-denominational churches are represented by the UNICEP. Non-denominational is usually defined as one local mega-church, which is not organized as a denominational network of congregations. Mirtha Lazo, the wife of principal pastor Peter Hornung, was vice president of the congress. The principal pastors were and continue to be, on the political stage and are well known.

3.4.3 Emmanuel

“Iglesia Bíblica Emmanuel” in the present investigation will be called “Emmanuel”. UNICEP executive director Raquel Gago, says Emmanuel as historically the second most influential church of UNICEP, attracts massive numbers of members in the younger generations of emerging social classes. Its founder Humberto Lay was a pastor at one of the most influential evangelical mainstream protestant churches “Alianza Cristiana y Misionera” before being hired by the Assemblies of God to attract the middle classes. In 1987, the project ended with the foundation of his own church in the middle and upper middle class areas located in the financial zone in the district of San Isidro. Humberto Lay is well known in public. When asking taxi drivers to take me to Emmanuel many replied, “That is the church of Humberto Lay, right?” Humberto Lay is an ex-candidate who unsuccessfully ran for President of Peru in 2006 and as President of the ethical commission in 2011-2012. The importance of this kind of public

recognition should not be underestimated for evangelical churches in a Catholic majority context.

3.4.4 CDV

Camino de Vida, in the present investigation referred to as “CDV”, is clearly the church of the younger generations in Lima whose services take place in a somewhat hidden sports hall in an exclusive upper class residential district of Monterrico. CDV has the most elaborate and sophisticated multimedia show of all Neopentecostals in Lima. It is highly influential within UNICEP, providing training for other member churches, which makes it a clear trendsetter within UNICEP. The trendsetting role was intended by its founder Robert Barriger, who said he is “willing to sacrifice one generation in order to reach the following one”. Especially the younger generations in the lifestyle-scheme of Arellano, are very likely to belong to the progressing and emerging social classes found in the two UNICEP-trendsetters Emmanuel and CDV. These churches aim to attract progressive, ambitious, younger generations of people who are the principle drivers of social progression. This makes CDV a typical Neopentecostal church in Lima, which shall have to be investigated. Historically, CDV was founded by a US missionary who still is the principal pastor of CDV. Robert Barriger was sent to work as a missionary for the evangelical church “Cathedral de Fe”. After about ten years he quit his job and formed his own church. As a foreigner, CDV founder Pr. Robert Barriger, is not active as politician, but he surely is somewhat of a celebrity within the evangelical landscape, playing a significant role in the umbrella organization UNICEP and has influence on high-level politicians.

3.4.5 Potential Church

A fourth case is included in the investigation because it shows an interesting new trend. The Potential Church is a US mega-church which will be called “Potential” in the investigation. It is not yet part of UNICEP, but is closely connected to its member churches through personal friendships among pastors of the investigated cases,

especially the CDV. The bilingual “Potential church”, has only existed five years in Peru and targets and attracts, almost exclusively, young adults of emerging classes and therefore serves as an example of an extreme form of CDV, with a lot of similarities to CDV because of the presence of foreign elements and emphasis on multimedia to attract members from other Neopentecostal churches. It shall therefore serve as an indicator of tendencies and be investigated even further, though it is still very small with only about 250-600 members and the emphasis on youth is evident to such an extent that members of the elder generation are usually addressed as “parents” by the pastor. There are many obvious signs that Potential targets the progressing and sophisticated social classes, especially since a high number of its inductees have participated in CDV before.

Summarizing, the churches investigated are the most influential among the emerging social classes in Lima: Comunidad Cristiana Agua Viva, which is referred to as “Agua Viva”, Iglesia Bíblica Emmanuel, referred to as “Emmanuel”, Camino de Vida referred to as “CDV” and Potential Church, referred to as “Potential”. The influential first three tend to be widely known (for instance by taxi drivers) because of their principal pastors and church founders, who are active on the public stage. The leaders of the first three case-churches strive for public presence, influence in national politics and wish to attract the emerging social classes, which are the younger generations. This marks a distinction to other evangelical churches within the Peruvian landscape.

All of them are self-described as being “Christian”. The three distinctive Neopentecostal churches together form the most important examples and most influential Neopentecostal churches in Lima and due to centralism, Neopentecostal elites are basically restricted to the Peruvian capital, even though some of them have developed or are expanding to other cities or districts outside of Lima.

These case-churches have been methodologically investigated according to the theoretical frame within two significant perspectives 1. Attention is drawn to religious actors and their motivation, social necessity and background in order to identify ways of mobility within the evangelical field as within Neopentecostal churches and its relationship to social mobility. 2. The religious firms have to be studied according to their products, marketing, sales representatives as well as organizational structures.

3.5 General Methodology

3.5.1 Quantitative research

As I pointed out before the statistical information on evangelical churches in Peru is very limited. Because of the small number of evangelicals in Lima, the segment is quantitatively insignificant. Therefore a qualitative exploration of Neopentecostals seems to be appropriate as method for the present investigation. The quantitative survey that I conducted through the IOP, the Institute of Opinion Polls in Lima, will help to consolidate the qualitative research to the database of evangelicals in Lima as far as possible. Questions of religious mobility, knowledge about Neopentecostal churches and a more specified religious identification were included in an opinion poll for the population of Lima.

The survey consisted of four closed questions:

1. ¿Como se define Ud.? – How do you define yourself?

The options given were: Católico-Catholic; Cristiano-Christian, Evangélico-Evangelical, Pentecostal, Cristiano-Pentecostal, Cristiano-Carismático.

The question reveals how most of the evangelicals in Lima really define themselves.

The term Neopentecostal was not included, since none of the believers define themselves as “Neopentecostals”, the option “otro”- other reveals that.

The second question asked about the religious mobility of believers.

2.” ¿Usted ha pertenecido o ha asistido regularmente a servicios religiosos (ritos, ceremonias, etc.), de una sola religión? – Have you participated regularly in religious services (rites, ceremonies, etc) of one religion? The actual term “religious service” would be “confession” but in Peru, people use the term religion to distinguish different Christian confessions and denominations as well.

Respondents could choose between the options: “una sola religión”- Only one confession”, “dos”- two, “tres”- three, “cuatro”-four, “cinco o más” - five and more, “No he asistido a servicios de ninguna religión”- I don’t attend any religious services”.

The third question asked about the familiarity of different evangelical churches in Lima including the cases: Católica, Emmanuel, Camino de Vida, Movimiento Misionero Mundial (MMM), Asambleas de Dios, Alianza Cristiana y Misionera, Iglesia Evangélica del Perú (IEP). Those surveyed could also check Otra-Other, Ninguna-None.

3. “¿En cuales de ellas ha participado?” – In which of them have you participated?

3.5.2 Qualitative Research

In general the investigation will be an explorative study. The bases of collecting information in the qualitative field study were non-structured interviews and participative observations as well a comparison of webpages, where the religious identities present themselves in the wider, transnational way.

The webpages provide information to formulate a first impression regarding which age groups and social classes or lifestyles each church wants to attract. Observations made by participating in Sunday services, provided insight into atmospheric details of the churches and let me better understand group-dynamics, where the church was located and its accessibility by public transport within the city of Lima. My participation also created a certain degree of trust between myself and other religious actors as well as sales representatives as a condition for productive interviews. One can expect to verify first impressions made by the analysis of the webpages and a profound explanation of how each church tries to gain the niche marketing within particular lifestyles of emerging social classes in Lima by observing where a certain church is located, how liturgical staging takes place and levels of education, abstraction, participation etc. of its members.

Before interviewing representatives and members from the churches, I first interviewed Peruvian and Latin American scholars and celebrities within the evangelical landscape including representatives and ex-representatives of the umbrella organizations CONEP and UNICEP, members and representatives of their numerically strongest churches (AD, MMM), ecumenically involved Catholic representatives (CEAS- Comisión

Episcopal de Acción Social), Christian youth organizations and influential evangelical NGOs in order to guarantee an objective selection of the cases of Neopentecostal mega-churches in Peru. I applied the methodology in the SIER (Seminario Interdisciplinario de Estudios de Religión) of the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, which has affirmed the selection of cases and methodological decisions made were relevant for the Peruvian context.

Non-structured and semi-structured interviews shall give the religious actor space to build up confidence and allow him or her speak freely about his or her priorities to participate in the church. The method therefore shall take the form of a relaxed and unpretentious conversation, without a fixed structure and questions that avoid forced and perhaps, dishonest answers. Including the scholars, representatives in other churches 84 persons were interviewed throughout the year 2012.

The interviewees in the case-churches are principal representatives (one founder or principal pastor for each), one to two local pastors and at least six lay leaders/members. The number of interviewees of each church was realized according to the point of saturation. The samples of the third group are gender-neutral in order to verify whether there are differences of perception among the different genders. An attempt to interview loosely affiliated believers as fourth group has been difficult because, in all cases, the churches enforce immediate and active involvement through regular participation in training and leadership. Religious actors who are exclusively participating in services are rare and difficult to find and as such, were not always available. Attempts to interview ex-members were equally difficult.

In the case of CDV, because of its diversity, more interviews were conducted in order to reach saturation and I interviewed an ex -member, who was particularly helpful because he helped me to understand subtle issues, which one does not understand otherwise. The first category consists of representatives, who founded the church. They represent and exercise authority and provide official answers based on the ideal image of the churches as they appear in public announcements. I also interviewed the influential characters that are not necessarily the official leaders in charge such as Mirtha Lazo, the wife of the principal pastor Peter Hornung of Agua Viva. Because of her public and practical

role in the church, it seemed more appropriate to interview her than principal pastor Peter Hornung, who is primarily the chief administrator. In the case of Emmanuel, its founder and ex principal pastor Humberto Lay has a much more influential role than the principal pastor Saul Gutierrez, especially given the fact that Emmanuel is widely known as “the church of Lay”.

The second group of pastors was referred to me by the principle interviewees and their answers revealed a lot about organizational patterns. The third group, the lay leaders or members, act under the authority of the representatives. They are the most important sources of information because their answers serve to show how the church influences lifestyles of church members and the authority structures of their churches. The variables of the segmentation are examined in terms of gender, profession, social background and the district of Lima in which the interviewees live. I used the “snowball effect” to interview additional interviewees referred to me by others, to avoid receiving only answers approved by the “board of censure” of the authority.

In order to gain a real diversity in the samples, I needed to search for possible exceptions such as elder members in the younger generation dominated churches and people who came from higher social classes in the churches that typically cater to people on the other side of the socio-economic scale.

In the case of CDV it made sense to interview an ex pastor also, since he caused the cleavage by founding his own church “Casa del Padre” in Lima’s higher class district of La Molina. He took with him the ten wealthiest families from CDV when he left. The cleavage caused a serious financial problem for CDV. The contrast to Casa del Padre gives a broader view of the social classes in CDV, which cannot be achieved by other means.

To provide another perspective, I interviewed in addition six members of the largest Pentecostal church AD and the largest Neopentecostal church MMM. In AD the national council and superintendent was interviewed as well. Those interviews shall serve as further exploration outside the cases.

Studying evangelicals in Peru involves entering some sort of subculture that puts a lot of emphasis on one’s own religious identity. “Are you evangelical?” was the first question of interviewees for someone investigating this religious field. As an

evangelical pastor and therefore “one of them”, those interviewed seemed to trust me and in general and were interested in being heard.

The advantage of being a “Christian”, as evangelicals call all non-Catholic denominations, usually creates a certain amount of trust and because we are “all in the same boat” which would not be the case if I belonged to the majority Catholic Church. Hence my access to the field was relatively easy.

Most of the interviews were recorded, but since I did not always get the permission of interviewees, or found the interviewees spontaneously in various cases, I also took notes of responses. Especially in the group of local pastors, information seemed to be homogenous since this group’s typical authoritarian structure seems to have exact instructions “from above” for members as to what to say and what to not to say. Therefore saturation is reached very quickly. Since each case church is dominated by members in a certain age group, it was much more difficult in CDV and even more so in Potential to find elder interviewees, whereas in Agua Viva the younger generations are not as present in Sunday services. I also tried to interview older members in order to gain a different perspective about motives to participate etc. In Emmanuel and Agua Viva, church membership is much more balanced between the generations. In terms of gender, in general one cannot say that one group actually dominates, as is the case in Pentecostal churches according to Chesnut, but I did meet many more women who refused to be interviewed about their faith, than men. I suspect that the reason for this female reluctance has to do with a lesser self-esteem of women in a “machismo”-dominated Peruvian society.

It would have been valuable to interview in each case, ex-members who had left the church, because those members were most likely to give a very critical view of the churches that they had left. In the case of CDV, the interview with an ex-member contains a critical biographical review.

Questions and variables

Personal observation as well as the information gained from interviews shall provide insight into the major observable fields of investigation in each church. The observations made will be sustained and specified through the interviews with the three different groups. The field study needs to consider several different questions that will be specified below. Specifically these questions are:

1.) Does the phenomenon of religious mobility within the evangelical landscape towards Neopentecostal churches and within Neopentecostalism relate to the pursuit for social progress?

2.) Are there typical trends for inner evangelical and inner-Neopentecostal mobility towards particular Neopentecostal churches? If so, which are the lower end and high-end churches in this tendency?

3.) Do religious actors move within evangelical churches towards particular Neopentecostal churches? How can these ways of conversion towards and within Neopentecostal churches be explained?

4.) What are religious actors looking for in the process of religious mobility from church to church? Has religious mobility developed a common language for the phenomenon?

5.) In terms of the international citizenship or lifestyle, questions have to be asked of churches with a background of social upward mobility. These include:

Is there a direct relationship between the two kinds of social mobility and the social networks the churches weave? If so, can this be connected to social progress promoted by the church through education, counseling and coaching, practicing English etc.?

6.) What are the motivations, especially of progressing younger generations, to participate in the Neopentecostal church? How does each case influence the life-dimensions of religious actors? How does a particular church absorb all believers' life-dimensions through its teachings? How does a church enforce or support leadership and active participation?

7.) How do religious actors describe religious convictions? How does prosperity theology reflect the aspirations of progression and certain emerging lifestyles among young generations in Lima?

8.) What kind of tendencies does the phenomenon of religious mobility indicate about religion in postmodern times?

Certain concrete questions shall structure the analysis of the observations.

Why are certain Neopentecostal churches attractive to religious actors? According to the market theory we need to ask: What can be said about products, marketing, sales representatives, and organizational structures?

1. Product: To what extent is religious practice and thinking influenced by prosperity theology? How do churches emphasize the importance of generosity/offering/tithing? Which major “religious goods” for daily life do churches offer? The role of social capital, as mentioned formerly in the sense of Bourdieu, shall be analyzed under this topic for each church. Therefore talking of social capital in an operational way, involves personal contacts and networks that enforce the social ascension of the believer. How can the liturgy or staging be described?

2. Marketing: A general question, considering the segment of emerging social classes is how the churches stimulate the interest of their target group. What role do high-tech and low tech-media play in attracting believers? To what extent does the usage of multimedia accentuate performance in a service? Are traditional or new symbols used for brand recognition? What role do foreign symbols, elements and transnational relations play? Marketing aims to attract certain consumer-lifestyles. Very different aesthetical elements shall therefore be examined to identify at whom particular music styles, usage of media and symbols are targeted. Many of these aesthetical elements have to do with the next criterion named by Chesnut.

3. Sales representatives: How are the representatives dressed? What do their clothes say about lifestyles? What can be learned about their theological or rhetorical training? What is their interaction with the believers? The form that preaching takes shall also be considered. What rhetorical elements does the sales representative use to emphasize a message? What major themes of sermons can be observed? How do pastors use scripture?

4. Organizational structure shall include variables as they relate to decision making and the role of money. What can be observed and verified about power relationships in the churches investigated? What can be learned about access to power through leadership in the churches? Do these churches favor a flexible transition from church to church? How does the religious firm assure sustainability? What can be said about the social distinction between principal pastors and members of a church?

What can be learned about gender-relations and gender equality among the leaders?

Of course these variables are interconnected and cannot be separated from each other, but they shall be valuable in an attempt to structure the content analysis. Many variables belong to different topics and will therefore be treated flexibly in the analysis.

Analysis

Since content analysis includes filters and structures the information, it will be used to analyze the interviews and observations of services, sermons and webpages of the field study. Therefore I will order the observations of services under the topics of accessibility, aesthetical characteristics, audience, pastor, liturgical characteristics, and sermon". I made observations in various services throughout the year 2012. My objective was to recognize major themes and structural and rhetorical elements to show typical aspects of each church and what it says about church hierarchies and the lives of its members.

In order to make them easy to cite, the database of the interviewees will contain the churches numbers that correspond to Agua Viva-1, Emmanuel-2, CDV-3, and Potential-4; gender (f-feminine, m-masculine) and number of the person interviewed. Since women cannot be pastors in these churches on local level, they do not play a significant role; the codification of local pastors implies only men pastors. Since the principal pastors and founders are well known in the general public, I will name them when they are cited, instead of including them in the system of codification. I had to take into account, that local pastors could face reprisals from the higher authorities if they don't "tow the official line" and are too honest. Therefore the method used to codify the interviews is the number of church combined with the number of local pastors interviewed in each church. For instance: 1/P/2 means the second local pastor of Agua Viva.

The analysis of interviews will have to show tendencies through the responses of the interviewees. Language not only has an impact on how religious actors relate to transcendence, but also how a phenomenon within a minority group actually can be interpreted.

The analysis follows a similar thematically structure and the topics used to classify and order the variables of the interviews are: social background and lifestyle, religious background and mobility, preferences, priorities and motivations, integration and the promotion of social mobility and organizational structure.

The topic “Social background and lifestyle” considers the age, location (district in Lima), family background (classical Limeneans or Neolimeneans), profession of parents, and the profession or career of studies of the interviewee. It will show some basic social aspects of members and verify if social mobility has taken place within the families from generation to generation. Interviewees were also asked about their cells, which are small groups of believers. Cell is the term used to define a circle of friends of confidence that study together and interchange their faith. They often meet once a week in one of the cell member’s home. The cell members tend to know each other and their social background intimately. Hence interviewees at some point were asked about the others in his cell or team; however it is important to note that not all churches work with the concept of cells. Asking the interviewee about the others in his/her cell provided additional information without the need to conduct more interviews.

Under the second topic, “religious background”, I asked the interviewees in which church they converted and in which church(es) he or she participated before coming to their present church. Interviewees were asked how long they had participated and how he or she became aware of their present church. Interviewees were also asked if they were influenced to join a particular church through its low tech media or high tech media. If the interviewee came to know the church through low tech media, it was interesting to ascertain who he/she was influenced by, whether the importance of family plays a role and/or whether elements in the individual’s lifestyle, such as colleagues or friends, had influenced him/her. Interviewees are also asked to provide specific information about others in their cell: where they live, from which churches they came and in the case that someone has left the church, if he or she knew to which church the particular person moved. Therefore the category “religious background” asks questions about religious mobility and its connection to social mobility. The category “preferences, priorities and motivations” shall verify to what extend the observed elements of supply influence believers. The interviewees were asked what elements are

special about the church he or she participates in and what topics and themes treated in the service and groups are most important.

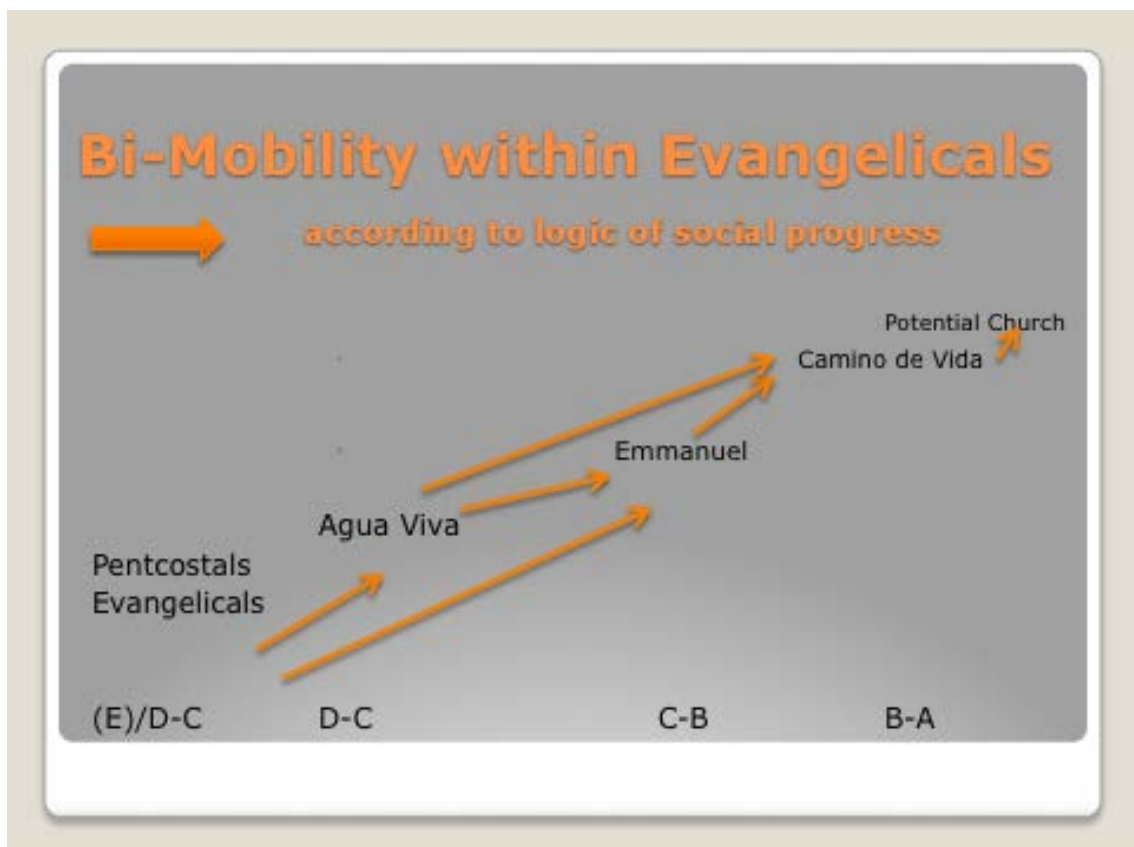
In terms of “supply and demand” of churches, I would like to point out, that this investigation does not support the analogy of churches to commercial enterprises on the demand side, since believers are not just simply “church shopping”. The questions that correspond to the supply, and show perceptions of “marketing and product” shall be helpful to specify what actually attracts religious actors to the church and will be used to determine if their efforts “pay off” in terms of increased “consumer” numbers. It will have to show if the assumption of gaining social networks for instance is adequate to progress. It shall also be necessary to determine whether a connection exists among social necessities, named in the section “social background and lifestyles” and the “products” of churches. This could help to verify the existence of flexibility in religious convictions and how the religious products adapt to social necessities of the believers. The level of flexibility is also explored through the congruence of answers among different groups as well as answers members gave in terms of priorities in religious convictions.

Under the heading “Integration and promotion of social mobility”, questions were asked about how the church affects different dimensions of life and how it promotes social progress. These questions focus on getting answers related to the specific activities the interviewees are doing in the church, how the church involves its members, how often members attend church during the week and how their participation affected his or her life in general. Since it has been empirically proven that members of smaller churches are strongly committed, it remains to be determined how this occurs in each church. It will also be revealed how the religious actors describe their religious convictions in highly flexible, prosperity oriented churches. These questions are closely related to those asked in the category of “organizational structure”, because asking for the way and frequency of involvement of actors, will also provide answers about the area the leader is in charge of and his/her level of leadership. The questions in this category also relate to the role of sales representatives, and specifically how they have been trained, how they become pastors and the role of women in this regard. The interviewees will also be asked how they came to that particular ministry. The role of principal pastor and

founder and how decision making is carried out will also be examined. I also asked about tithes and donations in hopes that interviewees would disclose about how they gave to the church in monetary terms.

3.5.3 Expected tendencies

The following chart shall give insights about the expected tendencies of typical ways of religious mobility.



As the chart above shows, mobility leads, on the one hand, from historical evangelical and traditional churches toward the Neopentecostal churches and then to a particular group of Neopentecostal churches. An interesting fact is, after moving from the church that most of them converted to, which for most of the interviewees was from an evangelical or Pentecostal church to a Neopentecostal church, many religious actors go

on to cross-further boundaries by moving within major trendsetting churches within Neopentecostalism. Since Neopentecostalism in particular, has quite flexible religious convictions that try to accommodate particular needs instead of following and proclaiming religious and dogmatic traditions, it shouldn't be surprising that religious actors move in an equally flexible manner to other Neopentecostal churches. It will have to be determined what actual religious convictions the different Neopentecostal churches have. Since various religious actors have had such a mobile church biography, I chose to address typical, general tendencies of mobility within the cases. The actor's motivations are important to describe and understand this tendency. It is interesting that church actors (within Neopentecostalism) usually move to "better" churches in terms of the socio-economic level of its members, location, aesthetics etc. The study will show that in the atmosphere of economic growth and upward social mobility, the emerging classes are willing to spend hours commuting to attend a church because they want to consider themselves part of the society that meets there and gives them the opportunity to socialize with people from higher social classes.

Considering the "social islands" that exist in Peru, churches allow encounters that could not occur in other environments due to the structure of social inequality. The social setting of the church is different, especially if it is highly participative and rapidly inducts religious actors into voluntary service and weaves strong social networks. In this way Neopentecostal churches tend to enforce the feeling that members are a part of something, not just visiting. Social networks play an important role in the process of religious and social mobility of religious actors in Neopentecostal churches. They manage to support social upward mobility through courses like time and money management. On a symbolic level, these churches provide members with the possibility to step out of a peripheral context by welcoming an international citizenship and providing access to higher social classes. Therefore religious mobility is connected to social mobility in that, at least it gives the impression of members progressing socially by moving to a socially higher connoted church. The desire to improve their social status, means members use churches as springboards to a higher religious society. Neopentecostal churches focus on postmodern categories of aesthetics, emotion and diversity, such as identification through feeling, rather than religious traditions and contents as factors of identification as it is the case of mainline Protestant churches.

4 Analysis – Exploration

4.1 First impressions

In this section the case-churches shall be described according to first impressions of observations and interviews. A general impression of each church is formulated by examining their webpage, which give an idea about how they differ. Thereafter, an analysis of the interviews will be used to verify or discredit these first impressions. The analysis of Lima’s population gives a more global vision to define the topic and locate the qualitative research. The following chart gives an overview, which shall help to present the results of the analysis which will be given at the end of each section in order to structure the information.

4.1.1 Basic facts about the cases

	Agua Viva	Emmanuel	CDV	Potential
Year founded	1986	1987	1987	1998
Aprox. members	100.000 (registered 45000)	Aprox. 10.000	Aprox. 5000	Aprox.250 -600
Principal Pastor/founder	Peter Hornung/ Capurro	Saul Gutierrez/ Humberto Lay	Robert Barriger	Troy Gramling
District	Lince	San Isidro	Monterrico/ Surco	Miraflores
Historical roots	CCR	Alianza/AD	Baptist	Baptist

4.1.2 Quantitative Research - Surveys in Lima

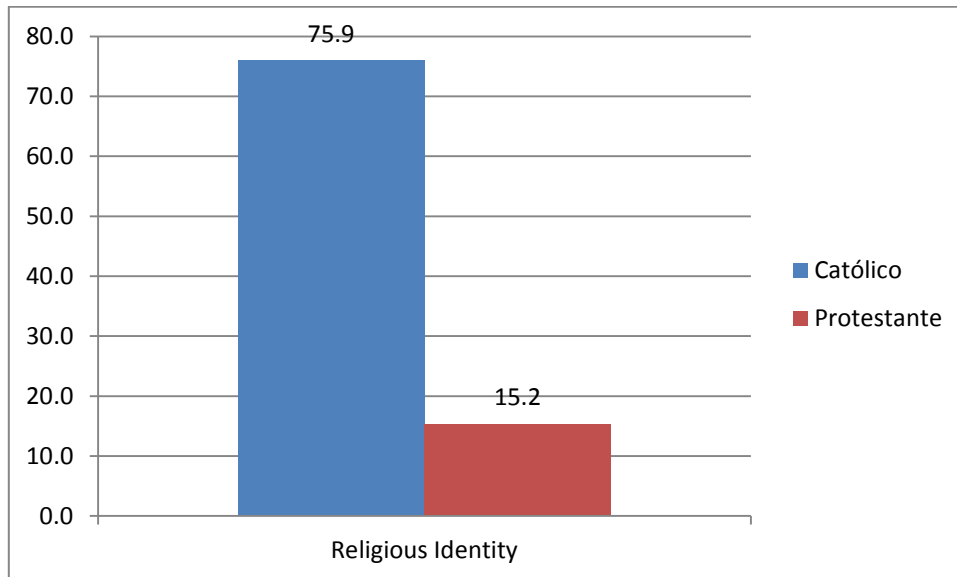
I had the possibility to elaborate four questions and include them in a 1920 people survey in Lima done by the IOP PUCP. The charts below provide a visual representation of the information and findings provided in this section.

Table 1. Religious Identity

How do you define yourself?	Frequency	Valid %
Catholic	1457	78
Christian	197	10.6
Evangelical	82	4.4
Pentecostal	4	0.2
Christian Pentecostal	5	0.3
Christian Charismatic	4	0.2
Other	118	6.3
Total	1867	100
Missing	53	
Total sample	1920	

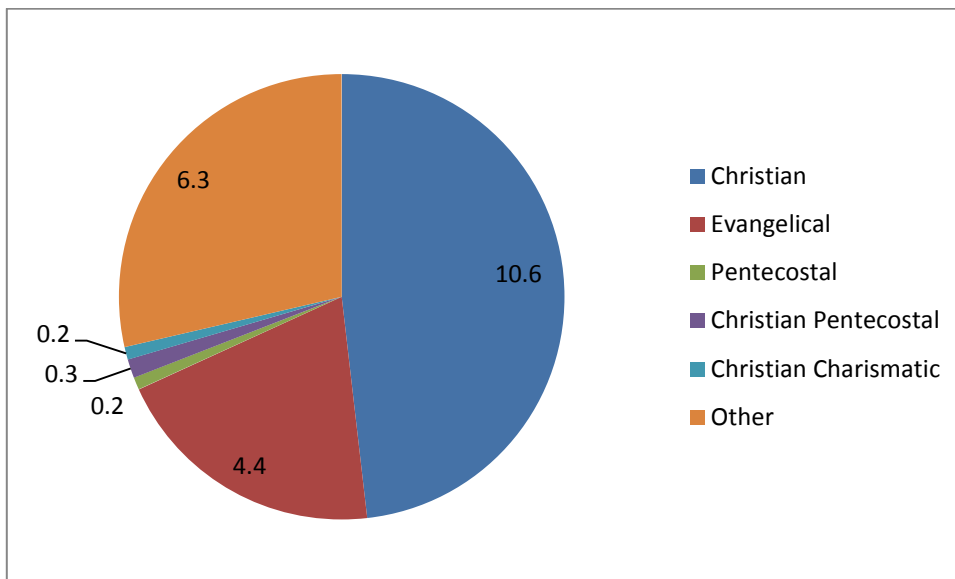
As a small minority within the minority of evangelicals, the questions asked to Neopentecostals cannot actually provide information about the specific tendencies expected for religious mobility.

Figure 1. Religious Identity



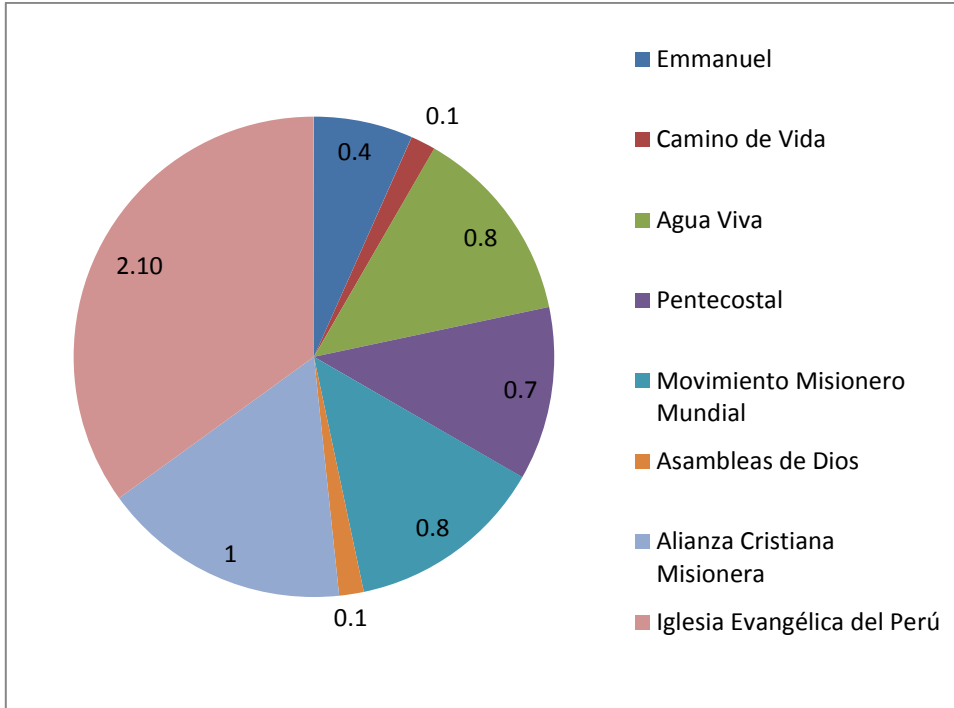
However, the question of religious identity reveals an interesting perspective. 78% of respondents define themselves as Catholic. The different evangelical identities reach a number of 15, 2%.

Figure 2. Protestant Religious Identity



The highest response was recorded for the term “Cristiano” 10,6% that in Latin America stands in contrast to “Catholic”. Only 4,4% of the Limeneans define themselves as “evangélicos”. Even though by far the highest number of protestant respondents tends to be Pentecostal, very few religious actors use the term to define themselves, the same number that calls itself “charismatic”. Only 4 of 1920 people (0, 2%) call themselves Pentecostal.

Figure 3. Familiarity with evangelical churches



The figure on familiarity of churches reveals an interesting observation about participation. In the evangelical field the largest church of the CONEP, the Assembly of God (AD) was mentioned by only 0,1% of the people in the inquiry, which is odd given that AD claims to have one million members. An explanation could be that this number represents their presence in all of Peru, which would explain why their presence in Lima might be relatively low, what has to do with the demographical situation in Lima. Therefore the information available about AD is sparse compared to the information available for other groups such as Agua Viva for instance. According to the familiarity of evangelical churches asked for in the survey, the IEP (Iglesia Evangelica Peruana) as the largest low class classical mainstream Protestant church, had the highest number of respondents (38 people, 2.1%), followed by the largest middle and emerging class church Alianza Cristiana y Misionera (18 people, 1%). The largest UNICEP member MMM, had 13 people (0, 7%) while Agua Viva, the largest mega-church in Lima, had 14 persons (0,8 %). 8 people (0, 4%) responded Emmanuel and 2 (0, 1%) CDV. The comparably little number of AD could be explained through the public activity of mega-

churches, which gives them public visibility, even though they are smaller than AD as largest Pentecostal church. Only 83 people (4, 3%) said that they have no church affiliation.

Table 2. Religious self-definition by religious mobility (Number of religions you have been involved)

Religious selfdefinition	Only One	Two	Three	Four	Five or more	Total N
Catholic	87.9	9.1	2.1	0.1	0.6	1410 = 100%
Christian	61.7	33.5	4.3	0	0.5	188 = 100%
Evangelism	68.3	26.8	3.7	0	1.2	82 = 100%
Pentecostal	.50	.25	.25	0	0	4 = 100%
Christian Pentecostal	.25	.75	.0	0	0	4 = 100%
Christian Carismatic	.75	.25	.0	0	0	4 = 100%
Other name	60.5	30.2	5.8	1.2	2.3	86 = 100%
Total N	1470	245	47	3	13	1778
	82.70%	13.80%	2.60%	0.20%	0.70%	100%

Questions elaborated by the author (Field Work by IOPPUCP)

In terms of religious mobility 1470 (82.70%) considering all religions have participated in one religion. The number corresponds to the Catholic majority.

As Figures 4 and 5 show, the religious mobility in general terms takes place among the people, who define themselves as “Christian”, which actually include very different protestant believers including Pentecostals and Neopentecostals. Asking for the people who have switched their religious community more than four or five times, the numbers become insignificant.

Figure 4. Religious Mobility tow religions

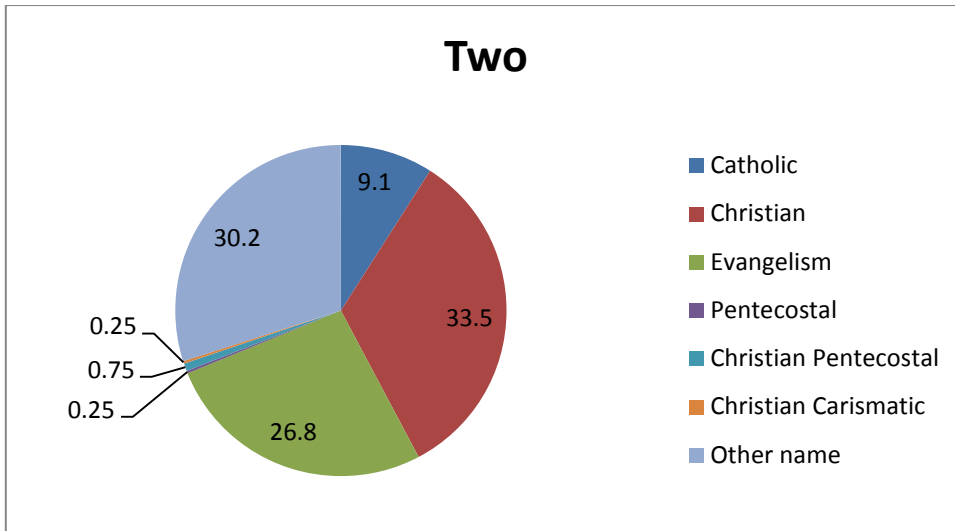
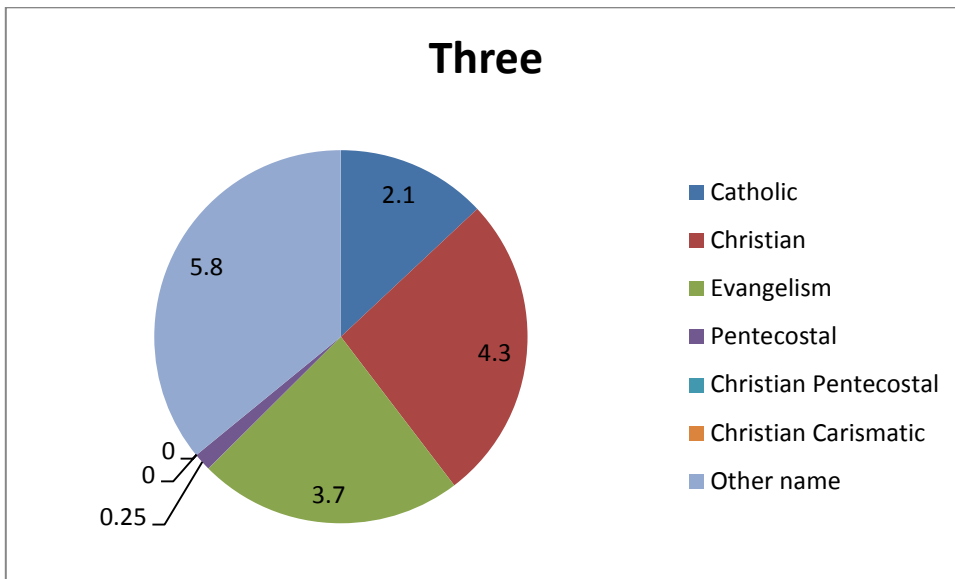


Figure 5. Religious Mobility Three religions



On the basis of a survey research, therefore we can only say that religious mobility in Lima exists. The survey shows that when investigating a social minority, it is difficult to show tendencies of mobility on a quantitative level. In general, the numbers of Protestants are very small; Neopentecostals are almost non-existent as numerical minority within the evangelical minority. On a survey study therefore can serve as

starting point of the qualitative study, because in order to explore this group a qualitative study is inevitable.

Most of the Limeneans, stay within their original religion, but we have been able of identify a relevant minority that moves.

On the quantitative representative level, we can say that there is a proves of religious mobility going on in Lima. The survey shows that it is difficult to reach these groups even through large samples as the one used in the IOP survey. But a survey study could provide a starting point for the qualitative study, which is the method I will follow to approach personal life trajectories instead of a panel survey that would have been cost and time intensive.

4.2 Webpages

4.2.1 Agua Viva



The largest Neopentecostal church, Agua Viva has on its main page three attention getting elements. The globe with cross and dove in the upper left side is clearly a

Christian attention drawing symbol, which forms the logogram and is to be found in smaller size as well in the very upper left corner next to the headlines. One can click on it and receive further information. The logogram and dominating symbol is a world-globe with a dove representing the Holy Spirit and a cross, which surrounds the world (http://www.ccaguaviva.com/WEB/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=61&Itemid=53). On the right side is a biblical verse from John 7:38 written in capital letters. It includes the name of the Christian community “Agua Viva- Living Water” that represents the vision and motto of the community. The name comes from the biblical verse that says “Out of a believer’s heart will flow rivers of living water.” The primary color of the page is turquoise which ties into the water theme. In the upper line is a photo of a couple, Peter and Mirtha Hornung (whose names are written next to the photo). They appear to be in their mid-fifties, white, conservatively dressed and a happy couple. The text under the line “Bienvenidos – Welcome” on the left side of the center next to the couple, enforces the message shown by the photo. An equally formal, heartfelt welcome is given to those entering to the Christian community. This community is introduced to newcomers as a Christian church which emphasizes family work, as modeled by the training of leaders and community service. The webpage is a medium that connotes a sense of friendship and gives glory to the God almighty. This letter like greeting conveys the message to the onlooker that “we love you and want to bless you”. The message, photo and symbol show a strong congruence. The impression is one of a quite conservative style of church, with clear structures and orientation.

The page seems well structured, informative and easy to overlook. The left side consists of a main menu, with the following options and priorities: “about us”, “strategies”, “in what we believe” and “services”. The information “About us” is displayed partly in the same style with the turquoise heading with symbol and biblical verse and the photo of the couple on the right and a newly introduced black and white photo in the upper center of an outstretched hand waving at a mass of people in a big arena. In capital letters, there are two headings with a small text below each of them: Mission and Vision. Below the small texts there are two videos next to each other. The mission is shortly described as a Christian Peruvian church providing personal salvation and working for the transformation of society. The further descriptions express the fact that this salvation and transformation will be achieved by building up leaders that live under biblical principles and believe in the values of Gods plan. This promotes the vision of

the church that it is nationally and internationally recognized and influential. Furthermore the church is conveyed as an instrument used to commit every person to God's plan and prosper as a result.

Under "strategy" the upper photo stays the same and a new photo is introduced on the right hand side. It is black and white and shows a woman with closed eyes lifting up both hands in the middle of a mass of people. The text is quite long compared to the previous ones. It mentions again the pastors whose aim it is to make every member a leader in order to develop a "máximo potencial". Further on it talks about a pre-condition that is basic requirement for the encounter. The next paragraph describes the encounter as event, where God himself spills out his balsam and holiness into the believer's life so that the person can come to know Jesus and start on his or her way towards discipleship. This involves learning the Christian doctrine that leads to the next level - leadership.

In studying leadership and serving as a leader of a cell, members learn about the importance of teamwork. The way of a believer is clearly paved: pre-encounter, encounter, discipleship, leadership. The latter involves becoming the leader of a cell.

The next point in the menu informs viewers of the church's belief system and introduces two new black and white photos, with more hands held up. The biblical verse of John 7:38 in the heading is presented in enlarged print. Each point is supported by biblical verses in brackets behind the text. In its entirety, the text is basically a confirmation of the dogma of the trinity, a focus on Jesus, divine inspiration of scripture, salvation through faith in Christ as universal body its associated characteristics: justification, holiness, restoration, liberation, prosperity and peace. Other beliefs are the baptism in the Holy Spirit, resurrection of the dead and the second coming of Christ. The last point speaks of the necessity of a profound evangelization of Peru in order to recover moral values, to halt hatred, violence and corruption and to bring peace, development, respect of life and wellbeing to all Peruvians. The last point of menu "services" shows the location of the central church on a Google map and shows the timetable of services on Saturday (two times) and Sunday (three times).

The page can be described as “easy on the eyes”, clearly and logically structured, informative and not distracting. The photos of emotionally oriented services and text descriptions allude to a close connection of this church to Pentecostalism. Some words in the doctrine such as “maximum potential” or “integrally prosperous”, provoke in me the impression of the characteristics of Neopentecostalism.

4.2.2 Emmanuel



This page is significantly different compared to that of Agua Viva (<http://www.iglesiaemmanuel.pe/portal>). The page is changed often to reflect different seasons, and to inform viewers of events etc. The black background is filled with many colorful but confusing symbols. The upper left hand side shows a blue symbol, which

itself leaves room for interpretation because it is not clear what it is, although it may be a downward flying dove (the symbol of the Holy Spirit), a leaf or a flame. Among the many different pictures and photos, the main photo in the upper middle changes designs and informs viewers of different coming up events such as fasting, concert announcements, etc. and gives the dates of these events. Between the announcements is a small hand written text with a younger couple between the ages of 35 personally signed with the names of the two principal pastors “Saúl and Anita Gutiérrez”. A second look reveals that the event announcements and the menu on the right upper side of the page correspond. Moving the mouse from one to another, causes different corresponding images of events with their dates to appear on the main page. The headings can be clicked on and links the viewer to related information. The photo with the couple corresponds to the heading “Bienvenido” and names the principal pastors. The other menus have special names as “vigil of church”, “works of Christmas”, “fasting for the church”. Another attention drawing line is in the center. This does not change regularly and looks like a line with many square images and names in it, that seem to correspond to different areas and groups of the church: “networks”, “marriage”, “prayer”, “Emmanuel TV” “children”, “between friends”, and “women”. The images are links that one can click on to get additional information about the different areas and groups of the church. Under the links, one can enter the live transmission which provides more information about upcoming events, that were already partly announced in the upper part. On the right hand side, there are further links the viewer can click on to get information about “workshops” and the “devotional diary” used by the church.

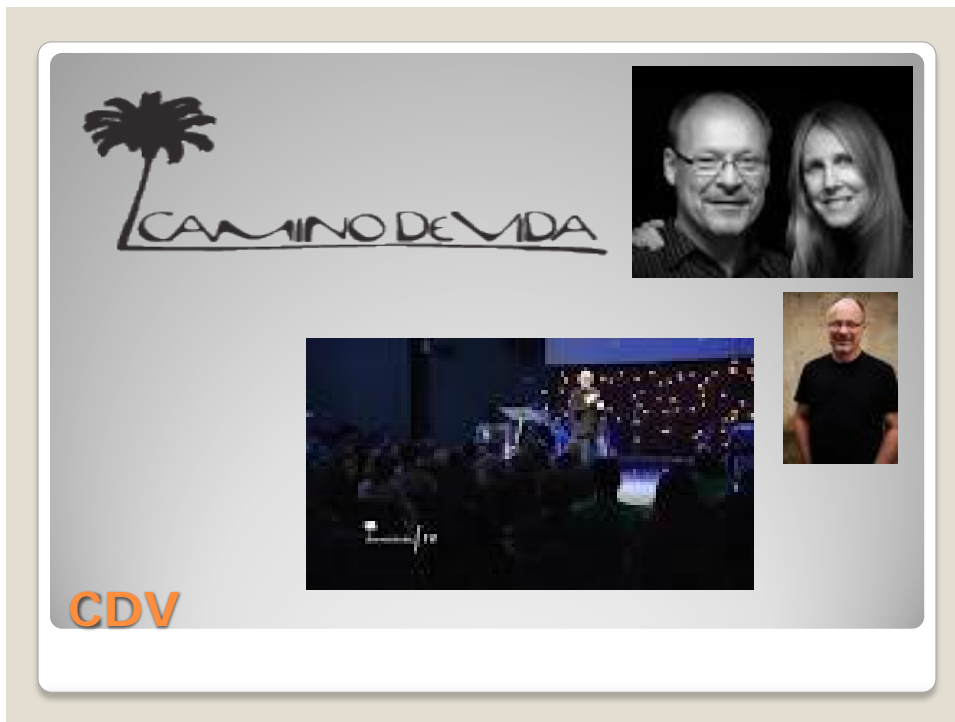
I find this home page confusing because of many different areas and aspects that have little structure. After viewing all the interesting pictures and names, one finds the main menu. It doesn't generate much attention because it is found on the upper part of the main page, where one usually finds the information of tertiary importance provided on a webpage such as “about us”, “news”, “ministries”, “localities” and how to contact the church. The first heading leads to the basic menu: “In what we believe”, “Mission, Vision, Strategy”, “History”, and “Ministry Team”.

The introduction to the church's belief system is similar to that of Agua Viva, but without biblical verses mentioned and inference to a prosperity theology. Even though

the photos do not show Pentecostal practice in the way the page of Agua Viva does, the expressions in their doctrines seem even more Pentecostal than those presented on the Agua Viva page. “The Holy Spirit lives in everyone through the baptism of the Holy Spirit and that this experience forms the start of a continuous life in obedience to the word of God. Speaking in tongues is one of the manifestations of this baptism.” The vision and mission part is short and simply cites Mt. 28, without mentioning the biblical reference. The vision is one of service to the church, which is blessed, empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit, as a worldly extension of the heavenly kingdom of God. In strategy, the networks and pastoral groups are mentioned. The network of the church is described as covering the city and extending to Peru and the world.

The next part of news shows the reading calendar of the book “Tiempo con Dios es Vida Viva – The time with God is living life”, but without further information about the book. Another link leads to the weekly bulletin, but instead of opening a pdf, it simply shows a calendar of verses for each day. One needs to have some background about how the daily reading has to be done in order to understand the information. Compared to the Agua Viva page, whose basic intention seems to be to inform about their church in a classical sense, as most webpages of historical churches do as well, the Emmanuel page seems to be a reminder for insiders, who know what to look for. Another difference is the intended age group, which in Emmanuel seems to be younger. The younger couple of principal pastors in the center, compared to the elder couple at Agua Viva page, and layout of the page with a variety of options and visualizations seem to attract rather younger generations than at more conservative Agua Viva page. One gets the impression that the educational level of the intended users differs. While the Agua Viva page gives information about the church in a well-structured and in an easily understandable way, Emmanuel uses an abstract, more innovative design to provide introductory information about the church to new members.

4.2.3 CDV



A palm tree that's located on the left side of the name "Camino de Vida – Way of life" conveys a relaxed and successful lifestyle and is the feeling that this church intends to provoke in viewers. While the logo is placed in a usual place for webpages, the headline that would lead to further information about the church is missing. The only common headline is "Horarios y Locales – schedules and localities", when and where members meet. The other headlines are: "The next step", "CDV online", "Agenda – schedule" and "ofrenda – offering" on the right side of the homepage, where the "contact" information would usually appear. None of the other websites show such a clear emphasis on donations as CDV. The virtual information provided the viewer is much less than in the other cases. The first headline on the left hand side of the upper menu is called "El siguiente paso - the next step". Entering the menu introduces the headline as question "¿Y ahora que? Now what?" which is an example of a relaxed informal young style of language, this is followed in the rather familiar used "tu" instead of the formal "usted" salutation. The short written paragraph introduces the principal pastor "Pr. Robert" who obviously has a non-Spanish, "gringo" name.

The focus of the webpage takes the form of a video instead of written text. Written texts are short and are mainly used to sum up or to invoke the viewer to open the video component. The limited text explains that Pr. Robert will give the visitor practical

advice to start a new life with Jesus and motivates the viewer to take the time needed to watch the video which is positioned clearly at the center of the page. The actual time of the video is 17 minutes. Before describing the video I want to go back to the homepage.

What catches the eye of the viewer is the changing advertisement of special events, which are updated every week. In contrast to Emmanuel, this information is clearly located at the center of the page in order to draw the attention of the viewer. It has an equally young style, but seems much more organized, even though its content is not comparable to classical church webpages, because the information given is very little. One gets the impression that more thought went into the design of this webpage and that it is more “professional” than the overloaded Emmanuel page.

On the bottom of the homepage, there are four links to “predicas - sermons”, “noticias - news”, “Casa Gracia – House of Grace” as well as “La Sal – the salt” on the right hand side. The videos are of recent sermons by principal pastor Robert Barriger. The link “news” shows another video of a young adult in a motivational tone saying, “These are the announcements of this week”. The Casa Gracia link also leads to a very differently designed video. The “La sal” link leads to a blog, which shows a collage of different areas of activity. The titles of the different videos seem highly creative and professional, and give the impression that the church promotes self-expression and self-realization in many areas of life. The webpage seems very exceptional for a church, its highly interesting and sophisticated design is sure to attract an educated, younger clientele with different interests. The belief is supported by the lower line, which connects the user directly to the social networks Facebook and Twitter and there are also links to the common video-pages: Vimeo and Youtube. Another smaller line gives the personal Twitter links for the principal pastors Robert and his wife Karyn. In the lower line virtual petitions for prayers are offered. Another link leads to the Facebook page of CDV that presents a daily devotional with biblical texts.

The main video entitled “What now?” shows a “gringo” with American accent in a stylishly furnished living room, with family photos and a sofa. This is the background in which pastor Robert talks to new members more like a close friend, than a pastor. He is dressed casually in jeans and short sleeved shirt. On his right hand he is clearly wearing

a wedding ring. Even though he is probably over 50 years old, he seems unpretentious and fashionable. His voice is calm and soothing and notes from an electric guitar played quietly, accentuate his words. The content of the video serves to explain to new church members how to live a complete life as a Christian. He goes on to explain the steps one will take to achieve this new life. The first step requires reading the Bible. Pr. Robert explains how to do this by citing the chapters and verses that will strengthen one's belief (John, Acts, Paul's letters, Psalms and Proverbs). He suggests reading one proverb per day to better understand one's life. According to him, a psalm a day and chapters of the New Testament will touch ones heart. He also recommends underlining; copying to paper and memorizing the psalms while commuting. He enforces the impression of having an intimate relationship with the viewer by confessing that he often reads the Bible in the bathroom. Another step is to pray every day. He shows how to pray and breaks with the traditional way of praying the Lord's Prayer, opting to use his own words. He mentions the importance of having a connection to a church. He invites the viewer to CDV, but also opens the way to other churches. Furthermore he describes how to connect to CDV through member groups. Besides reading the Bible and praying, he suggests that one should take courses that CDV offers that teach about how to live a matrimony, parenthood, womanhood and masculinity according to God. Another course he promotes is "Vida con proposito – Life with aims" and a course for people struggling with addiction. He cites psalm 92, 12-13: "Those who are planted in the house of God will flourish". At this point he discloses the significance of the palm tree in the logo. It shows the motto of the church and visualizes the cited Psalm verse. The aim of the CDV is to plant and nurture people in faith. He then repeats the steps one needs to follow to make this possible.

He gets to a point of culmination by saying: "Puede conocer el carácter de uno por los amigos que tiene, y si sus amigos no quieren progresar en la vida, de repente hay que pensar en cambiar sus amigos" (<https://www.caminodevida.com/elsiguientepaso.html> min. 13:17). "One can know ones character by knowing his friends and if your friends do not want to progress in life, eventually you need to change your friends." Here he reveals the church's connection to prosperity theology - members can expect to "flourish" (meaning prosper) in all different dimensions of their lives. He closes by stating three aspects of CDV's vision using four key words "Conectar (connect), crecer (grow), sembrar (seed), alcanzar (achieve), that serve as a map, where one can locate

him or herself and plot their way to a better life. The term servolución” (serve-olution) is used to attract the attention of viewers that are outside of the church. He explains how the church is organized - Ministerios (ministries), equipos (teams) y cursos (courses). There is a ministry of women, men, different age groups, people of special necessities and the ministries can be subsumed as groups where one can participate in. Members are placed in groups according to the perceived gifts. For example there is a group called “Reps” who welcome people, collect the offerings etc. He repeats the courses and gives information about when they start. Finally he gives a warm welcome and mentions that if CDV is the church of preference of the viewer, it will be a pleasure for him to be his/her pastor.

It is worth mentioning, that all the webpages of churches analyzed so far are offered in Spanish only with no English version. This is not the case for the webpage of the church examined in the next section.

4.2.4 Potential



Since it is a church based in the USA, the Lima webpage for Potential has special sub-menu which allows viewers to view the webpage in English. The webpage shows a lighted bridge - a landmark of the Miraflores district of Lima which attracts tourists for its order, green areas and safety. It probably also provokes the younger Limenean viewers as well. It says “LIMA” in bolded capital letters in the center and next to them “Lima Campus” with an advertisement of a bilingual service at the weekend. It shows the location, which implies, that it is not a church building, but a convention center, and the service times. This marks a distinction from the other churches, who have their own buildings. On the left upper side it shows small logogram, the name “Potential” in small black bolded letters and the word “church” in capital letters, but this is comparably small - the emphasis is clearly on “Potential”. The upper right shows a pink chart with “Location and service times” which leads back to the homepage of Potential and shows all the worldwide locations: its main campus is in Cooper City, Florida; Hallandale Beach, Florida; an iCampus (an internet platform that functions on regular times via live-stream); Lima, Peru; Nassau, Bahamas; Pensacola, Florida; Ventanilla, Peru.

These locations and the way they are ordered are confusing. Potential is rooted in Florida and has spread in a rather unorganized spontaneous way to other countries. There are two campuses in Peru, which are both in Lima, although Ventanilla is a district that belongs to Callao (the port city independent of Lima); it is located in the middle of Lima. Due to the use of the English language on the site, it can be assumed that most visitors to the site are probably North Americans, eventually living in Lima and that the church doesn't have any other locations in Peru. In light of this, one might question why the church wants to create the impression that it has more than one location in Peru by citing that there is a church in Ventanilla. Compared to the church's location in other cities, in the US state of Florida, Caribbean islands and the Bahamas, its location in Lima doesn't seem to fit. The locations within Lima are equally different in a social sense. Ventanilla is one of the “pueblos jovenes” (young villages), as the marginal outskirts in Peru are called. It is marked by a strong presence of violence, drugs, youth delinquency, poverty and other social problems compared to the Lima campus in the up-scale district of Miraflores. The link that opens by pushing the first upper button, clearly promotes the idea that the Potential church connects the Peruvian visitor to the world, the English speaking North American world in particular. On the right side next to the cities there are two titles: “What to expect” and “What about my

family?” Under the first title one reads the following: “No matter which campus you attend, at Potential Church you’ll be warmly greeted and accepted just as you are. Before service, pick yourself up a freshly brewed Starbucks coffee. Then make your way to seat and prepare yourself for a high-energy and uplifting worship experience. Don’t be late! You may miss a special surprise!” Especially the reference to Starbucks shows that this is not a typical Peruvian church. The US coffee brand has become widespread within the upscale districts of Lima. The brand is referred to in order to create the impression that belonging to Potential means belonging to the highly developed and prosperous world that stands in contrast to the context that Peru is usually seen in. The additional text creates other “Potential” connotations using expressions like “creative and encouraging message” and the aim of the services is described as “...to motivate you to take your next step toward reaching your God potential.” The term “God potential” attracts attention and it is also used under the second title, where the younger members of the church are “encouraged to reach their God potential”.

There is no particular link back to the Lima campus. The Lima Campus link leads to the same upper line, which in itself does not present any information. The upper menu line gives several options “New here?”, “Teachings”, “Family”, “Connect”, “Stories” and “Give”. Under “New here?” a photo of a big theatre hall appears that is filled with people, a leisurely dressed young white man (lead pastor Troy Gramling) on stage and the title “Partnering with people to reach their God potential”. There is a video with the same title and below are the titles and texts “What to expect” and “What about my family?” This contains the same information as in the Lima-menu. Below are three submenus: “Potential Church, learn more about the history, mission, belief and affiliation of Potential Church”, “Get to know the lead pastor Troy Gramling”, and “Find a Campus near you. Look up service times and directions to one of our locations”. The upper menu is the same as in the Lima Campus page. Under “teachings” one finds the latest sermons of Pr. Troy in the form of videos that are usually about 30-45 minutes long. Under “Family” one has the option of clicking on the two main titles “Ministries” and “Prayer and Counseling”, which subdivided into the menus “preschool, kids, students” and under Prayer and Counseling “Prayer request”. Under “Connect” one finds the title next step which is subdivided into the options “Baptism”, “Connect Groups” and “Volunteer”. The menu options do not lead directly to videos of

biographical portraits and the title “Life change, Breakthrough, Progress” shows 15 portraits in the form of three minute videos. The people portrayed are, with two exceptions, young adults. Another interesting characteristic of the webpage is the ethnic origin of the people shown in the videos, which convey the idea that members of Potential are multi-culturally diverse. The “Give” menu leads to another video titled with “Changed lives, changed world”. “Giving” is explained as “integral part of your relationship with God”, an “act of worship that allows us to give back to God what He has given us”. Giving is described as an “act of faith”, an “opportunity to make God number one in our life”. The dominant part of the page is a video that is almost an hour long, showing Pr. Troy on stage in leisure clothes and a short sleeve T-Shirt with a gold necklace and a tattoo on his an arm. The visitor gets the impression that “Giving” is a priority in Potential Church, especially since the title below is “Give now” in the form of a direct login to an account, the option to create an account and a schedule of “Giving”. Below a text explains that information about scheduled contributions is held securely and privately. Below one finds another video with the title “Temple Centurion”. This is a four minute video that invites viewers to “Learn about the heart of Potential Church and what it means to be a Temple Centurion.” The term centurion is explained on the left hand side next to the video as an Old Testament Roman soldier, who “...protects, proclaims and promotes the presence of God – one who believes in the vision and dream that God has given to the Potential Church. Temple Centurion gifts are generously given above and beyond tithes”. On the right side a video shows how to “...learn what it means to feel blessed to be blessed” and shows two young white people, one male and one female, conversing.

The Potential webpage, more blatantly than any of other churches, shows the connection between giving and blessings as a pre-requisite for prosperity. The “Giving” menu is the one with the most amount of information, which indicates that this church considers giving to be a priority.

The webpage is rather simple compared to those of Emmanuel and CDV. It has a rather young and unconventional style and on the first impression is very “US – American” looking. It is interesting that the Lima campus page actually leads to the same information as the main page. The webpage provokes the idea that Potential is not interested in a contextualized Peruvian idea of what a church is, and has its own

identity. The constant use of the English language strengthens the impression. Like the CDV webpage, the Potential page uses videos extensively. The videos contain the majority of information, even to a higher extent than in the other church webpages.

4.2.5 Summary

In my perception the webpages reveal a lot about the different profiles and members of the four Neopentecostal churches. Agua Viva shows the most classical webpage, that provides basic information and first impressions of this church. The Emmanuel page provokes the impression that it is primarily for current members, because the information provided has little order for someone that does not know anything about the church. It seems its main purpose is to advertise actual events and to invite members to attend. The unstructured way the information is provided leads to the assumption, that it attracts the lower middle classes from the “conos” that are used to a certain degree of informality in their daily lives. In comparison, the CDV webpage, is ordered and through its style, also seems to attract a rather sophisticated demanding audience compared to Emmanuel. The Agua Viva webpage seems to be the one that attracts a broader range of members including older ones, whereas the other webpages have a youthful style of presentation using attractive colors, video material and the option of interaction through links to social networks. The latter three seem to attract members that feel familiar with digital media and use them regularly, including in their daily spiritual practice, such as internet devotionals. Especially the younger generations all over the world use Facebook or Twitter nowadays as primary medium of communication and it is obvious that the churches are aware of this and consequently they provide things such as devotionals on Facebook, in the case of CDV. Potential provides an extreme case of the use of media by a church since it goes as far as providing an internet campus in addition to a local campus. The internet campus provides regular activities just as a local church does. It would not surprise me if Potential had the relatively highest number of younger members. Bearing in mind that demographically, the younger generations present the majority of Lima’s inhabitants, it can be speculated that even Agua Viva might have a rather high number of people in the younger generations, who compared to their counterparts in other churches, adhere to

“conservative” lifestyles. In social terms the Agua Viva page, even though their principal pastors belong to the upper Limenean social class, seems to address a lower class, lesser educated audience, which shows a stronger similarity with Pentecostals than any other cases, while Emmanuel seems to attract the progressive lifestyle type but in the lower middle classes with more education.

CDV and Potential seem to target the higher social classes. An emphasis on progress leads one to expect that they have a rather a “progressed and progressing” audience. The English language and ability of members to accept a foreign identity and language for membership, is especially evident in Potential, more so than in CDV. It has to be considered that most families in Lima in all social classes are doing whatever they can to put their children into foreign schools in order to provide them with the best education possible. Therefore young people from higher social classes feel at home in places where a foreign language, mostly English, is spoken and it seems to be a clear sign of prestige and a symbol of distinction from a peripheral society. The interviews will have to prove that.

One should keep in mind, that in order to watch internet videos the technical equipment has to be rather advanced. The internet connection needs to be faster and more stable than is necessary to view simple, text intensive pages such as the Agua Viva page. Hence to visit the CDV, Potential and to a certain extent also the Emmanuel webpages, requires higher economic and technical conditions of their users. People with little internet experience, such as elder generations, the lower classes and people that lack the economic conditions to have these services, probably won't be attracted by these webpages or the churches because they feel excluded. Therefore it is not surprising, that the latter three cases attract younger generations who want to progress, not only spiritually, but in all aspects of their lives. In Potential, there are foreign educated English speaking believers, who want to belong to some kind of international church based in the developed northern hemisphere. The fact that CDV has a “gringo” principal pastor shows a trend that is even more evident in Potential. Also in terms of tithes and donations, Potential provides the option of giving via internet on their main menu, where users go first. Potential could therefore be the church that most strongly promotes prosperity theology.

The principal pastor plays a significant role in all the churches. Other similarities and differences are provided by the following table, which serves as an overview of the characteristics that describe the webpages of the churches.

	Agua Viva	Emmanuel	CDV	Potential
Design/style	Classic, informative	Creative, confusing	Creative systematic	Creative, systematic
language	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	English
Dominating topics/ forms	History, religious content, text	Upcoming events, colored pictures	Videos, volunteering in creative teams	Videos, fundraising
Links social networks	no	Partly, not dominating	Facebook, twitter	Facebook, twitter
Clientele: lifestyle, social indications	Conservative, Lower class	Moderate Lower class	Progressive, sophisticated, Middle, upper middle class	Progressive, sophisticated Middle, upper middle class
Ages attracted	Elder style	Young style, families	Young style	Young style

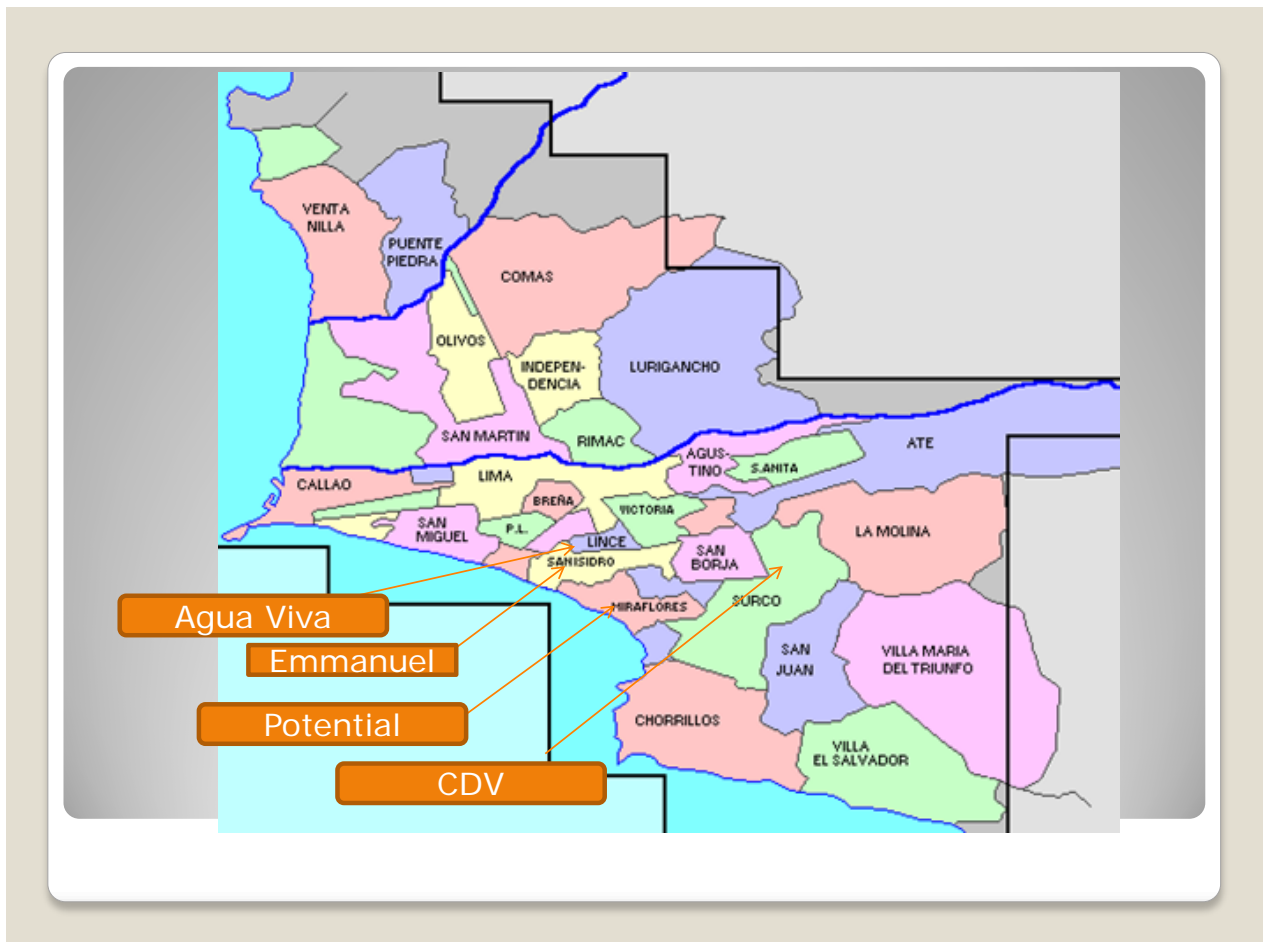
4.3 Service – Observations

Observation of the different services will be used shed additional light on the information of the churches that was first provided through an examination of their webpages.

There are certain details that all of these churches have in common. Although the level of technical advancement differs significantly between them, all the churches use multimedia in order to project the worship part and/or biblical texts, instead of using song books or papers. In terms of liturgy, a common element similar to Pentecostals is

the worship time, which differs in length and style, but generally marks the beginning of the service. Afterwards music plays a subordinate role compared to the word. None of the cases puts emphasis on the sacrament of Holy Communion as does the Catholic Church and traditional Protestant churches. Therefore it is not surprising that the buildings usually do not have an altar or other religious stage, as one would expect in a traditional church. The blessing at the end of the service also doesn't seem to be a liturgical priority, since it is mostly presented as secular good bye ritual. Every service focuses on a particular sermon, and includes emotional prayers and the offering. These service priorities are common in all cases and form a point of distinction from mainstream Protestant churches and places. The church buildings which include ex-cinemas, theatres and convention centers are also not traditional church structures. Inside and outside the churches, Christian symbols such as statues of Jesus and Mary are not to be found. In this section we will consider differences between the churches in terms of their outside and inside appearances, their liturgical staging of services and the symbols and multimedia used, such as rhetorical elements. Since some of the cases have already established other branches in other Peruvian cities (as in the case of Emmanuel and Agua Viva) or other districts within Lima (as in Agua Viva, CDV) it has to be mentioned that in these cases, observations have been made solely at the headquarters, the original mega-church setting. Due to the non-denominational structure, the main church still has a special character that most clearly shows typical attributes of the church. All the churches were visited several times throughout the year 2012 in order to get a broad view of the general characteristics of each church. Their specific locations are given on the map below.

Location of churches within Lima – Map



4.3.1 Agua Viva

Accessibility

The main church in the district of Lince was visited several times during the year 2012 at different service times. The building is a former cinema. Lince is considered a middle class district close to the historical city center. The building is located right on one of Lima’s major avenues “Avenida Arequipa” that stretches across almost all of the metropolitan area. The church is therefore easily accessible by inexpensive public transport. There are no parking lots close to the church and it can therefore be assumed that the vast majority of members doesn’t have cars.

Aesthetical Characteristics

The facade of Agua Viva's church building shows the logogram of world globe. The entrance to the building is "protected" by security officers, as they are in other public institutions such as banks, which makes the building seem a bit "cold" from outside. Unlike in many of the other churches, no handouts or leaflets for new people are given to introduce the church to "first comers". Entering the church, the main wall behind the stage shows the symbol of the globe and the verse, which forms the main symbol of the church, as on the webpage. There is a big plain wooden cross in the center which is illuminated. The part in the back was originally built as a stage because it was a cinema. The chairs are also the kind one would find in a cinema that have to be pushed down, in order to sit. The hall is generally light colored, fancy and very clean. Agua Viva is the only church of the cases studied that has a perceivable altar. There are no pictures on the walls and nothing that could distract visitors. In general, the environment can be described as elegant but not over bearing because of its lighter colors.

The audience

The church is filled with people, who are seated by uniformed members, mostly women, who are dressed in dark blue clothing consisting of trousers, a blouse and a vest, similar to waitresses in a restaurant. People are dressed in suits and ties and their female counterparts are for the most part dressed in longer skirts or conservative styled clothes. In terms of demographics, Agua Viva seems to be a family church. Most of the members come as families of all different generations, but the number of elderly people seems to be disproportionate, considering the church's demographics. Their faces are rather "stern looking" and it isn't easy to approach them. Personal contact is rare and after the service everybody quickly leaves so there is little personal contact. In the foyer, books are sold to the exiting mass of church members.

It is also worth mentioning that after having left, the security prohibited me from re-entering, which provides evidence that there exist strict rules that must be adhered to by the members. This will be further explored in the interviews.

Liturgical characteristics

The worship usually lasts about an hour and is guided by a team of lay people. The music is mostly soft pop and folk with a band in front and two beamer walls on which one can see moving pictures and text. Not all the songs are sung with the words shown, some are simply sung by memory.

The service is given by a pastor without lay participation. After the worship, the pastor reads intercessional prayers from little papers, filled by members before service. The little papers often contain prayer requests for “salud (health) and prosperidad (prosperity)” etc. While the congregation prays, the music team remains in the back of the stage putting emphasis on the highly emotionally spoken prayers through soft instrumental music and sometimes affirming them with “amen”. The congregation stands throughout the entire worship, including the prayer part.

The intercession prayer leads directly towards the announcement of the offerings. These are not dedicated for a special project, but differ according to the time of year. At advent, giving blesses the giver the whole coming year and apart from special occasions, it is simply announced that giving is an important part of being blessed, and one can infer, having ones prayers answered.

Agua Viva uses the traditional alms bag to collect the offering. The “waitresses” pass it through the rows while the music team accompanied by the pastor, loudly sings an emotional song. After the offering, the sermon starts and leads to an invitation to make a “decision” in faith. Towards the end of the service, a prayer for physical healing is usually said. Sometimes the audience is encouraged to touch the part of their body, which needs healing. A prayer of healing leads into a quiet emotional song which is sung by memory without any multimedia usage. The pastor sends the audience off by saying good-bye and disappears rapidly to the backstage area, which is heavily guarded. The music team sings another “goodbye song” while the audience exits the building.

Pastor

In Lince, various pastors were on the stage when I visited, but Mirtha Lazo, the wife of the principal pastor Peter Hornung, was the “star” of the stage. She was dressed

conservatively but always stylishly in different colored designer dresses and expensive jewelry that indicate her social status in the upper middle class. What seemed most obvious was the contrast between her and the audience. Compared to the audience, she seemed to project an image that she was socially superior to the audience members. In Agua Viva the pastor leads the entire service. Lay people only worship and the interaction of the pastor with his or her audience is very close, but in a hierarchical way.

Sermon

After the offering only the pastor remains on the stage, which signals the audience should be seated. In the case that one continues to stand, an indication is given that they should sit down. The pastor begins the sermon by reading a biblical text. It is usually the only biblical text in the whole service and serves as the basis for the sermon which follows. The rhetorical structure depends on the personality of the preacher, but generally, repetition in different forms of affirmation is a basic element in all Agua Viva sermons. Whole parts and basic messages of the sermon are repeated often with the same terminology. The pastor maintains eye contact with the audience the entire time and shows a very strong presence. The pastor speaks freely and loudly, even to the point of shouting especially in the case of Pr. Mirtha. Repetition is presented in an enhancement of voice and stressed key words in the sermon lead to its moment of climax. The audience is animated and “trained” to respond at appropriate parts of the sermon by raising their hands toward the ceiling while yelling “amén” in a chorus of affirmation. Another form of affirmation is applauding. During the entire sermon the audience is actively involved through questions, that usually require a “yes” or “no” answer and are called upon to perform do certain gestures, such as kicking or stomping of their feet. These gestures are performed to defeat the “enemy”, a recurring motive in every sermon. Other human emotions, “espíritos - spirits” such as “desánimo - discouragement” or depresión – depression” are correlated to the term “enemy”. In terms of content, a basic message of empowerment is presented in every sermon. Verbs that are repeatedly used in every sermon include: conquistar - to conquer, supercar -to master, to outrank, prosperar - to prosper and ganar - to gain. These verbs are used with nouns such as: victoria - victory, batalla - battle, fuerza - force. These keywords indicate the religious aspect of spiritual warfare. They correspond to military vocabulary and are used in order to provoke emotions associated with going into battle. Emphasis is

another intentionally deployed element in sermons which motivates the audience to adopt a proactive attitude in their lives. It was a constant emphasis and a belief in a rather simplistic dualistic view of the world. The sermon is characterized by a political populist speech pattern that follows clear rhetorical patterns and is intended to provoke certain feelings. Theological analysis of the actual text does not seem to be intended by the preacher. In most cases the biblical figure serves as a role model, who teaches how to act in order to accomplish an objective. The audience, as an expression of agreement and unity, applauds at climax which is signaled through the use of militant type keywords. Afterwards a more transcendent terminology is used characterized by words such as keywords such as: milagro - miracle and gozo - joy. This part of the sermon is also accompanied by repetition and sometimes includes jokes that provoke laughter which serves to lighten the intense atmosphere of the sermon.

At the conclusion of the sermon, a transition to another liturgical part that can be described as “conversion” takes place. Audience members make a decision to accept God and to come up front. It seems that some believers make this decision various times, because the opportunity is available for all, not just new visitors. The liturgical process seems to be flexible especially in this part. The sermon leads directly to the call for visitors who have come to Agua Viva for the first time to come to the front and the pastor prays the Holy Spirit into their hearts to evoke their power for the decision. The other members closely watch every new potential member close to them. I was felt forced in every service I attended to go up to the front of the church at this point. There are members who are authorized to pick out new visitors and to bring them up front. In some services these wear bracelets with the inscription “ganar - to gain”. Every new visitor stands in front of the stage beside a companion and then is touched by him or her. The companion is of the same sex and affirms the prayer led by the pastor on stage. Each companion is free to express his or her affection in a proper way. While most companions simply touch the back and shoulder of the new member, some go to the extent of holding the member’s head in their arms during the prayer. Many tears are shed during an emotional prayer and the process is accompanied by background music. After this part the new visitors are immediately considered new members of the church, who committed themselves as new believers by partaking in the conversion process. They are led by the arm of their companion towards the backstage, where they receive

some gifts, a New Testament and invitations to connect to a group cell. The new members stay in the back together with their companions until the end of the service.

Reflection

The church building coincides with the impression of the webpage. It is clearly a church, has a ceremonial atmosphere and has the most “church like appearance” place of all the Neopentecostal cases. Multimedia is only occasionally used, so it does not form a major element in Agua Viva. It is worth mentioning, that Agua Viva has a large number of elderly people that is not found in the other churches.

The role of the Pr. Mirtha, represents an interesting observation in terms of gender relations. Adored by the congregation, her charismatic personality makes her the protagonist of Agua Viva and makes role of the principal pastor. Her husband seems of little importance.

I had to bypass security, to meet her personally backstage in order to make an appointment for an interview at a later date. This was strictly forbidden, but it proved to be impossible to make an appointment through her secretary. Agua Viva is the only church where I saw constantly an almbag. In Agua Viva the sermon is not based on a secular topic, but rather on a biblical text, which does not follow a common lectionary as it does in the Catholic Church and in other Evangelical churches. It is important to note that the biblical text foreshadows the sermon, but formally and liturgically forms the basis for the sermon. The structure of sermons in Agua Viva raises the idea that a sermon could be a type of coaching in the basic sense of a leader, who motivates, and transports people from where they are to where they actually want to be. The element of motivation forms a basic element throughout the entire service. This arouses strong feelings and many people cry during prayers and they shout exclamations many times. In one service I counted the 57 “amén” exclamations of my neighbor throughout the service. Sometimes it is repeated three times in a row in order to affirm a message. Most of the times the pastor initiates the exclamation and then the masses simply repeat it. They do not need to be prompted.

The intellectual levels of the discourse, as well as the restriction of lay participation in these expressions, serve to highlight, that members are not well educated. The interviews will provide insight as to whether their “follow the leader style” mirrors the organizational structure as well as expected. Another insight is provided by the form of conversion of new members. The call to come up front immediately makes visitors new believers that have committed themselves to the church, even if they did not know what is expected of them. The way members are forced to stand up and go to the front does not actually leave space to reject the invitation for people that culturally have not learned to say “no”. In terms of the atmosphere among believers, Agua Viva seems to give little opportunity for spontaneous encounters. Even on the streets, in most of the neighborhoods of Lima, Peruvians are very easy to talk to, very sociable to each other and to strangers. Agua Viva’s believers on the other hand, seemed much more reserved, restricting their encounters to members in the cells they are in. Whenever I saw a group in the foyer or outside the church on the street, they told me that they were in their cells making appointments for the week’s meetings.

4.3.2 Emmanuel

Accessibility

Emmanuel is located right in Lima’s financial center in the socially high class district of San Isidro which is a very modern, highly developed and stylish part of the city that has little in common most of Lima’s districts that seem “third worldly” in comparison. Located on one of Lima’s most important avenues the “Avenida Javier Prado” and close to the expressway, the church is easily reachable by car, taxi or bus. There is a little parking lot in the front but many bigger parking lots are close to the church.

Aesthetical Characteristics

Since Humberto Lay is an architect by profession, he elaborated the architectural plans of the church himself and completely reshaped it. The atmosphere seems very cultivated. The church doesn't have a church like facade, but it looks interesting and more pious than that of the other churches because of the glass walls and a use of glass elements in general. As one enters the church, his/her eye catchers are the digital boards announcing the latest events and activities of the church. The stewards are dressed similar to those in Agua Viva, but wear smarter suits that are dark blue and show the logogram. Admission is refused for latecomers. In the case that there is no free seat in the main hall, they ask members to go up to the second floor and watch the service on a big screen. They also give handouts with basic information, contacts etc. Behind the fancy glass wall one enters the main hall, which is carpeted and has a stage that shows the logogram with a big cross and a dove in the center. There is no altar and the atmosphere is more like that of a theatre than a church. On stage one finds another round glass wall with the drums in its center. The band seems to have its own special place on stage. Above the stage, are giant loudspeakers, three beamers and a professional mixer that would be typically used in a music studio.

The audience

People seem to come from all different social backgrounds and age groups. There seems to be a mixture of social backgrounds and ages. It seems that different generations participate in the service together, since entire families enter the church together. People are very kind and have a smile on their faces; the obvious aim is to show strangers that they are welcome. The variety of people of different backgrounds is reflected by the way they dress. There are groups conservatively dressed with ties and suits and others who are dressed rather casually.

Pastor

The style of the Emmanuel "stage actors" is similar to the audience. It can be best described as cultivated. The men wear ties, shirts and trousers. The women are

comparably dressed. The pastor is difficult to recognize because there are different people on stage that lead the music, prayers and moderate the testimony part. Often the pastor only preaches the sermon and since he does not differ in terms of his attire, the only way to ascertain that he was indeed the pastor was the fact that he was preaching. There were various guest preachers throughout the year who were introduced before they started preaching.

The contrast between pastors, lay people on stage and in the audience was limited. Lay participation in the service at times led to confusion, since there was no clear moderation of the service. Every part seemed to be moderated by someone else. Accessibility to the pastor is not as difficult as in Agua Viva. Knowing who to approach, one can go to the pastor before or after service, but one is asked to first set up a meeting with the secretary whose contact information was on a handout.

Liturgical characteristics

The worship part is much more guitar and drum dominated than in Agua Viva. A band leads the worship and the song lyrics are projected on the beamer walls. Band members are less conservatively dressed and the sound volume is definitely stronger than in Agua Viva and at times goes beyond the limits of endurance. The music basically is used before the service.

After the worship in the afternoon services, a testimony lead by lay people ensues in which they tell those listening how God blessed them in the past in difficult times and how their lives changed after accepting Jesus while attending Emmanuel. In the testimony part, people said many times that they had come from distant places. That forms an important point for the investigation.

The moderator is in the background. The offering, like in Agua Viva, takes place after the worship and announcements of upcoming events. Sometimes they use the almbag and on other occasions, the envelope box. The offering is followed by the sermon. Afterwards there is a time for conversion. The service often finishes without any perceivable Good-bye ritual. The service suddenly stops and people leave while the choir sings another song. Outside many people meet in little groups and are friendly.

They were very friendly and for the most part, did not reject any questions I had about their church.

Sermon

The sermon is introduced by first reading a biblical scripture that forms the basis of the sermon. Since in Emmanuel there is the greatest diversity of preachers, due to its many pastors and rotation system it is more difficult to identify typical rhetorical elements of the sermon. However, commonality could be found in the sermons which often focus on illness or other shared life problems. The transmitted feeling by the pastors was not strength and empowerment, but rather a general provoked feeling of sadness because the pastors regularly stress the fragility of life and the role of faith in changing a person's life. The advantage of the family in the case of conversion is described. Generally rhetorical elements are fear provoking stories about illness and strokes of fate, the necessity of conversion. Another typical rhetorical element is dramatization. The same message is repeated various times and at some point provokes crying which is usually supported with background piano music that coincides with the voice of the preacher. The preacher trembles violently and even the temperature of the air seems to lower when he gets to the climax at which point the tone of the message changes. People react to the message with exclamations of "amen", crying out loud and even putting their heads on the benches and sitting on the floor. In the upper room people do the same thing while watching the sermon on a giant screen. The conversion seems to be the focus of every sermon. People are asked to make a decision and come up front. In the upper room they come up and cry and convert in front of the screen. The sermon is automatically followed by the invitation to convert, as it is in Agua Viva. "Convertees" are guided by companions and are prayed for as the band plays highly emotional background music. Thematically the sermons often mention family problems, for instance, mentioning that one should appreciate ones parents, even though they did not have educational opportunities to go to university. The sermon thereby reveals certain aspects about social contexts, which shall be of interest.

Reflection

Both churches that we have focused on have very emotional services. The message of the sermons is reinforced by repetition and emotion provoking elements rather than quiet reflection. When members say they have come from far away, spending many hours in traffic in a bus to attend the church, this information suggests, that many people in Emmanuel do not come from the middle and upper social classes that live relatively close to the church, although the church seems to attract a variety of people.

Both churches seem very organized in terms of structures and laws that members need to adhere to and they put emphasis on conversion to change one's life. While Agua Viva leaves no doubt about its authoritarian organizational structures, in Emmanuel it is less evident. The lay participation on stage and the confusion it causes corresponds to the impression I received of the church from the webpage. But the staging of the sermon contents is perfectly prepared and a sign of a disciplined structure. Moderate, decent and cultivated seem to be the characteristics that describe Emmanuel. It seems to be structured very clearly in order to fit very different social backgrounds. The emphasis on conversion is very evident and stressed. The offering is usually collected in the envelope box. The box where one puts the offering has a long opening for envelopes. The message to the members is clear – coins are not welcome. In order to give in the appropriate way, one needs to give bills. Technology plays a much bigger role in Emmanuel than in the former case.

4.3.3 CDV

Accessibility

CDV is located in a residential neighborhood in Lima's upper class district of Monterrico which is not easily accessible by public transport. It is easier to go by taxi or car. There are many parking lots in front of the church and mostly new cars, including SUVs are parked in front.

Aesthetical characteristics

The building from the outside is not very inviting and has no sign at all to attract one's attention. Entering the church is like walking into a big black hole because all the walls are painted black. One goes directly into the hall, there is no foyer and people are sitting on steps. The dark hall and cold stone steps seemed rather unwelcoming to me. To be honest, I felt terrified the first time I entered. I must admit that I have never been in such a place that was called church. Inside there are three beamer walls that offer some contrast to the black walls. Big fans are used to bring in fresh air because the building doesn't have any windows. There is no stage.

The audience

The above average presence of young adults in the audience is striking. Even though not everyone is under the age of 40, the clear majority belongs to the younger generations. They are stylishly dressed in "cool" clothes - no one wants to sit with his best Sunday attire on steps that everybody has to walk on with dirty shoes in order to get to his or her seat. Members of the "representation team", tell you where to sit. They are young adults wearing t-shirts that show the logogram, a palm tree. They are so friendly that it appears as if they might be "high". They seem to be riding a wave that one needs join them on, in order to feel at home in this church. One feels as if they are in a special place in all respects.

Pastor

There are different pastors on stage, but I experienced a high number of services that were led by principal pastor Robert Barriger. He always seemed to be dressed in the same clothes: jeans and an untucked sport shirt. Guest preachers from the US were also dressed this way if they were about the same age, which differed from the younger crowd. Most of the other CDV pastors are younger and styled differently, especially in terms of their disheveled hair. This particular hairstyle is combined with smart boots, skintight trousers and t-shirts under a sports coat. In general, the outfit seems very stylish and rather artistic to my mind. The pastors are fit and preach using body language. It seems that they aim to distinguish themselves from the audience by the clothes that they wear. I am able to distinguish young Neopentecostal pastors from any

other group because of their fashion sense. The Potential campus pastor dresses in the same manner. As in the case of Emmanuel, pastors are reachable. One can come up to them, ask questions and get answers, although I should mention, that at times you hear “I’m busy right now but after the service we can sit and talk”. This is a very different unconventional way of treating people that is welcoming and charming.

Liturgical characteristics

The darkness turns into light when the worship starts. A rock concert like light show accompanies the high quality rock songs played by the band in Spanish. The concert atmosphere seems to copy the US Hillsong church, which is partner of CDV. In Lima, their type of worship is unique. Cameras film the audience that sings with their hands held high which also contributes to the concert atmosphere. Because their images are projected onto the screens, the believers become “stars” on screen and on the internet because the service is recorded and broadcasted as a live stream-video. The song lyrics are beamed on screen with rapidly moving pictures of Lima, particularly the developed districts of the city, for instance cars driving on the Malecón of Miraflores.

After the worship the advertisements are announced mostly through videos as well, that show lay leaders as TV like actors. In fact it is worth mentioning, that all the staging, videos, music etc., is achieved through the participation of a select group of members who have had professional instruction in acting, filming, decoration, photography etc. paid by the church. After the inner church advertisements are applauded by the audience, the offering is announced with biblical verses after an introduction explaining its importance. During the offering, another song is played and the collection team passes expensively designed envelopes with the church’s logogram on to them. There are two different kinds of envelopes, one is for tithes and the other for donations. The sermon comes next and forms the longest and central part of the service. Afterwards the prayer for conversion takes place - this is a short prayer for those that lifted their hands admitting to have come for the first time. They are not asked to come forward. The prayer does not cause any particular emotional reaction by the audience. Finally, another song is sung and people are invited to the courtyard to socialize, have a snack etc.

Sermon

The sermon does not necessarily start with a biblical text. In fact, biblical texts usually only appear when talking how important it is to read the Bible. In the sermon, the beamer wall played an important role, because texts were beamed onto screen and pictures were used to make it more visual. Biblical texts are only mentioned to facilitate discussion. Topics about daily life dominate the service. The number of “amen” heard depend on the preacher. The sermons in their rhetorical discourse are not similar to the ones in Agua Viva or Emmanuel, since they lack the highly choreographed elements and the level of repetition is much less. A clear line of thought is recognizable and the sermons seem to focus on using entertainment to create a concert atmosphere and encourage participation in the church.

Reflection

The impression given by the internet page correlates to the service and lay participation and goes beyond the usual voluntary work done in a church. One can receive professional training in arts, music, filming etc. and express oneself creatively in the church as a protagonist. This is an indication that CDV members lead rather sophisticated lifestyles. The special atmosphere gives the impression that it is for insiders. The accessibility and aesthetical appearance of the church support this impression. This is not the kind of church that one sees and passes by. People get to know it through recommendations of friends as a rather “secret place” hidden in a high society neighborhood. From the outside, it doesn’t provoke the passerby to enter. After the service members enter the interior courtyard, where the snack bars tempt you to stay and socialize with people from a “special place” and become one of them. The courtyard reveals the logogram that had only appeared on screen in the service, but is not an overbearing symbol. The back door one leaves through, reminds one of a US country house, with marble like walls and lots of flowers, obviously not a typical Peruvian home, but one of high society. My impression is that this form of staging, that clearly is reflected in the building itself and the non-use of symbols, supports the idea that the church is a kind of secret society, (a club) where you do not belong right away.

Integration in CDV is a process in which you discover if you “fit into” the church. Little details like the background video for song lyrics show a particular side of Lima. The message received is that Lima cannot be more beautiful than it is portrayed in the fashionable video of CDV. The advertisements of the church are similar to TV commercials, in that they create the feeling that one wants to participate and be part of something special, as the church portrays itself to be.

4.3.4 Potential Church

Accessibility

Potential still does not have its own church building as such, since it has come to Lima recently. Potential rents the convention center in the heart of the upscale Miraflores district which is often referred to as the “Manhattan of Lima” because of its many elegant shops, hotels, cozy coffee shops, exclusive shopping centers, and Parque Kennedy, which is a cultural “hotspot”. Unlike the CDV, the Potential Church is a place where people pass by and might be attracted to enter. One is given a warm welcome by a “gringa”, who speaks English with an English accent. This is not surprising since this is the area where foreigners (expats, tourists or businessmen) are common. There are many parking lots near the church so it is relatively easy to access the church by car.

Aesthetical characteristics

The convention center is well located and of course has no Christian symbols. In the entrance, large posters invite members to the upcoming events such as a tribute to a Coldplay concert. The beamer wall in the center is similar to CDV’s. The beamer walls show advertisements on the screen, including a commercial advertisement for McDonalds. I could hardly believe my eyes and my friend had to pinch me to make sure it was true. This would become important because the pastor in charge chose not to mention this in the interview I had with him.

The audience

The church is similar to CDV in that it is a church for young people and those who are older are called “parents”. They looked like typical young adults with no recognizable group identity, other than their ages.

Pastor

Most of the service happens on screen. Lima has a Campus pastor, who moderates the service and offers personal attention. The Limenean audience receives the preaching on screen by principal pastor Troy Gramling. Pastor Klopp, the campus pastor in Lima seems to model himself after the style of the young CDV pastors, which I described previously. A few times of the year he actually preaches in Lima.

Liturgical characteristics

After the commercial advertisements on screen, the worship part follows, as in all the other churches. This part is lively with a young band performing mostly English songs. The Campus pastor appears, welcomes the audience and shows the church’s advertisements on screen in English with Spanish subtitles. It is actually the advertisements of the main church in Cooper City, Florida inviting members to attend US events like a church celebration of Independence Day for instance. Apart from being foreign, the way celebrations are advertised seems interesting. I remember a Christmas event advertisement, produced by the youth pastor Scott Mendenhall for a play in which he plays a stressed person at Christmas, accompanied by techno beats, running wildly around the Christmas tree that eventually falls. This image fits perfectly into the whole stressed out and commercial advertisement of a Christmas service in Potential, which promises to be anything but devotional. These advertisements are followed by testimonials of youngsters about their lives, similar to those seen in the video on the webpage.

The offering, as in all the other cases, occurs at the beginning, before the sermon. As in CDV, only envelopes are collected. Then the pastor announces the sermon, which is broadcasted live from Cooper City, with principal pastor Troy Gramling speaking in English. After the sermon, the Campus pastor leads a prayer in English, which

sometimes is translated into Spanish. After another song, he says good-bye and people meet each other over coffee. The new visitors are invited to share a pizza delivered from Pizza Hut.

Sermon

Pr. Troy starts his sermons with a topic from secular life instead of a biblical text. The sermons are called “teachings” and are broadcasted on the internet. The basic element of Potential sermons is the use of every day themes and attention drawing, often-commercial symbols. The sermons have attention getting titles such as “Cheesecake-Sex” and “The naked pastor”. When I asked one interviewee what the sermon was actually about he did not remember anything (4/m/1). Pr. Troy uses biblical texts to support the arguments he makes in his sermons which are intended to be intellectual as well as entertaining. In fact one can listen to the stories of Pr. Troy and his wife “Steph” for hours and it seems more like a comedy show than a sermon. The content is often about prosperity, for instance, when he reveals how he became rich and finally got his expensive sports car (he always dreamt of having silver Camaro). He says insistently that “I did not buy it. God gave it to me” (Gramling, 08.12.2012). More than other Neopentecostal pastors, Pr. Troy speaks a lot about material wealth in his sermons, for instance he interprets Lk 6, 38 by saying “If you give – you will receive. Make room for more.” His prosperity theology is sophisticated in the sense, that it involves different dimensions of prosperity apart from the economic one. In a sermon entitled Triathlon, he states that we should try to live as triathletes, in order to be prosperous and successful in different areas of life such as sports, work, and family. The teachings in Potential church also connote an implication of coaching believers for a successful life. Pr. Troy’s constant repetition of Starbucks Coffee whenever it is convenient, gives the impression of masked advertising, especially since it occurs on the webpage as well.

Reflection

Potential leaves no doubt that this is a hyper modern church, using elements of the daily life of professionals to target consumers in a fast moving, success oriented reality. Marketing seems to play more of an important role than the actual sermon, which seems

to focus on entertaining the audience. Secular elements have a much stronger dominating presence than in the other churches. Furthermore it is striking how Potential promotes US brands during its service. The English language, the repetitive mentioning of Starbucks coffee and other US brands shall have to be analyzed in the interviews. It seems that Potential plays with the complexes of a marginal society by offering people in this group the opportunity to be a part of the developed international world and the American lifestyle. The role of socializing seems stronger than in other churches and the search for foreign friends and practicing English, yearning to adopt and participate in another culture seems to be very strong. The interviews shall provide more insight into these elements of the church. Since participation in Potential requires good English comprehension, the target group seems to be located in higher and emerging social classes and have a decent education. The usage of scientific results as a background for sermons to sustain arguments also supports this assumption.

4.3.5 Chart overview

The chart below summarizes the key variables discussed in the proceeding sections as they relate to the churches investigated during personal observations made in 2012.

	Agua Viva	Emmanuel	CDV	Potential
Accessibility	Easy bus access on major avenue in central district, no parking lot	Easy bus access on major avenue, central financial district, little parking lot	Difficult bus access, safe unguarded parking lot, safe residential area	Possible bus access, guarded parking lots
Aesthetical characteristics	Church appearance Little	Fancy ordered hall appearance multimedia	Unconventional cold and dark sports hall, no	Convention centre, show hall style, no

	multimedia		religious symbols, elaborated multimedia, light show	religious symbols, Multimedia show, more on screen than live
Audience	Elder generations, families Darker skin, lower class Conservative Sunday clothing	Whole families, all generations Darker skin, lower-middle class Moderately fancy dressed	Different ethnic groups, more whites young crowd, Middle-upper middle class, Leisurely dressed	Very young, more whites, middle-upper middle class, bilingual
Liturgical Characteristics	Almbag Pentecostal elements conversion	Almbag/envelopes Evangelical/Pentecostal conversion	Creative envelopes, Entertainment, show staging Rock concert	Creative envelopes, entertainment, show staging On screen
Pastor	No access, star treatment animator	Possible access, formal bureaucratic order	Easy access, unconventionally friend like	Moderator of the show, Easy, immediate access
Sermon	Military vocabulary, feeling provoking	Polarizing, dialectic Sad vocabulary Feeling provoking	Entertaining, Animating, secular, eloquent	Entertaining, scientifically informative, secular, eloquent

4.3.6 Summary - according to market criteria

All of the churches visited have a similar liturgy. There is a worship part followed by the offering. CDV and Potential have inner church advertisement videos that they show first, a part that in traditional churches appears at the end, because it informs the congregation of upcoming events. The offering in the beginning, provokes the idea that it is some sort of entrance fee. The elaborate envelopes used to collect the tithes suggest that only higher domination bills are welcome. Another common element is the culmination of the service into a form conversion that doesn't exist in traditional churches. The forms and scale church conversion differs. There is also a marked difference in church aesthetics as well as the social classes and lifestyles of its members. The reference group of identification in the first cases seems to be the Peruvian upper class. For those members who do not belong to this class, the church provides an escape from the poverty, dysfunctional families and unemployment found in the lower classes. Conversion and participation in the church corresponds to a break from their former life "in sin" and their former social networks.

A habitus of distinction and pretention seem to be the motivation of CDV and Potential members as well. The location and style of CDV distinguishes it from other churches. The reference of identification in both cases is a foreign "gringo" pastor and a gringo network of friends, in which the individual members feel dependent on a network of others as references etc. This provides a distinction from Peruvian reality and requires accepting a culturally different reality shared with others from the same church. This is especially evident in Potential. Therefore we can assume that exclusivity exists in CDV and Potential because of the location of the churches, their extravagant styles and their use of the English language and foreign symbols.

The emphasis on healing only appears in the first two churches as a matter of priority. In CDV and Potential, healing does play a particular role neither in liturgy nor in sermons. The focus is clearly on "winning" and not any forms of weakness such as illness, poverty etc. Another element of contrast is the time differences of the services. While the service in Agua Viva and Emmanuel usually lasts two hours, the services in

CDV and Potential do not take much longer than one hour on average, although some exceptions occurred in all cases.

Products

Prosperity theology is detectable in all of them, the extent and manner that it exists differs according to the educational and social background of believers in churches. In terms of prosperity theology, one significant difference to the IURD group needs to be clearly pointed out. The observation of sermons shows that prosperity theology is not expressed in the IURD-typical scheme: “Donate and God will bless you”. In Lima’s mega-churches the term prosperity is interpreted according to various life dimensions and seems to serve as a synonym of “success” in all life dimensions and is not restricted to material wealth. However, prosperity theology seems to play a role in all cases and even more so in Potential, where material wealth as expression of faith was an often-repeated element of sermons. In general, prosperity theology is a term rejected by pastors and believers alike. Nonetheless, the term occurs quite often in religious practice and refers to success in many areas including health, fitness competitiveness, commitment and success in the professional career as well as family life. Since the present investigation does not focus on theology, these superficial observations should suffice without examining them in depth.

Prosperity is correlated to the themes of conquest, progress and breakthrough against evil. It refers to breaking one’s own “bad” habits in order to have success in different life dimensions.

All of the churches are spirit-centered since they put emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit serves as instrument of power and as weapon in the religious actor’s struggles. This struggle takes place inside and outside and is expressed by such utterances as “...being in the zone of God” (CDV, 03.06.2012). “I want to conquer my life... to say to the flesh: surrender to the Spirit” (Agua Viva, 08.12.2012).

Implicitly and in subtle ways, religious actors are taught that the way of thinking and acting they have learned, has to be overcome. The dualistic worldview also occurs in

most Pentecostal churches as well, but the terminology of conquest is much stronger in the Neopentecostal churches.

Chesnut mentions healing as product. It can be seen as such in the case of Agua Viva and Emmanuel, who place healing liturgically in their services and also celebrate special healings in their services similar to the Pentecostal counterparts. In CDV and Potential, topics such as suffering tend to be avoided on purpose. Another element that I would subsume under the heading products is a form of “coaching” that occurs in sermons, dominates liturgy and seems to be a typical element in all cases.

Marketing

In Lima, some of the biggest evangelical churches have adopted market strategies from Neopentecostals in order to keep up with them and escape the fate of “being left behind”, as has happened to most of the historical Protestant churches. An obvious example of the adoption of Neopentecostal marketing is seen in the “Alianza Cristiana y Misionera” church, whose service-performance underwent severe changes in the last decades, more so than in any other church.⁵ In other cases, parts of the church become “neopentecostalized”, as it is the case of the Methodist church in Lima.⁶ A typical observation in Neopentecostal churches is their considerable investment in high-tech media combined with low-tech advertising through the “word of mouth” of family members and friends.⁷ This combination proves to be effective. Social networks play a significant role influencing one’s decision, as do references from family and friends. This low-tech media, as Chesnut names it, therefore plays an important role in the methods of evangelization in Limenean Neopentecostalism as well. Instead of home visits, that Chesnut names for Pentecostals, the Neopentecostal churches use the talents of lay people as part of their marketing strategy. Operating in cells or small groups, lay people are called to take participate actively in evangelization. Low tech media implies convincing friends and family to participate in a church service. One marketing medium that shall not be underestimated are the courses that all different churches offer its members. These courses have rather interesting names such as “hombría maxima –

⁵ Victor Liza, representative of youth organization MEC in Peru, journalist, 31.06.2012.

⁶ David Romero, 23.06.2012.

⁷ Nearly all the interviews prove that religious actors get to know the Neopentecostal church through either friends or influential family members.

maximal manhood”. This course is provided by CDV, not only to its own church members, but also to members of other churches including Emmanuel and Alianza Cristiana. The courses enhance the popularity of Neopentecostal churches in Lima and can be classified as products for the churches that offer the courses. As a matter of fact, many religious actors moved from one church to another because they were inspired by a particular course.

In terms of high-tech media marketing, the first thing that comes to mind is the use of projectors and Dolby surround sound systems.

These systems allow churches to give a professional touch to the church advertisements, announcements and music performed and are an attractive force of the church which encourages members to participate in the event, group or course that is projected. In some of the Neopentecostal churches in Peru, advertising in church is similar to advertising targeted at consumers in the commercial marketplace in that it generates desires that motivate the audience to try the product advertised. The crucial role of the internet cannot be neglected in this respect.

An interesting observation that shows how marketing has adapted to the particular group a church targets, was the new opening of a CDV branch in Miraflores in 2012, which seemed to mimic the atmosphere of Potential, which is interesting given the fact that most members of Potential in Lima are ex members of CDV. The interviews will give more information about the reason and circumstances behind this migration. Whereas the main church is in exclusive residential area in Monterrico, the services of CDV in Miraflores are held in a five star hotel right in the center of Miraflores, as are those of Potential. CDV welcomes its members with a table of flowers and leaflets about the church. I had the impression that CDV was wary of the competition presented by Potential. However pastors and believers vehemently denied this by stating: “Here in Miraflores there are so many Starbucks Cafés and all of them are filled with people. If another one opens some blocks away from us, it will fill up as well. We have no reason to feel Potential’s success threatens our own. The most important thing is that people live their faith, no matter in which church. As long as they are worshipping Jesus, we are fine, besides pastor Daniel is my friend.” (3/P/1, 03.06.2012) The Starbucks example reveals an implicit understanding of the churches that the religious market is

similar to the economic market. It is almost like saying “yes we are an enterprise, with both “brands” of churches belonging to the same parent company.” This strategy forms an observable form of marketing and consciousness of competition in the religious market.

Sales Representatives

Chesnut mentions that sales representatives need to be skilled fundraisers. In Neopentecostal churches this might apply even more so than in Pentecostal churches, since the target group is a dynamic factor of society. Especially in the more exclusive socially higher class churches, fundraising plays an important role which is depicted by the announcement of the offering which almost seems to be introduced like another sermon. An interesting phenomenon of the four cases investigated is that CDV and Potential, which are the ones that emphasize giving as their webpages show, are the cases that depend on foreign donations. In the case of Potential, the church is relatively new in Lima. In the case of CDV, this is understandable given the fact that the congregation is mostly comprised of members of the younger generations, many of whom still do not make enough money to donate. The churches that are actually self-sustained are Agua Viva and Emmanuel.

In addition to the Chesnut’s observation, the appeal of pastors and lay sales representatives through clothing, postures etc. attracts the target group they want to reach. In socially higher churches, foreigners have a special value. Whereas Chesnut mentions the inequality of social and cultural contexts and the occurring identification problem, particularly the members of CDV and even more of Potential seem to be convinced that everything imported and foreign is better and thereby negating their own cultural and ethnic identity. One could argue that this mindset is also reflected in the style of Potential and CDV. According to the observations the sales representatives in Neopentecostal churches not only tend to be skilled fundraisers, as Chesnut points out, but also skilled coaches, which enforce a proactive attitude and productive lifestyle.

Organizational structure

Organizational structure is difficult to observe. The mechanical affirmations in Agua Viva may lead one to believe that this church is highly authoritarian, with an authoritative leader. The interviews will have to explore this issue further. The webpage and services of all the cases show a very special role of the principal pastors. Their position in decision-making and influence in the training and selection of leaders will be reflected upon in the analysis of the interviews. Compared to the MMM-type and IURD type churches, the plurality of leadership through teams and ministries is very high, which shall be supported by in the interviews.

4.4 Analysis of the interviews

4.4.1 Agua Viva

Agua Viva is the largest mega-church in Lima. It has massive evangelizations (prayer meetings) in the stadium “colosseo” and claims to have about 100,000 members. According to their statistics they have 1000 to 1500 conversions per week, which shows a religious priority. Agua Viva has a pyramid like church structure, where members, apart from the Sunday service, are organized in cells of about seven people. Each member participates in his first cell, but after sometime is expected to form and lead a new one which he or she opens through mission activities. Because of this, the church is growing immensely. As I mentioned before, the interviews were not easy to conduct because the interviewees often felt a need to consult with next higher authority of the “pyramid” structure before speaking to me. In some cases the leader even gave the interviewee a hand sign to stop the interview. In these cases, the interviewee left immediately, informing me that his or her leader needed to speak to them. On the other hand, some interviewees were very friendly and helpful, but let me know that I would need to convert to their church to be granted an interview. This kind of behavior was most evident in Agua Viva and is similar to the behavior of members of Pentecostal churches.

4.4.1.1 Social backgrounds and Lifestyles

Contrary to my perceptions, the interviewees stated that mostly younger generations convert, which can probably be explained by the fact that the majority of the Limenean society belongs to the younger generations. Compared to the other cases, Agua Viva is the church with the highest amount of elderly members and is the only case that has a “golden age ministry”. In terms of Limenean lifestyles, there seems to exist a trend towards what Arellano calls “conservative lifestyle”, which is not surprising considering all the aesthetic dimensions observed in the church. Through the interviews of members of different groups Agua Viva, I was able to determine that the social gap between the principal pastors and members is vast. The principal pastors and lay founders of the church are from higher social classes, while the majority of the flock belongs to the lower classes. In none of the other churches, is the social gap as wide as it is in Agua Viva. The strongly hierarchical pyramid system reflects this. The leaders of the cells are professionals such as congress members, medical doctors, etc. (1/m/1). People with little connection to the founders tend to belong to lower classes. The wife of the principal pastor, Mirtha Lazo, is a sociologist, and she affirms that the majority of Agua Viva members come from lower classes.⁸

Mirtha Lazo

Lazo makes no secret of why she basically targets people in lower classes when she says “I know that for a person that has everything, it is only possible, if God in a supernatural way makes you see the hole that exists inside; whereas poor people know they need God because they lack everything.”⁹

⁸ Mirtha Lazo confirmed without hesitating “bajos, estratos bajos”.

⁹ “Yo sé lo que es para la persona que tiene todo solamente cuando Dios de manera sobrenatural te hace ver el hueco que hay adentro, en cambio la gente pobre no tiene mucho que decir de que necesita a Dios porque como a ellos todos los falta”. Mirtha Lazo.

Lazo speaks about her social background in an upper middle Limenean class family in the upscale San Isidro district. I met her in the office of Agua Viva, which she defined as her home where she lived all her life.¹⁰ Proudly she says “We were the first church to rent a big cinema. Some churches had already rented the Cine Azul on Sundays I remember, but we rented the Cine Pacífico.”¹¹ The researcher has to take notice of her social connotation that is implied in the two very differently located cinemas in Lima, because class has a lot to do with location. While the Cine Azul (which today is the main church building of the AD) is located close to the historical center in Santa Beatriz, while Cine Pacífico is located in the heart of Miraflores next to the main entrance of Parque Kennedy (Kennedy Park). She told me about the social situation of Agua Viva in its beginnings in 1985/86 when six couples founded the church. Their religious practice differed from the Pentecostals because they did not share their social reality. She talks about the negative reaction she received when she converted because in her family situation it was very uncommon to convert to evangelicalism. “My whole family turned their back on me; my whole family was telling me that I would date a greengrocer after having studied in a feminist university, living in San Isidro.”¹²

When asked if her lifestyle had changed after having converted, she told me about her father taking her to Acapulco when she was 15 years old, which seemed a strange answer to me. “I was in Acapulco at the age of 15, I have been in incredible places because my father was an exporter of coffee, a business man, a fortunate man, so I said if my dad who is only a mortal man, could take me to those places, how much more could my father in heaven do.”¹³ She uses her own social reality to demonstrate the theological aspect of prosperity theology and to introduce a self-perception as being the daughter of the King. “You can’t imagine how difficult it is to change those structures because the problem is here.” She then tips her finger on her forehead, gesturing that the problem the church needs to resolve is the way the people think. “So this is what we

¹⁰ It should be mentioned that another scholar received a different answer about her origin in an interview, which names her provincial background.

¹¹ “Fuimos la primera iglesia que alquilamos un cine grande, porque ya habían algunas Iglesias que habían alquilado por domingos el “Cine Azul” me acuerdo pero nosotros alquilamos el Cine Pacífico.” Mirtha Lazo.

¹² “Toda mi familia me volteo la espalda, toda la familia me dijo te vas a meter con el verdulero.”

¹³ “Estaba a mis 15 años en Acapulco, he estado en lugares increíbles porque mi padre era exportador de café, un hombre de negocios, un hombre de fortuna, entonces, yo decía si mi papá que no es Dios me pudo llevar a esos lugares, cuanto más cuando ellos se enteren que tienen un papá en los cielos que te puede hacer llevar más allá de lo que pudo hombre mortal, eso se llama fe.” Mirtha Lazo.

need to renew”, she says.¹⁴ She mentions the distinction between her and her “flock” by saying, “But since we come from different worlds, as you are aware of, for us it’s very easy to tell them you can, because if I could, you can.” Responding to the question of how her life had changed she answered: “I quit drinking whisky; I left my environment and went to preach the word of God in districts I have never been to before.” Her answers to questions interview shall be further reflected on later.

Local pastors

The local pastors affirm that people in Agua Viva basically come from lower classes.¹⁵ “I think everybody comes from a background of a life in problems... their former lives weren’t good.”¹⁶ Social mobility plays an important role as a testimony for gaining new members. As local pastors see it, there needs to be a change in the way of living that transforms Latin American culture in order to achieve prosperity for all (1/P/2).

Members

About 60% of members of Agua Viva are housewives or self-employed individuals running small businesses. An elderly woman who told me she belongs to the 144 rank of a local pastor and is active in the so called “Edad de Oro”- Golden age, told me that she is from San Martin de Porres, a “cono” district, so it takes her up to two hours to go to church by bus (1/f/3). When asked how her life has changed since joining the church, she pointed out her “bad living habits” (el malvivir) like having smoked and constant

¹⁴ “Tú no te imaginas, es difícil cambiar esas estructuras porque el problema está acá, entonces aquí es donde tienes que renovar, pero como nosotros venimos de otro mundo, te das cuenta, para nosotros era muy fácil decirle a la gente tú puedes porque si yo he podido tú puedes, ah porque quien me cambio a mí fue Dios, yo dejé el whisky, dejé el grupo en que mi movía, dejé todo para ir a predicar la palabra de Dios a zonas que en mi vida nunca había ido.” Mirtha Lazo.

¹⁵ 1/P/1: En términos generales la mayoría está en el nivel bajo que en alto.” 1/P/2: “El volumen del 60% son amas de casas, comerciantes, mini comerciantes, hay poca de alta clase, si hay profesionales pero no es el grueso.”

¹⁶ “Creo que todos vienen de una vida de problemas...es porque su vida anterior no estuvo bien.” 1/P/2.

fighting with her mother that stopped after her conversion. Her explanation of what motivates her to come to church is a typical, since especially in Agua Viva, religious actors tend to have overcome problems often seen in the low classes. Most of the interviewees come from dysfunctional families (1/m/4; 1/f/6; 1/P/2) and/or a background of alcohol and drug addiction (1/P/2) and a precarious lifestyle (1/f/6). The contrast of their situation before and after their conversion is drastic and shows to what extent the church influences thinking patterns of believers. This will be discussed further on. The active involvement in church social groups of at least three nights a week means low class Peruvians had to restructure their lives. Most of them did not finish secondary school and live on “cachuelos” which means they are in low income insecure jobs, do day-labor in poorly paid jobs or have self-sustained small business enterprises. Some started university studies, but often they found out that they needed to make ends meet and stopped studying, partly because they never learned to organize their time.

Reflection

The social origin in lower classes of Agua Viva members is shown particularly in their polarization of the lives before and after coming to Agua Viva. The change caused by joining the church makes them feel that before this turning point, their lives were an awful mess and that the church is to thank for their improved life circumstances. The perception of the religious actors in all interviews is closely connected to their conversion and participation in Agua Viva.

Prosperity theology seems to be a basic teaching in Agua Viva, which influences the worldview of the members. Lazo’s biographical example, which serves to illustrate the way material blessings occur, is widely accepted logic. However, in my opinion the Peruvian reality does not reflect the idea “if I could, you can” because these people come from a background that does not give them the necessary cultural, social, and economic opportunities required. Nonetheless, Lazo tells her followers that simply by following the teachings of the church leads to a lifestyle of prosperity.

There is no doubt that a religious transformation generates a change of lifestyle towards a structured life, but the comparison to her own biography seems questionable, since in her case, she already was leading a prosperous life because her family was well off. It reveals a weakness in her argument because of the social gap between her and the majority of her believers before joining the church seems to be overlooked.

Lazo's statements can be used to provide insight into the self-perception of her audience, as people that are suffering from "auto-marginación," as Kogan calls it. It seems to be acceptable that the spiritual mother does not share their life reality and is not perceived in a critical way. The examples somehow ignore social inequality between her and her believers by turning a blind eye to these differences and interpreting prosperity as purely faith based. The section about perception of products reveals more concerning of future prosperity.

4.4.1.2 Religious background and mobility

This section asks about the religious backgrounds of members, through which media they came to know the church and how mobility is perceived by the different groups.

The interviews show that most of the members in Agua Viva come from Pentecostal churches, such as AD. The founding families come from the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement and the Alianza Cristiana y Misionera, one of the largest evangelical churches in Peru.

Mirtha Lazo

Lazo points out: "Our people are ex Catholics, because I don't want people from other churches." She explains that evangelicals need to bring a letter from the ex-pastor if they want to enter from an evangelical church and that would give the pastor the opportunity to convince the member not to move. She declares vehemently that Agua Viva does not want "convertees" from other evangelical churches and says that in her opinion, "very few are evangelicals, our people are ex- Catholics, you know evangelicals we are only 12% (of society) and the Alianza Cristiana and the Baptist

churches are churches that have a good word and therefore the people are well nourished. Those people don't come to our church. I haven't seen any."¹⁷

The recruitment of members of other evangelical churches is neglected using the argument that evangelical churches "nourish" their members well. While the mobility out of Agua Viva towards other churches is explained as follows, "People leave because they say it's a very large church and they prefer something more personal."

Local pastors

According to Lazo, "Generally believers move from Agua Viva to another church, not vice versa...they go to charismatic churches, for instance Camino de Vida. I don't have the information of where they go but they move to different churches like Emmanuel."¹⁸

The answer was spontaneous and coincided to answers given by members as well who said the supposed reasons members left the church was the pressure they felt to evangelize. "They don't like the idea that they have to work in order to gain souls. That makes them feel uncomfortable."¹⁹

Members

The members interviewed do not in all cases, support the claim made by Lazo. They have moved from AD (1/f/3; 1/f/5) Alianza Cristiana (1/f/6; 1/m/2) or were ex-Catholics who converted to Agua Viva (1/m/1; 1/m/4). Although many came from Catholic churches, many others came to Agua Viva from an evangelical background.

¹⁷ "La gente nuestra es ex Católica, tú sabes que nosotros solo somos el 12% de la iglesia evangélica y la iglesia cristiana y Misionera, las iglesias bautistas son iglesias que tiene buena palabra y entonces la gente está bien alimentadas, yo no veo gente, no vienen a la iglesia. Los que vienen son los católicos." Mirtha Lazo, p.11.

¹⁸ "Generalmente pasa que de aquí van a otra iglesia no al revés...Bueno se van a las iglesias Carismáticas generalmente, por ejemplo Camino de Vida, no tengo en este momento la información de a donde se van pero sé que se van a diferentes iglesias como Emmanuel." 1/P/1.

¹⁹ "...no les gusta sentir la presión de tener que trabajar para ganar almas porque el modelo te motiva y a veces te presiona a que tú evangelices para ganar almas y eso te puede hacer sentir incómodo." 1/P/1; 1/P/2.

Some “were born again” in other evangelical churches like MMM, a low class Neopentecostal church or other Pentecostal churches. Some mention that they came to Agua Viva from a Pentecostal church (AD), as in the case of 1/f/3. The church seems to place much emphasis on the conversion. This shows that the significance of conversion in Agua Viva is strong. Of course, the majority of current Agua Viva came from the Catholic charismatic renewal, but that is also true for the generation of founders and higher social classes. Local pastors admit that the church expects very much from its members in terms of time and that some members decide to go to similar churches that expect less of a time commitment like Emmanuel or CDV.

In terms of marketing and religious mobility, most of the believers were invited by family members or as Chesnut names it “low tech media”. In Agua Viva, often the parents bring their sons or daughters (1/P/1; 1/P/2; 1/1/f/5; 1/f/6), but not exclusively. “Usually one member of the family comes first and is followed by the rest of the family”.²⁰ The strong emphasis on every member as a “multiplier” of new members, urges the believer to give a convincing testimony at home in order to bring other family members to the church. The family conversion also plays an important role in changing the family lifestyle. Without family support, it is hard if not impossible, to give up unhealthy life habits such as drinking for instance, which is very common practice in the family celebrations that take place to honor local saints for instance. These celebrations are brought from the provinces to Lima and are common practice in the poorer districts. Because of typical close knit families, which are common in the lower Peruvian classes, the religious actor must try to convert his or her family or as much of family members as possible so that the entire family’s situation is changed. Otherwise, he/she faces the possibility that they will be seen as the “black sheep” of the family. The situation is similar in Pentecostalism. The difference to Pentecostal churches is the doctrinal prosperity focus of Neopentecostals that generates upward social mobility, not only as an effect of the spiritual lifestyle but a necessary force to give a credible testimony that one is actually blessed. Like in Pentecostalism the majority of converts to Agua Viva are women (1/P/1; 1/P/2).

²⁰ “Usualmente es alguien de la familia que vienen primero y después viene el resto de la familia.”

Reflection

Agua Viva insists on the immediate conversion of church visitors. The majority of “convertees” are non-practicing Catholics, but there is a significant number of people who come from other evangelical churches, especially Pentecostal churches. The acceptance of religious mobility from Agua Viva to other churches stands in contrast to the Pentecostals, who do not accept mobility from their church to other churches as interviews with official leaders, such as the national council, show. All the AD officials vehemently denied the fact that their members move towards Neopentecostal churches²¹. However, they do admit that Pentecostals move towards Neopentecostal churches but only from the “lesser developed churches”. This was empirically disproved by the interviews. Agua Viva proves to play a special role in terms of mobility since it is often the first church of the mega-church group where people come to from Pentecostal or Evangelical churches. As Chesnut mentioned, people tend to look for something similar to their former church as well as new attention getting elements. The similarity Agua Viva has to Pentecostal churches explains its attraction for “movees”. Agua Viva is “conservative” if not in many ways “Pentecostal”, in its style and speech. This attracts the lower classes and creates an atmosphere where people from Pentecostal and mainline evangelicals feel at home and on the other hand, experience something new. I would say Agua Viva is a kind of bridge between mainline Evangelical churches and Neopentecostal churches. The comparative groups of investigation in AD and MMM show the clear tendency of members to move to Agua Viva. The Agua Viva interviews confirm this and shed light on the fact that the founders came from the Catholic Church, whereas the newer converted members usually come from Evangelical churches. Agua Viva interviewees freely and openly admitted that many people tend to move to other “charismatic churches”, that is Neopentecostal mega-churches. Different interviewees name basically the same church groups - UNICEP mega-churches that have similar religious convictions and practices, but stage their services in a more modern way and are located in upscale areas in Lima.

²¹ “Para nosotros no es problema, porque cuando hay un buen desarrollo en una iglesia es difícil que se vayan a otro sitio. Pero las iglesias Neopenteostales que han salido en los últimos años, ellos han jalado mucha gente de pentecostales independientes.... Un porcentaje muy alto. Ellos doctrinalmente no son fuertes.” Carlos Jara, national superintendent AD as well as Limas superintendent Eliseo de la Cruz, AD.

The three groups of interviewees showed a general acceptance of the mobility and their answers were congruent. Members deliberately mentioned that their cells consist of members who come from Evangelical and Pentecostal churches and “some” came from Catholic Church (1/m/2).

4.4.1.3 Preferences, motivation and priorities

In terms of religious priorities, Lazo repeats the doctrine that we are sons and daughters of the heavenly king and therefore we deserve to live as kings. She describes her life after death, “I expect when I go to heaven, there I will have a home; there I will walk through golden streets, listen the kingdom of God is coming now...”²² She makes no secret of her materialist emphasis of the prosperity she believes exist in heaven. Apart from the product of prosperity theology, Lazo admits that she used her political activity and connections, to market, promote her church and make it popular.

Local pastors

The local pastors and members mention events of mass evangelism and the discipleship courses as important factors of attraction for new members, in addition to the music and sermons. They believe that the world and worldly possessions “contaminate” believers if they don’t have the “spiritual protection” offered by the church. This belief reveals a rather Pentecostal worldview.

Members

When asked about what attracted the believers to Agua Viva and motivated them to participate as religious actors, interviewees typically gave “pious answers”. A typical answer to the question was “because God wanted me here” (1/f/5), “el amor de Cristo” (1/m/2), “The presence of the Holy Spirit” (1/m/1). Other answers were “It was how the

²² “Espero cuando vaya al cielo, ahí voy a tener la mansión, ahí voy a andar por calles de oro, oye, el traer el reino de dios es ahora...”. Mirtha Lazo.

pastor (of Agua Viva) presented the word of God that impacted me tremendously.”²³ One interviewee said that he was excited to see how it was possible to “live the Bible”. “...Everything that was in the Bible was actually possible to live”.²⁴ The interviewee stated that one of the things that he liked about the church was the worship and seeing people dance and jump as part of it. The way of “preaching” was a quite common answer given by the interviewees (1/f/3; 1/f/5), the music and band were also often mentioned by many interviewees (1/f/6; 1/f/5; 1/m/4). Many interviewees stated that the principal Pr. Mirtha played an important factor in their decision to participate (1/m/2; 1/f/5; 1/f/6). Nobody mentioned prosperity as factor to participate nor were “new friends or social networks” mentioned. Since the sermons and prayers in Agua Viva are centered on prosperity theology, it seems strange that interviewees deny it as “principle doctrine” (1/m/1). Only one of the interviewees, who was 20 years old, stated “God filled me with grace and prosperity” (1/m/4). Some interviewees protested the notion that prosperity and wealth could be a major elements in Agua Viva (1/f/3; 1/f/5), which stands in contrast to the comments made by Lazo in this respect.

Reflection

This section shows differences in the groups of interviewees. The doctrine of principal “product” prosperity theology clearly pointed out by the principal pastor, is denied by local pastors and members, who avoid mentioning prosperity, even though it is a major theme of services (1/m/1; 1/P/1). In my opinion, this is because they want to give a religious based answer which cloaks their true feelings.

In addition, the researcher has to keep in mind that people tend to use code-words. Talking about “blessings” in general includes all life dimensions, including finances, professional success, relationships etc. The marketing factor of involvement in politics, mentioned by Lazo, is also denied by local pastors and members as being important. I suspect that this is partly because it sounds impious to mention such worldly things as a motivation to join the church, but the personal affection members have for their principal pastor’s wife, affirms that her fame played a role in their motivation to join her

²³ “...lo que sí me impactó tremendamente fue la forma como el pastor de aquel entonces presentaba la palabra de Dios” 1/m/1.

²⁴ “...todo lo que había en la Biblia era factible poder vivirla.” 1/m/1.

church, even though this was not mentioned specifically by interviewees. In contrast the focus on “changing Peru” has been mentioned as priority by various interviewees, but it seems not to be connected to political activity. Instead this is seen as a result achieved through a conversion of the masses. The doctrinal priorities mentioned on the church’s webpage, are not mentioned by the members, nor by local pastors.

4.4.1.4 Integration and social mobility

The question of how the church integrates its members and to what extent it influences the different life dimensions of the religious actors was partly expressed previously when interviewees were asked about the reasons for leaving Agua Viva for another mega-church. The interviewees pointed out that Agua Viva requires members to make a huge time commitment, which some members of the church could not make, and consequently they left the church.

Mirtha Lazo

For Lazo, social mobility is an important aspect of the church especially in the lower classes, where she says many have gained upward social mobility through the membership in Agua Viva. She says, “We need to work in order that our people get to another level”. Upward social change is an explicit objective. Lazo states that “...first I started to take the people to education, to finish studies. There were people who had studied one or two years and stopped. I said to them - no, you are a leader; you have to give a testimony. What testimony of persistence are you giving? What testimony can you give to the people, that there is a great God, a God of miracles if you haven’t have finished your studies.” She adds, “...therefore we insist the people and all of our pastors finish their studies.” As a result, some finished secondary school and all of them are taking courses through the University San Pedro de Chimbote to complete their university education. This has positive results, because their studies, makes them feel

better about themselves.”²⁵ Agua Viva has an agreement with the university mentioned to give members access to a university education. This aspect of educational activity by a religious community seems very interesting to me.

The passionate tone of her speech reflected Lazo’s protagonist role in the church. She refers to the congregation as “them” - “I started to take them so we take the people... we put them...” as if they were her children. This corresponds to the way the religious actors perceive her. “Pastor Mirtha is very important, she is like a mama.” (1/m/2) She mentions that the church fulfills a task of ensuring the “children” receive an education, which is usually a responsibility of parents. When I expressed this to Lazo and asked if it could be connected to the pyramidal structure of Agua Viva, she explained that the behavior pattern has nothing to do with the hierarchical system. According to her, it is rather typical for the Peruvian lower class. She commented, “I think it is particular characteristic of the Peruvian culture that they don’t make their own decisions”.²⁶ She continues by telling me about how hard she has been working to train “them” that they don’t have to ask their leaders for permission. “It’s typical for Latinos, especially in lower classes. It does not come from the church, it comes from home, and it is our culture.”²⁷ Through this comment, she seems to defend her church structure. Lazo, as well as local pastors and members, pointed out the cultural deficit that needs be overcome as well. In her explanations she does not identify herself with the “Peruvians”, “Latinos” and the “culture”.

Local pastors

²⁵ “...primero comencé de llevando a la gente a que se eduque, a que termine sus estudios, había gente que había estudiado hecho un añito dos añitos que y que decía no, tú eres líder, tú tienes que dar testimonio; porque ¿qué testimonio das tú de perseverancia? ¿Qué testimonio le puedes decir a la gente hay un Dios grande un Dios de milagro? Cuando tú, no has terminado tus estudios, entonces llevamos a la gente y todos nuestros pastores terminaron sus estudios, unos terminaron la secundaria a todos los metimos a que sigan cursos, hicimos con la Universidad San Pedro de Chimbote y todos tienen ahora diploma de la Universidad pero hicimos que la gente tenga otro nivel, porque la gente ya teniendo un cartón se siente diferente, cosa que nosotros lo obtuvimos por nuestros padres.” Mirtha Lazo.

²⁶ “Creo que es propio de la cultura del Peruano que no tiene sus decisiones.” Mirtha Lazo.

²⁷ “...es típico de todo latino, justamente clase C, D...esto no viene de la iglesia, viene del hogar, esto es cultura... puedes ir a otra iglesia y te van a decir no, yo no, prefiero no contestar...” Mirtha Lazo.

The description of members by the local pastors corresponds to the description of the social origins of members given by Lazo. The church seems to give them value as people - “The people feel valuable in the church, while in the world they feel abused and rejected. Therefore they need to feel valuable and able to do anything for good.”²⁸

In terms of practical integration, every member is expected to create a cell and participate in discipleship courses in order to be prepared to lead a cell. Members of cells all attend the Sunday service, so with their regular cell meetings, members are involved in church related activities four to five days a week and this and gives them little time for other activities. The expectations of the church are no doubt a significant reason why members need to learn to structure their lives.

Members

The members also talk about the system of cells that they are integrated in. The leader of a cell, calls those he leads his sheep and he gives them advice about how they should live, structure their day, work, etc. This gave me the impression that “coaching” involved all different aspects of life, which is supported by the response “I am not authorized”, which was often given by members as well as local pastors when they wanted to avoid responding to a question I asked of them. Some members answered the question, “How many days of the week are occupied by the church?”, with “every day, I work and study, after getting up I pray, at lunchtime I am preaching, when studying and at home as well and in the church we speak about God.”²⁹ Other interviewees including 1/m/2 stated that he spends four days a week involved in church activities, not including the time he spends studying and working in church (1/m/4; 1/f/5; 1/f/6; 1/f/3). The strong integration in the church that occupies almost all their free time, implies that members socialize exclusively with only other members of the church. The full church schedule and the necessity to give testimony or “preach” in every social environment facilitate leaving bad habits such as smoking behind them. In the words of religious actors, “The Lord started to clean my life more”³⁰ “(The presence of the Holy

²⁸ “...la gente se sienta valorada en la iglesia mientras en el mundo se siente maltratada y rechazada, entonces tiene que sentir que vale y sentirse capaz de hacer cualquier cosa para bien...” 1/P/1.

²⁹ “Yo trabajo y estudio, desde que me levanto estoy orando, en el trabajo a la hora de refrigerio predico en el estudio también, en la casa también les predico y en la iglesia hablamos de Dios” 1/m/2.

³⁰ “... el Señor comenzó a limpiar más mi vida...” 1/m/1.

spirit)...transformed my way of thinking in order to have the thoughts of the Lord.”³¹ “I almost give all my life (to the church).”³² One interviewee, that had been recently converted, stated he needed to be in the church all the time and as a result...the rhythm of my life changed completely. Everything changed completely.”³³ The interviewee indirectly points out how his life gained structure and order, in a holistic way. In social terms the church, helps to structure the all aspects of members’ lives and forces them to turn away from habits such as drinking alcohol which also allows them to save money which can then be tithed. The full timetable of church involvement does not leave room for returning to “old friends” and living habits, but enforces a new lifestyle, which enforces social progress.

When asked about training and education that the church offers every interviewee pointed out the discipleship courses to receive religious indoctrination but none of the religious actors the mentioned the university. This might serve as evidence of a disconnection between the official voice of the founders and that of the members. I’d like to add that the local pastors also didn’t speak about the university education the believers receive with the help of the church.

An element of integration is the so-called “encuentro” (encounter) which is camp that takes place on a weekend. This event plays an important role in lives of believers who are prepared in four classes to get “motivated” to attend the encounter. The new believer is “ministered” in a group as well as in a personal way. No one in Agua Viva told me about his particular event. “It is very special and changed my life.” (1/f/5) It culminates in a baptism (1/m/1), which signifies that the person being baptized has made the decision to belong to the mega-church on the basis of an emotionally loaded weekend of community and personal ministry.

Reflection

³¹ “...transformó mi pensamiento, para tener los pensamientos del Señor.” 1/m/1; 1/f/5; 1/f/3.

³² “...yo casi le doy toda mi vida.” 1/m/1.

³³ El impacto de Dios en mi vida fue realmente espectacular, cambié mi vida totalmente, el ritmo de mi vida cambió totalmente todo.” 1/m/1.

The members interviewed described their former lives as evil, empty, dirty, chaotic etc. “I left drugs, alcohol, and the libidinous life behind.”³⁴ According to members, the church gave them a new life and is the church stands in contrast to the “world”, according to their dualistic worldview. The integration into the church makes them reject their former lifestyle. The reality mentioned by the local pastors that everybody in Agua Viva comes from a background of a life of problems seems to be confirmed by the members when they explain their integration using the backdrop of how they lived before joining the church.

This perception by the members (and the pastors) shows a strong dependency on the church. Comparing the principal pastor to a mother, affirms this because church members indirectly characterize themselves as “immature children” who without the guidance of the spiritual leader, are unable to act in an adequate and ethically correct way. This has been mentioned literally as a consequence of low self-esteem and family problems (1/m/2). The rejection, exclusion and abuse are particularly real for the lower class Limeneans similar to the Lalive d'Épinay's description of Pentecostals who suffered similarly. This manner of integration reveals a lot about the social reality of the religious actors and their self-perception after being integrated into the church, having fully accepted the idea that only in and through the church they are valuable. The topic of clientelism is closely connected to the dependency created by the church.

The internal dependency of the integration combined with the organizational structure of the church, seems to be one explanation of why members cannot express themselves freely. When talking about integration and how the church influences life dimensions 1/m/1 gave a very interesting testimony that is worth mentioning. 1/m/1 was a policeman before converting. In Peru, the police are characterized by corruption, as are most public institutions, now he works in Agua Viva, doing some chauffeur jobs besides teaching courses, because he quit the police force, although, according to him, he had a brilliant reputation and says, “I would have been colonel or general, I would earn more. A colonel receives about 5000 to 6000 soles and a general 6000-7000 soles. But I did not get there... instead I receive a payment of love for the work I do. I am

³⁴ “Yo salí de las drogas, del alcohol, de la vida libidinosa.”1/m/2.

happy about it. Everything occurs because of the Lord.”³⁵ He mentions that he does not know how, but he always manages to make ends meet. This particular case shows that if we measure social mobility using income, downward social mobility can actually occur. Nevertheless, the religious actor freed himself from corruption and gives a testimony in which he affirms his decision to join the church, even though his income actually dropped because of this. The present investigation does not measure social mobility in the common system from A to E class on the base of income, but rather uses the more flexible variable of lifestyle and more specifically “changes in lifestyle”. The example of Agua Viva also urges the investigator to be careful about drawing conclusions about actual upward social mobility by the interviewees. In the case of the ex-policeman, his new Christian perspective resulted in his decision of to quit his job because of its associated corruption, in order to accept an honest job with the church, albeit at a lower income.

On the symbolic level, religious actors accustomed to a structured lifestyle, socialize with other believers many times of the week. These new social networks help to drive them away from old living habits and falling back to old bad habits, even if they are not consciously aware of this. The value of the university education for members mentioned by Lazo, the church’s official voice, must be questioned since none of the members or local pastors mentioned it as a benefit of belonging to the church. But they did mention the discipleship courses and religious education they received.

One must question, whether their commitments to the church, actually leaves enough time for the members to pursue their education, because it would require evening classes to finish secondary school or a university career. It does not seem clear to me how those courses could be completed given the time commitments which often overwhelm members, and actually results in many leaving the church. Integrative forces put an emphasis on conversion and the so called “encounters”, which seem to obstruct the formation of independent thought in a highly organized structure. This is analyzed in the next section.

³⁵ “Hoy hubiera sido coronel o general, hubiera ganado más, un coronel gana alrededor de 5 mil a 6 mil soles, un general gana alrededor de 7 mil a 8 mil soles. Pero no llegue,... recibo una ofrenda de amor por el trabajo que realizo...yo estoy muy feliz de eso...todo ocurre por un propósito del Señor.” 1/m/1.

4.4.1.5 Organizational structure and promotion of social mobility

The former perspectives have shown a strong hierarchical structure of the church. Its pyramid like system has to be further described at this point in an effort to better understand the structure of the church.

All members belong to cells and also serve as leaders of other cells. When someone converts, he or she becomes part of a cell - a small home study group of approximately seven people. For a time, Agua Viva based cells on the principle of G12 that is organized in the apostolic way of having exactly 12 people in every cell.

Mirtha Lazo

The principal leader and the local pastors state that the church sustains itself by tithes and offerings of its members.³⁶ Given the church's pyramid like structure, every member becomes a multiplier of members as a sales representative and fundraiser at the same time but without any pay or commission. Only most effective "men fishers" get paid for fundraising. Consequently, the pastors are paid by the believers and earn, according to Lazo, about 4000-5000 Peruvian soles per month. "We want that each pastor has his car and house."³⁷ She did not state this specifically, but it seems logical according to her prosperity theology that the pastors need to be role models for. To become a pastor, they have to go through the leader school which means completing all the courses of discipleship. Since one course takes about a semester, one can assume that all four courses can be completed in about two years. She points out that the Agua Viva is distinct to other churches in that the process of becoming a pastor requires that candidates not only have to complete the curriculum, they also need to "bear fruit". These "fruits" take the form of new members and to be employed as pastor, a pastor needs to recruit at least 2000 new members. Additionally, the pastor must prove that he shows enough "commitment" to the church in "attitudes and service". Lazo states that, "We have given classes for 15 years, working with everybody and afterwards God

³⁶ Mirtha Lazo; 1/m/2; 1/P/1.

³⁷ "...queremos que tenga su carro, que tenga su casa." Mirtha Lazo.

allowed us to be pastors.”³⁸ She states that Agua Viva has 40 pastors counting their wives. On the other hand, even though Lazo is the principal pastor of the church, she points out the role of other pastors’ wives when she says, “She (the wife of a pastor) does not exercise (as pastor) because she is merely a bouquet, she is help or decoration.”³⁹

Local pastors

According to a local pastor, Agua Viva has about 6000 cells with 5000 leaders and about 45.000-50.000 registered members. The statistics also mention 1000-1500 “convertees” join the church every week, of which about 20% participate in cells while the rest go to Sunday service without further participation. In order to familiarize themselves with the doctrine of the church, new members are trained in courses of discipleship, which takes place once a week. The courses are divided into four levels and are taken in a certain order. After having finished the courses, one usually becomes leader of a cell being able to preach and teach the doctrine and guide the new members. Each pastor has various cells under his authority and the cells of a particular pastor are called a school. On becoming a pastor, Lazo had this to say, “It’s not only the fruit in the academically part, but of the heart and commitment because some pastors are able to bring many new visitors. “...it depends on the individual pastor’s potential” (1/P/2).

In contrast to Lazo’s statements regarding the role of pastors’ wives, the local pastors point out, that the ceremony that anoints them as pastors is the equivalent to the ordination in mainstream churches which includes the wives of the pastors in which both are named pastors (1/P/1). Although they do not make a distinction between the two on an institutional level, only male pastors are counted in the official count of 20 pastors (compared to the figure of 40 given by Lazo), which does not include their wives.

Local pastors told me that Agua Viva forms part of UNICEP, which is not true and raises questions about the level of communication and participation that exists in the decision making process of the church. Insightful quotes about leadership roles include

³⁸ “Servimos en la iglesia 15 años dando clases, trabajando con todo y después Dios nos permitió al pastoreado.” Mirtha Lazo.

³⁹ “no ejerce tampoco porque es solamente un florero en la iglesia, es de apoyo o de decoración...” Mirtha Lazo

what one pastor said about his level of involvement in the decision making process, “It’s not at the level I would like.”⁴⁰ “Our church is directed by the head which is the pastor and he dictates the norms that characterize Agua Viva.”⁴¹

Members

The system of cells is strictly ordered and follows a hierarchical pattern. The leader is dedicated to the growth of the cell. One interviewee told me that she is located in rank 144 of the school of Pastor X (1/f/3). “I am want to know how you grow, how you lead a cell, who is better, why is (a cell) declining”⁴² The pressure put on leaders to recruit new members seems to be very high and is named as a main reason why members leave the church. This indicates that the sense of competition among members exists, and the “losers” in this competition leave the church.

All the members interviewed affirmed that they are expected to tithe the 10% of their income. Since the tithe is collected in the cell and not in the service, where it would be anonymous, the way of collecting tithes serves as mechanism of measure and control.

In terms of women pastors some stated that Agua Viva has female pastors while others stated that there are no feminine pastors in Agua Viva apart from Mirtha Lazo (1/f/3; 1/f/6).

Indication of the church’s authoritarian structure is provided by the often-repeated answer given not only by members, but also by local pastors: “The answer can only come from the pastor.”⁴³ “I am not authorized.”⁴⁴

Reflection

⁴⁰ “No está en nivel del que quiere.” 1/m/1.

⁴¹ “Nuestra iglesia está dirigida por la cabeza que es el pastor y es él quien dicta las normas que conciernen Agua Viva.” 1/P/2.

⁴² “...estoy mirando como creces, como vas, como llevas tu célula,...quien está mejor, por qué has bajado, que tienes...” 1/m/1.

⁴³ “Esa respuesta se la puede dar el pastor.” 1/P/1; 1/P/2.

⁴⁴ “No estoy autorizado.” 1/P/2; 1/f/5; 1/f/6.

The way in which members gain to prosper within the church through becoming pastor raises questions about the organizational structure of the church. Answers about how members can become pastors are cloaked by references to “godly decisions”. A future pastor needs to bear “fruit” of 2000 tithing new members before earning his own salary from the church. Thereby the organizational structure demonstrates how the “enterprise” gains material prosperity through the pressure to evangelize, which cannot be separated from fundraising since every new member is urged to tithe. Since the different groups affirmed that most members tithe, the church functions in a self-sustainable manner.

The church has five branches and twenty male pastors. Lazo says there are about 40 active pastors including the wives of the pastors, while the local pastors mention 30 including their wives. Some members stated that there are no female pastors in Agua Viva apart from Pastor Mirtha. The incongruence in numbers and the vague terminology used, implies the level of information local pastors and members have differs. Charismatic female personalities such as Mirtha Lazo seem to out shine their husbands as “stars” in the church due in their rhetorical brilliance and the passive personalities of their male counterparts.

The different information received from local pastors in terms of numbers of pastors and the membership in UNICEP indicates the level and quality of information that local pastors have, proves they are ignorant about some key characteristics of the church.

Participation in the upper echelons of the decision making process may be restricted by nepotism. Agua Viva seems to be a family dominated hierarchical church with an authoritarian order and structure that guarantees prosperity for the “inner family” of the church, which could lead one to question whether the structure exploits its members. In order to work, such a church needs an efficient ideology that “transforms the way of thinking” of the believers as a basis of the organizational structure. It seems to work using religious unity, “God given” law and a church order in which the flock plays their part because they are “being guided by the thoughts of the Lord” as 1/m/1 describes in an interview. The head of the church announces the “God given” law and makes decisions as the church’s highest authority and the seat of power in the decision making process. The members and lower rank (local) pastors shed light on the authoritarian

organization of the church by giving answers that clearly reveal their lack of power. Furthermore, the lack of transparency is shown by the local pastors as well as members, when they refuse to answer certain questions because they are not “authorized” to do so by the authority of the principal pastors.

4.4.2 Emmanuel

Emmanuel claims to have about 10.000 members including its branches in other Peruvian cities and the members of the pastoral team. The 12 member pastoral team is led by principal pastor who refused to give me an interview and instead referred me to his secretary who told me that another pastor from the pastoral team could give all the information I needed. The founder and ex- principal pastor Humberto Lay was interviewed as member of congress in his office.

Emmanuel’s interviewees were very friendly and the interviews tended to be long, since members tended to share information about their family affairs and life in order to give a testimony as Christians. Although to a lesser extent than in Agua Viva, the interviews seemed to be a form of evangelizing. It usually was a comfortable atmosphere and the interviewees gave me the impression that they had been taught to be friendly, smiling Christians who have overcome their problems through faith and are happy to testify to this. The impressions gained from the interviews support the observations of the service as being very moderate, ordered in all respects.

4.4.2.1 Social backgrounds and Lifestyles

Humberto Lay

As a Peruvian with Asian ethnicity, Humberto Lay is not at first easily distinguishable from the church’s members, who come from different ethnical backgrounds, as he affirms. His discourse does not blend into the young moderate style of his church. His traditional jacket and tie suggest that he is more conservative than Emmanuel’s other

groups as the following sections will reveal. However, it needs to be taken into account that since we met him in congress, the encounter had another setting than that of the church environment.

Local pastors and Members

The profile of the local pastors and members is identical, since they belong to the Neolimeneans and have a similar migratory background. They tend to be quite young, on average of 35-50 years of age. All interviewees had a provincial family background whose parents are lower middle class immigrants from the provinces having small microenterprises (2/m/1; 2/f/6), housewives (2/m/1; 2/f/2; 2/f/4), secretaries (2/m/3), or state teachers (2/P/1; 2/m/5). The majority of interviewees belong to the second and third generation of Neolimeneans and tend to study at a university or work as young professionals as administrators (2/m/1; 2/f/6), engineers (2/f/2; 2/m/5), bank employees (2/m/3), or psychologists (2/f/4). Even though most of them still live in their parents' house in the outskirts (which is common in Peru for people until they marry) most of them point out that they come from dysfunctional families (2/m/3; 2/f/4; 2/f/2; 2/m/1; 2/P/1). In all cases, the family situation is mentioned as something they had to cope with and joining the church helped them in this regard. Only one young man mentioned the typical social problems of lower classes. "I started to drink at the age of nine and to smoke at eleven years and I went to prostitutes."⁴⁵

It is interesting to note that although typically all family members attend church, in some cases, parents attend Pentecostal churches while their children attend Emmanuel. A young interviewee explains that his family lives in San Juan de Lurigancho (a cono east district). He studies engineering in a centrally located university. "She (my mother) attends an AD church near my house."⁴⁶ If he isn't studying, he spends his free time in the Emmanuel church in the financial district of San Isidro. Even though both generations live in the outskirts of Lima, the mother with a rather conservative lifestyle prefers the AD local church near home, while her son spends his days out of his home

⁴⁵ "...empecé a tomar a los nueve años y a fumar a los once años e iba a prostíbulos y lugares de ambiente..." 2/m/3.

⁴⁶ "Ella participa en la iglesia que está cerca a mi casa de la Asamblea de Dios." 2/m/5; 2/m/1, 2/f/6.

in the distant financial center of the city where he spends his time in Emmanuel, which is in a very real way his home away from home. He points out that the majority of his friends from university come from similar social backgrounds. In the case of 2/m/1 the mother likewise participates in the almost exclusively low class church MMM, which he went to as a child. The son's world as administrator in Miraflores differs from the social reality of his mother similarly to 2/m/5. He mentions that MMM seemed too rigid and conservative in their practice, and at another point, he states that MMM has daily services as only manner of involvement for lay people. The manner of participation differs according to social and educational dimensions. While the humble and poorly educated MMM members participate passively as audience members in church services, the Emmanuel members participate as protagonists and leaders in their cells. 2/m/1 This is a clear distinction between these two churches.

2/m/1 defines Emmanuel in comparison to the churches he has come to know: MMM is too rigid and prescribed". On the other hand, he accuses CDV of having "ciertos excesos – certain excesses" and of being too liberal.

Reflection

The description of Emmanuel as a center liberal, non-conservative church seems to describe it best. In the scheme of Arellano the "progressive" lifestyle, which defines members who achieve actual social upward mobility, can be used to adequately describe the lifestyles of Emmanuel's members, especially that of its young adult members.

The divergent religious homes of the parent's generation compared to those of their sons and daughters can partly be explained by the modern esthetic-style as well through different tastes in music etc. As a spectacular hyper-modern church, Emmanuel attracts members from the younger generations. The interviews give one the impression that this also has to do with social comfort. The young generation is preparing to belong (or already belongs) to a higher social class than their parents and it seems to be accepted as fact, that they belong to a religious community that differs from the church of their parents as well. Therefore one significant finding of the interviews is the connection

between lifestyle and religious taste. Since the lifestyle of the young generation differs considerably from that of their parents, so does their “religious taste”. The issue of dysfunctional families will have to be combined with religious priorities in order to demonstrate how religious priorities respond to the particular social needs of religious actors.

4.4.2.2 Religious background and mobility

Humberto Lay

Lay was as pastor in the Alianza Cristiana and was baptized in AD; therefore one would expect that at least some former members of these churches followed him to his present church, Emmanuel. Lay states that Emmanuel attracts mostly Catholics, because there is no interest in attracting people from other Christian churches.

Local pastor and Members

In terms of mobility, local pastors and members do not differ significantly and therefore they shall be examined together.

An explanation for why members come to Emmanuel is its spectacular service. ”We use modern media”.⁴⁷ Apart from Agua Viva (2/f/2), many members seem to come from the evangelical church Alianza Cristiana, which is the original church of Humberto Lay (2/m/1).

When asked about to which churches ex-Emmanuel members move to, a frequent answer is CDV (2/m/3; 2/f/6), Potential church (2/f/2) and Casa del Padre (2/f/4). Some younger interviewees already had previous contact with CDV through an interchange in courses (2/m/3) or through friends that have gone there or because they had visited the

⁴⁷ “Usamos los medios de la modernidad” 2/f/2.

church at the invitation of ex-Emmanuel members. It is common among evangelicals to visit each other's churches in order to experience different evangelical environments.

As factors of motivation for a membership in Emmanuel, interviewees mentioned the light shows, youth meetings, games and the use of modern technology.⁴⁸ One young interviewee explained why he did not feel at home in CDV. "Technically they are better but they are more distant, they involve you in the church but they don't get involved with you. Here it's more personal."⁴⁹ This observation becomes relevant later when speaking about CDV, but here it is enough to state the unifying character of Emmanuel for people who are in the process of upward social mobility.

In terms of how people get to know the church, the number of members who join the church because of friends, is higher than in Agua Viva. Family ties also play a role. There are parents who bring their sons and daughters (2/f/4) and likewise the younger generation brings their parents to church (2/m/3). This perception shall be further investigated when comparing characteristics of church visits between Evangelicals in order to describe ways of mobility among them.

4.4.2.3 Preferences, priorities and motivation

In terms of products, the doctrine in Emmanuel seems more evangelical than Pentecostal and comparable with the Alianza Cristiana and Misionera. The discipleship course supports this. "In book one, they teach us about the characteristics of God, what is the Holy Spirit, the trinity, the authority of a Christian, they teach us how to pray, the steps of prayer and worship."⁵⁰ These characteristics have a similar priority in other evangelical churches. Pentecostal elements such as speaking in tongues, as promoted on Emmanuel's webpage, are actually given little attention. The church exhibits a moderate attitude so that new members do not feel uncomfortable (2/m/5).

⁴⁸ "Sus reuniones de jóvenes son estupendas, hay luces, tienen juegos, tienen bastante desarrollo tecnológico." 2/m/5.

⁴⁹ "En lo tecnológico son mejores pero son más distantes, ellos te involucran en la iglesia pero no se involucran contigo. Aquí es más personal." 2/m/5.

⁵⁰ "En el libro uno nos enseñan sobre las características que tiene Dios, qué es el espíritu Santo, la Trinidad. La autoridad de un cristiano, nos enseñan a orar, los pasos de la oración, de la alabanza." 2/m/5.

Humberto Lay

When asked whether he considers Emmanuel a “postmodern church”, Lay criticized his own church as being “too light and to adapt to postmodernism”. He goes on to say, “Postmodernism has invaded the church, for example in the death of ideals. The man of today does not think of the future and that has affected eschatology. The churches do not speak any more about the second coming of Christ. Today they speak of daily life and narcissism is reflected in prosperity theology.”⁵¹ His disdain Lay has for postmodernism becomes clear when he defines the term “...an optimist man, the heyday of sentiments, narcissism, egotism, the admiration of success, the crisis of ethics where everybody has his own truth.”⁵² When asked about his priorities and the basic message of the church he states it is to prepare for the second coming of Christ. He does not believe his public presence is a marketing factor for the church, but it is a way he can transform society in a practical way on the basis of his faith.

Local pastors

The local pastors affirm Lay’s perception of postmodernism by defending themselves for the marketing they use. It’s merely employed in order to attract the masses that need to hear the message in a way they feel attracted and understand it. A polarization of the “world” and “Christian life” is evident. Life situations before and after becoming a Christian are mentioned as priority of participation in the church, while the aesthetic marketing media seem to be something one has to apologize for, because it is seen rather “worldly”. High tech media, as the observations showed, forms an important part of Emmanuel.

⁵¹ “El postmodernismo se ha infiltrado en la iglesia. Por ejemplo la muerte de los ideales, el hombre de hoy no piensa en el futuro y esto ha afectado en lo escatológico. Las iglesias ya no hablan de la segunda vinda de Cristo. Hoy en día se habla de la vida diaria, el narcicismo que se refleja en la teología de prosperidad.” Humberto Lay.

⁵² “...hombre optimista, el auge de los sentimientos,...narcicismo, egotismo, la admiración y el éxito, la crisis de ética...” Humberto Lay.

Another priority of Emmanuel's teachings mentioned by one local pastor is the discipleship of the nation (2/P/1; 2/m/3). "Our task is to disciple the nation and therefore we use the strategy of our vision through service...our members are militant because they get involved fast in the work. They have seen the power of God transforming their lives and they don't want to keep it for them, but want to share it" He does not mention the second coming of Christ. In contrary he says theological basis of work is "to prosper". Even though he points out the discipleship of the nation he does not mention Lay's public activity and fame as a marketing factor.

Members

It surprised me how a young and new member verbally expressed my impressions of the church. He is 18 years old and had attended Emmanuel for about a year. "In the case of youngsters, we try to attract them through marketing because we see the church as an enterprise, therefore we have various areas" (2/m/5). Older and longer participating members described the usage of high tech media differently. "Even though we utilize elements and instruments, we have our foundation in the word. It's an excuse; a medium because from outside the eyes always drive one, if someone sees something obsolete it won't call the attention. For this first sight we use a lot of modernity but once you are in, what is fundamental is the word."⁵³ The interviewee seems to downplay the importance of high tech media as if it was something to be sorry for, but on the other hand, is necessary to attract postmodern people from the "world".

The courses of matrimony, manhood and womanhood seem to call the attention of members and form an important product of the church mentioned by them (2/m/3; 2/m/5). The courses of how to establish an enterprise were not mentioned. Religious products were a priority for the members. The church's emphasis on discipleship urges them to read and understand the Bible themselves (2/f/4). A typical evangelical topic mentioned as being a priority is ones relationship with God (2/f/4). The relationship is in different interviews qualified through the personality of the transcendent father.

⁵³ "Si bien utilizamos elementos e instrumentos tenemos nuestro fundamento en la palabra...Es un pretexto, un medio porque de afuera siempre se va a dejar llevar por los ojos y si ve algo muy atrasado no le va a llamar la atención por eso primera vista usamos mucha modernidad pero una vez dentro...lo que es fundamental es la palabra." 2/f/2.

2/m/3 mentions the importance of the father, he never had. The emphasis of the heavenly father has to be seen on the social background and necessity of people who grew up in dysfunctional families, often without a father present. “Even if your father and mother abandon you, alone, he (God) never will.”⁵⁴ The deity stands contrary to the parental experience the believers have experienced and responds to their desire to be part of a functional family. “2/f/4 states: “The fact that I have accepted Christ in my heart gave me security because I had a father, a father that I was missing and all the walls that I had in my heart so that I wouldn’t be hurt, God broke and now I have security in him and trust in him and have friends in whom I can trust, that I could do things... that he has control of my life.”⁵⁵ The interviewee states that the priority of the “product” that she got is the security she experienced from the godly control of her life. “I was insecure and God has changed my life, God is the one that has control of my life and not me. This is a progress because it is a constant fight but I have a new life.”⁵⁶ The control is mentioned in a context of polarization by 2/P/1: “The work of inner control of the powers to face life.”⁵⁷ Here we find some elements of prosperity theology, God as the one that gives power and control to face life in the world.

The next chapter will further explore integration, because the focus in Emmanuel’s products is a “transformation” of the religious actor (2/m/3). In contrast to the taxi drivers, who recognize Lay when they hear the name of his church, none of the members actually mentioned Lay and his political role for Emmanuel. For them, public affairs seem to have nothing to do with the church.

Reflection

A common element of all the different groups is that they somehow apologize for the marketing strategies of the mega churches, even though they admit that those elements

⁵⁴ “Aun cuando tu padre y tu madre te dejares él nunca me va a dejar”. 2/m/3.

⁵⁵ “El hecho de haber aceptado a Cristo en mi corazón me dio la seguridad de tener un padre, el padre que me hacía falta, y todos los muros que tenía en mi corazón para no ser dañada Dios derrumbó y ahora tengo seguridad en Él y que podía confiar en Él y tener amigos en los cuales puedo confiar, que podía hacer las cosas...que Él tenía control de mi vida.” 2/f/4.

⁵⁶ “Era insegura, ha cambiado Dios en mi vida, que Dios es el que tiene control de mi vida y no yo. Eso es progresivo porque eso es una lucha constante pero tengo una nueva vida.” 2/f/5.

⁵⁷ “...opus de control interno de las fuerzas para afrontar la vida”

attract people who are considering joining the church. How the church actually adapts its message to the social necessity of its clients is interesting. The transcendent father figure as a priority for the members seems to present a particular “product” for Emmanuel members, especially for those who come from dysfunctional families.

The priorities of the three groups differ completely even though the doctrine course seems to teach the common evangelical topics. The question of essence in religious convictions is difficult to answer, since not even the answer of the local pastor coincides to the priority of Lay - the second coming of Christ. Therefore, a doctrinal flexibility can be observed in Emmanuel.

4.4.2.4 Integration and social mobility

Humberto Lay

Lay states that integration into the church transforms the whole person and his/her worldview because of the education they get through the church as well as the new healthy networks that they belong to. He discredits prosperity theology. In terms of integration, social progress does not form a priority for him, but rather belongs to the new equivocations of “nowadays churches”. He never makes it completely clear if his harsh critique against churches includes Emmanuel, but his expressions imply a transformation of the priorities of Emmanuel that he openly dislikes. The different priorities between Lay and his pastors provide insight that a certain amount of ambiguity exists in Emmanuel’s church doctrine. This shall be reflected upon further on.

Local pastor

One local pastor talked about his own history and how the integration into the church changed his life and behavior. He comes from a dysfunctional family because his father left when he was a young boy. He describes that it was the faith of his mother and the radical conversions of all his brothers and sisters that made him attend the church while

in university. His social progress is similar to the biographies of many other members. He describes how he got access to good jobs not only because of his qualifications, but also because of his Christian commitment. As an engineer, he like his brothers and sisters, prospered in their professions. Prosperity for him seems to be a natural product of faith and integration into Emmanuel. “We deeply believe that the way our soul is prospering, our life could prosper as well, we might not necessarily pass from poor to rich, but we can for instance, manage our finances in a way that leads to a life in dignity.”⁵⁸ He demonstrates a distinction from other church practices and a moderate form of prosperity theology taught in Emmanuel. He talks about his counseling sessions and mentions that people come to his office to receive life coaching in order to progress socially. Thereby he affirms the fact that pastoral assistance is a form of coaching.

In terms of integration, clothing seems to play a role since the church seems to have developed a particular style. As the observations show, Emmanuel members dress rather modestly and a local pastor explains the “taboos” of the Emmanuel dress code. It is important to honor God with our clothes and not be too permissive in our appearance. It is not clear what he considers “too permissive”. At one point he vehemently announces his view on tattoos: “For God, tattoos are not appropriate.”⁵⁹ This is contrary to Potential church, whose principal pastor proudly displays a tattoo on his upper arm. He did not want to specify exactly what someone needs to wear when going to church, but he commented that it should not be anything out of the “ordinary”. Therefore the moderate and similar dress code of church members reveals the extent of the church’s influence in the lives of its members in all life dimensions.

Members

The positive comments of a young new member to Emmanuel 2/m/5 who has not fully integrated in the church, wore jeans and a light yellow hooded sweater to the interview, which set him apart from the other male interviewees who wore a tidy shirt, suit pants

⁵⁸ “Nosotros creemos mucho que la manera como prospera nuestro alma puede también prosperar nuestra vida, no necesariamente que pasamos de pobre a ricos pero si, por ejemplo manejar de manera correcta nuestra economía que nos permita vivir dignamente. No como la prosperidad que hoy día no tengo nada y mañana cinco autos. No, así no.” (2/P/1).

⁵⁹ “..a Dios no le agrada nada de tatuajes.” 2/P/1.

and jacket (2/P/1; 2/m/3; 2/m/1). The more integrated members dress similarly, as the observations showed. They also tend to speak in a way that reminds one of their shared tasks of evangelical Christians, to give testimony by putting God in every sentence and model the truths that they have committed to memory. As one example, local pastors as well as members repeated the words from the webpage: “Somos una iglesia sierva, bendicida, guiada y potenciada por el Espíritu Santo para extender el Evangelio al Perú y las naciones” (2/m/3; 2/P/1). 2/m/5 speaks literally of the importance Emmanuel puts on memorizing doctrine “memorizar textos”. Therefore studious and well-rehearsed answers were the typical response given by Emmanuel interviewees.

The schedule for members is more moderate than in Agua Viva. The age ministries take place two times a month as do the meetings of the cells. The weekly schedule provides many options for participation several times a week, but does not bind members to participate. Members with a lower class background demonstrate social progress by receiving a new home in the church. 2/m/5 differences his former life his new life after joining the church: “Coming to the church I gained new friends, a new vision, perspective a new social situation, I now work in a bank and finished my studies. To have a professional career, is one of the benefits that I have received from God, who has restored the value of my life” (2/m/3). He speaks openly about social networks (new friends) that he has made through the church. The social mobility he perceives compared to his former life without work and the progress of his life is measured in the professional career he has, which was enforced through the education and coaching he received in the church. 2/m/1 mentions the education he received through the church provided training. “There is counseling for micro-enterprises, talks for immobile sales agents... how to form enterprises...”⁶⁰ this coincides to the observations made in the services.

The interview with 2/m/5 reveals that many young people in the process of social progression find a home in another social sphere outside of the confines of their dwelling places. The church offers a space during the free time between the morning and evening classes of university. 2/m/1 mentions the easy access to courses in Emmanuel compared CDV. This therefore shows that Emmanuel values involvement

⁶⁰ “...hay asesorías para microempresas, charlas para agente inmobiliario, se hacen charlas para hacer empresas...” 2/m/1.

in different areas and its inclusive character means members seem to be well informed and are immediately included in serving, as the case of 2/m/5 shows.

Reflection

Lay's position towards prosperity and practices of "nowadays church" differs considerably from the local pastor's perspective and gives the impression of an elderly man who opposes any changes in "his church". He does not identify with the idea that the church has to change with the times. Other pastors at Emmanuel seem to have adapted to the teachings of prosperity theology in contrast to the founder's emphasis on and "the second coming of Christ". Emmanuel seems to represent a church with former Pentecostal profile which has been transformed into a Neopentecostal church similar to Agua Viva. Emmanuel offers courses and coaching through pastors to promote the upward social mobility of their members, which is seen through the church's emphasis on prosperity theology. Therefore, Emmanuel enforces social progress on a material and symbolic level. I get the impression that the mostly young members, who are in the process of social progress also find a new home in the church that supports a future reality that is very different from that they have experienced in their parents house's in the outskirts of Lima. This is particularly interesting because meeting at other places in the same the financial center of San Isidro, such as cafés, restaurants, sports clubs etc. would incur costs that are way too high for their economic condition and therefore would exclude them. The church offers a similar meeting place at no cost to this generation, and therefore is all inclusive. In contrast to the structure of geographical enclaves that exist in many Peruvian institutions, Emmanuel does not discriminate – it is a place where this generation can go to learn and grow personally. Furthermore, Emmanuel's location in an attractive district, that symbolizes wealth and prosperity, enforces the idea that they have progressed socially, which can be defined as "symbolic social progress". "What I liked about this place is the order of things."⁶¹ In saying this, the interviewee reveals that Emmanuel and its surroundings differ completely from the district where he lives. In addition, the church serves as an impetus for members to adapt their behavior to the lifestyle suggested by the surrounding area of the church.

⁶¹ "Lo que me gustó en este lugar es su forma ordenada de las cosas." 2/m/5.

4.4.2.5 Organizational structure

Humberto Lay

As the decision maker of the church, Lay has a clear opinion of the role of women in Emmanuel - “I always opposed calling the pastors wife “pastora”. The vocation is personal and I never wanted my wife to be called pastor... my problem is a matter of authority, although the roles are changing nowadays in work and in today’s society, I believe that the traditional role of women is the correct one.”⁶² The position of the local pastor on the topic of female pastors is different. He affirms the existence of female pastors in the church. The position of local pastors is more closely examined in the next section.

When asked about how Emmanuel is sustained, Lay states that members always tithe, since that is a commonly accepted evangelical and biblical practice.

Local pastors

Since the church is very large, the principal pastor cannot personally address every matter. His adjutants therefore give him basic personal information before he meets with a believer for a special event, such as a birth etc. When they do meet, the believer is surprised that the pastor so much about his/her life, even though they have never met before. This structure itself intends to enforce the pretension of some kind of magical power in the person of the pastor (2/P/1). Based on his understanding of the church and its nets (equivalent to cells) the local pastor is convinced that members’ tithes sustain the church.

Members

⁶² “En cuanto a llamar a la pastora a la esposa del pastor yo siempre me he opuesto a eso, el llamado es personal y nunca quise que llamen pastora a mi esposa, ella es esposa del pastor...mi problema es con el tema de la autoridad y los roles que están cambiando mucho hoy en día por cuestiones laborales y la sociedad de hoy...Yo creo que el rol tradicional de la mujer es el correcto.” Humberto Lay.

I interviewed the wife of the youth pastor, who called herself pastor. She told me that she had given up her professional career as engineer in order to become a pastor. Being asked if she is ordained she shirked from the question “ejercemos- we are practicing”. She does not receive any financial compensation. She says, “I felt the fire to serve and to leave university”.⁶³ She did so before realizing that the church authorities do not allow women to serve. Her husband studied four years in Emmanuel’s biblical institute while serving in the worship ministry. When asked if he aspired to become a youth pastor she answered that she would minister “where God called him to be pastor.”⁶⁴ His answer showed that he hadn’t received a special training to be youth pastor.

My impression that the always friendly and often similar answers given by members were learned by memory was affirmed when they spoke about the discipleship classes, which are ordered through different books. “In book two the studies are more profound, we start to memorize texts that have reference to the church, the rights of the pastor and the authority they have over the church”⁶⁵ It’s part of their studies, they must memorize certain doctrinal texts such as the pastor’s authority over the church. Indeed one gets the impression that the decision-making is solely the domain of the principal pastor. “The pastor decides who is prepared to be a missionary” (2/m/5). The institution of “encounter” allows the church to include new members and gain authority over their perceptions, thoughts and actions and therefore it is not surprising that talking about this event was “off limits.”

Everybody I interviewed confirmed that they tithe and many of them even told me how much they give. The tithes are collected in service, not in the net-groups. Therefore it seems the church has lesser control over this process in Emmanuel than they do in Agua Viva.

Reflection

⁶³ “Sentí fuego para servir y dejar la universidad”. 2/f/2.

⁶⁴ “...donde Dios lo llamaba a ser pastor” 2/f/2.

⁶⁵ “En libro dos los estudios son más profundos, empezamos a memorizar textos que tengan referencia a la iglesia, los derechos del pastor, la autoridad que tienen sobre la congregación.” 2/m/5.

Like in Agua Viva, decision making to a certain extent takes place arbitrarily by high level pastors, who use their authority to propose that their decisions reflect God's will. Theological education plays a minor role compared to the decisions of the principal pastor. Local pastors and members claim to have female pastors, while the principal pastor denies this. The church is self-sustained through tithes and donations of the members. In terms of social progress, the interview with the youth pastor's wife shows an interesting characteristic of the church, namely that the equal work opportunities for equal pay given to women by the secular modern world are denied in the highly patriarchal church, where "...the traditional role of the woman is the correct one."⁶⁶

4.4.3 CDV

CDV does not keep records on its members; however, I was able to determine that it has approximately 5000 members, mostly in the younger generation between the ages of 18-35. CDV has Baptist roots, since US citizen Barriger came to Peru with a Baptist mission. The self-described "bapti-costal" defines CDV theologically as a Baptist church with an affinity towards Pentecostalism. As I mentioned in the section on methodology, in order to interview a wider range of members in CDV, it was valuable to examine the church "Casa del padre", which split from CDV seven years ago. Pastor Aguaya, an ex-executive Peruvian pastor of CDV founded "Casa del Padre" as a Neopentecostal church that focuses on the "family" instead of youth and today has about 1500 members. Casa del Padre is particularly interesting case study for research on social and religious backgrounds because the ten families Pr. Aguaya took with him to found of the upper middle class district of La Molina, according to CDV members, were also the richest and the former members CDV's "high society". Given the fact that their social position is included in the explanation, one can infer that the rift caused a

⁶⁶ "En cuanto a llamar a la pastora a la esposa del pastor yo siempre me he opuesto a eso, el llamado es personal y nunca quise que llamen pastora a mi esposa, ella es esposa del pastor...mi problema es con el tema de la autoridad y los roles que están cambiando mucho hoy en día por cuestiones laborales y la sociedad de hoy...Yo creo que el rol tradicional de la mujer es el correcto." Humberto Lay.

deep crisis for CDV. "...all the tithes went with them...it was a time of crisis."⁶⁷ The perspective of Aguaya will be stated under the section entitled local pastor and will give a different perspective than that of Tylor Barriger, the son of principal pastor Robert Barriger, as to what created the rift in CDV that led Aguaya to establish his own church.

4.4.3.1 Social backgrounds, mobility and Lifestyles

Robert Barriger

The principal pastor points out that the members come from very different areas to the church's "hidden spot" in Monterrico; "the majority come from poor families."⁶⁸ The UNICEP representative Raquel Gago, who is member of CDV, states that the "rich class" in Peru and Lima is Catholic and that none of the evangelical churches, not even the higher class oriented mega-churches, attract the "rich ones", but do attract the upper middle and emerging social classes (Raquel Gago). Therefore the idea that CDV's location in Monterrico attracts the upper classes seems incorrect. But it needs to be determined what motivates Barriger to claim that the church's location attracts people from all social classes.

Barriger says that he grew up without a father and he points out that 90% of prisoners do not have a father at home. His biographical statement coincides with a major "product" of the church, the necessity of creating manhood "hombría" (R. Barriger). He converted in the Jesus People Movement in the US in the 60s. He describes himself as a former hippie, who changed his life completely. A turning point for him happened when he met an elder man in church, who "adopted him", he became his "father", who nourished him spiritually and motivated him to be who he is today.

Local pastor

⁶⁷ "...todos los diezmos fuertes se fueron con ellos...fue un tiempo de crisis y a veces no había para pagar, no había ofrendas..." 3/f/4.

⁶⁸ La mayoría son de familias pobres". Robert Barriger.

The local pastor is part of the council and son of the principal pastor. He studied in a Californian Baptist seminary. 3/P/1 mentions that people who attend the church, often come from the far away districts. This implies that the majority of CDVs members are poor. On the contrary, Aguaya, the ex-local pastor speaks of his flock in La Molina as middle to upper middle class, since most of them are professionals with academic education such as lawyers, medical doctors and business people (Aguaya). His description was affirmed through service observations in Casa del Padre, where he addressed mostly businessmen of Peruvian companies. He points out that his members live in districts such as La Molina, Surco and San Borja, which are the closest districts to the church.

Members

The opinions of the interviewees stand in contrast to my observation of CDV being in an “exclusive” location and only partially support the descriptions of the church by Barriger. The official opinion about the selection of the location is that a church in a “rich” area supposedly attracts everybody and therefore CDV aims to attract all the different social classes. “We want to be a church for poor, middle class and riches... we believe that the location of a church is fundamental in attracting all people. If we put the church in a poor and dangerous district the people from the middle and upper class won’t come. If we put it in a semi-secure and dirty place, it’s possible that the middle and rich classes won’t come. If we put it into a secure and “good” district like Monterrico, even though it is not close, then the poor people will come for the zone and the tidiness and also the middle and rich classes.⁶⁹ Because the church is located in a residential area that is difficult to reach by public transport, this statement is questionable, since the poor usually rely on public transit. However, this would explain the big parking lot outside the church. The explanation concerning the churches location does not coincide with the information that I got from 3/f/1, the layperson in CDV in charge of providing statistical information about the church. She told me, “The majority

⁶⁹ “Queremos ser una iglesia para pobres, clase media y para ricos...creemos que la ubicación de la iglesia es fundamental para lograr que todos vengan. Si ponemos la iglesia en una zona pobre y peligrosa la gente de clase media y rica no van a venir, si lo ponemos en un lugar mediamente peligroso y sucio es posible que los de clase media y ricos no van a venir. Si lo ponemos en una zona de buen estatus como Monterrico aunque no la más cerca, entonces la gente pobre van a venir por la zona y la limpieza y también los de clase media y los ricos.” 3/m/6.

of members come from San Borja, Monterrico and Miraflores.”⁷⁰ The districts she mentions represent the upper middle class districts of Lima. She goes on to say, that “a few” (which turns out to be 3) come from poorer districts that are far away (Comas) and spend more than two hours commuting (3/f/1). The interviewees reveal that CDV attracts fewer people from the outskirts (3/f/4) than from the classical Limenean districts. The interviewees live in Pueblo Libre (3/m/3), Surco (3/m/6), Miraflores (3/f/1; 3/m/8), San Isidro (3/f/7) or the residential suburban green area: La Molina (3/m/2; 3/f/5). The ex-member interviewed comes from middle class district of Surquillo (3/m/9-ex). Only one of the interviewees, who lives in Villa Maria del Triunfo has a social situation similar to the majority of the Emmanuel interviewees (3/f/4) whose families immigrated from the provinces. Many of the young interviewees have already lived in foreign countries (3/f/1; 3/m/6) or are about to study abroad, particularly in the US (3/f/1; 3/m/2). The young woman from the peripheral district is not among them. Some of the members have received education in private foreign schools (3/f/1; 3/m/2) or foreign universities (3/m/6). In terms of social backgrounds and related problems, only a few CDV interviewees mentioned they come from dysfunctional families. A small number of interviewees grew up in a single parent household (3/m/2; 3/f/4). No one mentioned a former life involving addiction and drugs before joining the church, which is interesting since CDV offers members courses on how they can free themselves from addiction. The variable of social background needs to be combined with the religious background, in order to show the relationship between the two. This is the focus of the next section on religious mobility.

Reflections

While the descriptions of church membership of the local and principal pastor are congruent, a discrepancy exists in relation to the actual statistical information that the church provided me as the explanation of 3/m/6 shows. It seems important to ask why this is the case. I suppose it has to do with ethical reasons for wanting to be seen as a church free of prejudices. Educated foreigners from the northern hemisphere, who usually work in social projects, NGOs or churches of developing countries tend to have

⁷⁰ “La mayoría venía de san Borja, Surco, Miraflores.” 3/f/1.

strong ethical motivations for their work and a strong desire to be unifiers, bridge builders in the fight against poverty and inequality in developing countries. On the other hand, CDV and other higher class connoted mega-churches like Casa del Padre and Iglesia Bíblica La Molina, governed by Peruvians, openly state that they target higher social classes because they want to gain tithes from their members. Their message is extremely prosperity oriented and the offering seems to be center of the service, since that is where the pastor puts the most emphasis in his message of having a “generous God” who blesses in measure, those who are generous to him.⁷¹ Therefore Aguaya proudly reveals that the rent of the convention center costs \$2000-3000 per service on Sunday and family events can cost \$100,000, all of which is financed through the congregation in Peru.⁷² In addition to the ethical reason for having an inclusive church, another factor might play a role. CDV is financed by foreign countries in the Northern Hemisphere. People of the north preferably give to “the poor” in the southern hemisphere. In light of this, it would make sense that church authorities stress that they are socially diverse, even if statistical information doesn’t support this. It has to be highlighted that the issue by no means legitimizes the need of foreign donations in CDV. The church does invest money into diaconal projects in poorer areas of Lima and the provinces (as do other churches) through activities called “servolución” and “alcance”. CDV does not merely promote stereotypical Latin American problems to foreign donators, but as a church with a strong social commitment, it undoubtedly responds to typical Peruvian and Latin American problems in order to give a Christian testimony. In my opinion, based on the results of the interviews and statistical information, CDV has certain exclusive tendencies in targeting the middle and upper middle classes. The fact that a foreign pastor is the founder, principal pastor and works with a foreign team of high level pastors, supports the supposition that it wishes to attract members belonging to higher social classes (i.e. the rich).

Even though school education was not a specific variable of the interviews and it was not a topic in the former cases, CDV interviewees mentioned their school education, if they went to a private exclusive school. As Kogan pointed out, a foreign exclusive

⁷¹ Aguaya used the expression three times only in the interview and several times in his services in Casa del Padre.

⁷² Aguaya.

school education is a symbol of distinction from the majority. The social reality of most CDV interviewees affirms Arellano's observations about the classical Limenaen younger generations who show intentions to emigrate or as the interviewees put it, to study abroad and come back as professionals. Therefore CDV attracts young generations that intend to move abroad, especially to the US. The interviewees affirmed the need they had to recreate an "American environment", to accustom themselves to the American way of life. Therefore my impression is that CDV attracts social classes that want to distinguish themselves from the "average Peruvian". The family situation of the interviewees shall be reflected upon in the section on products and preferences. In general, the membership of the CDV is made up of the "sophisticated" younger generations. According to Arellano this group is smaller and younger than members belonging to other lifestyle types such as "progressive" (Emmanuel) and "conservative" (Agua Viva). The fact that the church shows little concern for increasing its membership, confirms that the target group is rather smaller and favors a status oriented mission as Bastian names the contrary to the mass oriented Pentecostal churches. I like to point out that this description aims to formulate tendencies, not classify churches nor religious actors. The finding of lifestyles on an empirical level can shed light on why certain churches aim to attract particular social classes in a fragmented socially disparate society.

4.4.3.2 Religious background and mobility

Robert Barriger

Robert Barriger does not show any concern of increasing the church's membership. He says CDV does not count its members because CDV aims to deepen the faith, not attract more people to the church. His "sophisticated" proclamation, distinguishes CDV from the other churches studied. Another defining characteristic of CDV, which is repeated time and time again by members, is the fact that CDV is a refuge for people who come wounded from other evangelical churches. Barriger states that many pastors are "abusive dictators" in other churches. This seems to function as defense and explanation

why CDV is gaining young members from other evangelical churches instead of from the ranks of non-practicing Catholics.

Local pastor

When asked about from which churches his members come, Aguaya points out, “there have come people from Alianza, the churches like Agua Viva, people from Camino de Vida sometimes, but the majority are new persons.”⁷³ “New persons” can be inferred to mean non-practicing Catholics. Aguaya’s assertions were proven to be correct by the findings I gathered by interviewing ex-CDV members in Casa del Padre. Aguaya named “Potential” and “Casa del padre” as common church destinations for ex CDV members (3/m/6; 3/m/2).

Members

Since CDV aims to be a reform movement, members and pastors mention that people tend to convert in other evangelical churches (3/m/3; 3/f/1; 3/m/2). As the observations showed, there is no focus on an actual conversion to CDV, but it seems important that new members, in order to belong fully, volunteer in a certain area of the church. In contrast to the local pastor, who mentioned Alianza Cristiana and Agua Viva, as churches where people convert from when they come to CDV, none of the members included Agua Viva as a source of new members. Regularly mentioned is the evangelical mainstream church Alianza Cristianay Misionera (3/m/2, 3/f/1, 3/m/3, 3/f/5; 3/f/7) and Emmanuel (3/m/2; 3/m/3; 3/f/4, 3/f/5, 3/f/7). Only 3/f/4 mentions members who came from Agua Viva which supports Barriger’s contention that people who have been driven out of Alianza come wounded to CDV (3/f/4). 3/m/3 specifies the situation in the churches “They sent them bruised, which are difficult to heal; the majority comes resented, abused. To the contrary, those who move from here to another church

⁷³ “Ha venido gente de Alianza, de la iglesias como Agua Viva, gente de Camino de Vida a veces, pero en su mayoría son personas nuevas.” Aguaya.

maintain good relations with us.”⁷⁴ Since Neopentecostals tend to move to the highly innovative CDV-church, it should be interesting listening to the ways of religious mobility of the interviewees.

3/f/1, 19 years old, was born in Brazil and lives in Miraflores. Her parents converted in a Baptist church in Brazil, but she was the one who took them to CDV after moving to Lima. 3/m/2, is 21 years old, lives in La Molina and “was born” in a small church in central Surco, where he “grew up”. From there he came to CDV. It was probably an evangelical middle class church according to the district.

3/m/3 lives and comes from Pueblo Libre. He converted through the preaching of the “business men of the complete gospel, founded in the US”. “Later I participated in Alianza Cristiana y Misionera.” Through Emmanuel he came to CDV.

3/f/5, 30 years old, lives in La Molina. As a non-practicing Catholic she came to “Campeones para Cristo”, a smaller Neopentecostal church and afterwards to CDV. She practices a double membership in CDV and Campeones para Cristo.

3/m/6, 27 years old studied in the US. He lives in Surco and talks about his religious biography: “I was born in Alianza Cristiana y Misionera... with 15 years I moved to another church, which is very similar to CDV...it was a free Methodist church...and then I went to the USA. There I participated in a charismatic church.”⁷⁵

3/f/7, 47 years old comes from San Isidro. She was brought by her daughters and participated various years in the Anglican Church “The good Shepherd”, a bilingual upper middle class protestant church in San Isidro. She did not manage to gain her sons and daughters to go to church until they took her to CDV.

3/m/8, 38 years old is a German expat, Lutheran by birth and came to CDV for its interesting style.

The eldest interviewee 3/m/3 is 62 years old and way above average. His motivation to participate in CDV is that no one knew him there. He was divorced and married again, which in most mainstream Peruvian evangelical churches is defined as sin. Therefore he

⁷⁴ “...nos los envíen heridos que es muy difícil a sanarlos, pues la mayoría viene resentidos, maltratados. En cambio la gente de aquí que se va a otra iglesia se va bien y en buenas relaciones con nosotros.”
3/m/3.

⁷⁵ “Yo nací en una Iglesia Alianza Cristiana y Misionera desde que yo tenía razón. Estuve hasta los 15 años, y a los 15 años me mude a otra iglesia que era muy parecida a Camino de Vida. Era una Iglesia Metodista Libre. Y luego me fui a los Estados Unidos y ahí estuve en una Iglesia Carismática que era linda.” 3/m/6.

left Alianza Cristiana and passed through Emmanuel. But since many members from Alianza tend to move to Emmanuel, he met people who rejected him because of his family status. In the youth dominated CDV he found an evangelical church, where none of his former sisters and brothers knew him and he became in charge of the family department giving marriage courses and counseling. Now he and his wife are leading the family ministry, training matrimonial restoration etc. in CDV. His religious biography reveals details about religious mobility, even though if his motivation to move to CDV is probably very different than in the case of younger generations. 3/f/4, 26 years old, lives with her single mother and sister in Cono Villa Maria del Triunfo. She takes her mother and sister, who participated in AD to CDV.

Subsuming their religious ways of mobility most of them either come from middle and upper middle class evangelical churches such as “Alianza Cristiana y Misionera” or the Catholic Church. An exception is the only interviewee with migratory background 3/f/4 who takes her mother and sister from the Pentecostal AD to CDV. This particular case exemplifies how many people come to CDV. The participation of elder generations occurs through their sons and daughters (3/f/7; 3/f/1; 3/f/4). This fact confirms that CDV is youth oriented church, since it is the younger generation who finds the church and involves the parents, not the other way around. The fact that the parents’ generation tends to be Catholic and not Pentecostal as it was the case in Emmanuel, provides evidence that members usually belong to the higher social classes. Another tendency seems to exist in CDV, namely that believers tend to join CDV through friends (3/f/4; 3/f/5). Individualism is more prominent in CDV since many of the interviewees have lived or currently live separate from their families. Therefore I would suspect that in general, CDV members have a more individualistic lifestyle than the collective family orientated lifestyle in Agua Viva for instance. In terms of religious mobility, people who have lived in different countries also move through different churches, which is exemplified by 3/m/6, who grew up in Alianza Cristiana and since then has “passed through” four different churches before coming to CDV. The intensity of religious mobility seems to be higher in CDV than the other churches studied.

Reflection

The member 3/m/3 could not stay in Emmanuel, because there were people from Alianza who judged him for being divorced and having re-married. He moved to CDV, even though the esthetic style of the church was a strange element for him. In giving him the opportunity to minister couples, CDV reaffirmed his dignity and self-esteem, which he had lost. Therefore, it seems CDV is a more tolerant and open minded church than others, which in turn shows that CDV attracts higher educated and less conservative religious actors. The case of 3/m/3 also supports the argument of Barriger that CDV represents a kind of refuge for believers who have been wounded in other churches. Being youth oriented, the church needs to be mindful of accusations that it discriminates against elderly people.

The case of CDV proves that information about which churches religious actors tend to migrate to and from, also reveals social aspects about the church. In comparison to the former two churches, in CDV nobody stated that people come from Pentecostal churches, which would reveal family origins in the low class, as is the case in Agua Viva and Emmanuel. Instead the middle class Alianza Cristiana is mentioned and the other two mega-churches of emerging social classes, which both recruit members from the large mainstream evangelical church Alianza Cristiana. CDV also attracts members from historical Protestant churches, which have a rather “sophisticated” theological background as the Anglican Church (3/f/7), Baptists (3/f/1) and German Lutherans who feel attracted by the secular modern style in CDV in contrast to the services of their own denominations. Religious mobility within middle and upper middle class evangelical churches corresponds to their social classes.

4.4.3.3 Preferences, priorities, motivations

Robert Barriger

Barriger says, “Market is not such a bad word as it appears to be, we need to attract the youth through the use of today’s technology and the social networks instead of

fighting against them. Why not join them? Why not use them as strategy?”⁷⁶ Barriger’s comment supports his desire to create an age-friendly synthesis of Christian faith and technology. When asked about his priorities for the church Barriger consequently answered “manhood” which can be interpreted to mean the role of the church to supply the missing father at home and to give the young generations an identity before the gangs on the streets do. The counterpart to “hombría maxima” is “ellas” the course of womanhood (3/f/5). He considers them the most important force the church has to transform families. The polarization between the “bad world” and the church that protects the individual is not openly discussed, but tends to be divulged through expressions such as “el enemigo” (enemy) which occurred also in many sermons and is a common term in the language of Robert Barriger. Barriger’s intercultural focus and the usage of high tech media to package a message avoids identifying the secular world as the “enemy”, but reveals his intention to transform Peru, as is the case in the other churches.

The basic product to transform Peru is the priority of the “father” as religious conviction. The name of the church that sprouted from the CDV is called “Casa del Padre - House of the father” thus it has the priority theme in its name. The pastors mention they want to create a proper manhood “hombría maxima” in order to fight machismo and the irresponsible behavior of men towards their families, which often results in boys being raised by their mothers without any significant male role model in their lives. When asked about the product of “international citizenship through social networks” Robert Barriger affirmed my impression that the church constructs world citizenship when he says: “Yes, if the church is not doing it, it is outdated, because the social networks are doing it.”⁷⁷

Local pastor

⁷⁶ “..el mercado no es una palabra tan mala como pintada, por los jóvenes tenemos que competir con la tecnología de hoy y las redes sociales en vez de luchar contra ellos. ¿Porqué no entrar en ellos, porqué no usarlo como una estrategia?” Robert Barriger.

⁷⁷ “Si, la iglesia si no lo hace está atrasada porque los redes sociales lo están haciendo.” Robert Barriger.

3/P/1 draws a distinction between “the message” and “the form” - how to present the message. “You can enter CDV today and it is different than it was two years ago and it will be different in two years from now I am sure, because everything changes in order to be relevant for the next generation.”⁷⁸ He indirectly affirms the niche marketing on the pluralized religious market saying “There are different churches for different people. It would be absurd to think that we are the only church of God.”⁷⁹ This corresponds to his analogy to Starbucks to explain the location of the church’s branch in Miraflores. “One can learn a lot from this world of service to apply it to the church.”⁸⁰

When asked about the essence of religious convictions and theological priority he laughed and said: “Jesus” and defined the confessional profile of CDV as “Bapticostal” as Robert Barriger describes it. “I would say we are Bapticostals in a strange way, because the Baptists know how to make a good chimney but they don’t know how to light the fire. The Pentecostals know how to start a fire, but they burn everything. We are like structure but we also believe in the power of God and the Holy Spirit and everything they can do. We believe in the gift of speaking in tongues, we wish to encourage, but on the other hand, we don’t want that someone new feels uncomfortable.”⁸¹ He differentiates the advantages and disadvantages of the two different Protestant denominations in order to achieve a theological definition of the confessional profile of CDV. He does this in the typical post modern way of patchwork that he links to other evangelical denominations into the definition of his own church. Another priority he mentions is “manhood”. “Men, who need to assume responsibility, are missing...we believe that a strong household is the one that has a strong man. However, it’s usually the mother who sustains the house and she can do it, but it is not her work, but that of the man, we want to change that... hombría is the synonym of the

⁷⁸ “Tu puedes entrar hoy a Camino de Vida y es diferente de hace dos años y será diferente en dos años yo estoy seguro, todo cambia para que sea relevante a la siguiente generación.” 3/P/1; p.3.

⁷⁹ “Hay iglesias diferentes para diferentes persona, sería absurdo pensar que somos la única iglesia de Dios.” 3/P/1.

⁸⁰ “...se puede aprender mucho de este mundo del servicio para aplicarlo a la iglesia.” 3/P/1.

⁸¹ “yo digo somos Bapticostales, en forma chistosa decimos que el bautista sabe hacer una buen chimenea pero no sabe prender fuego y que el pentecostal sabe encender un buen fuego pero quema todo. Nos gusta mucho la estructura pero también creemos en el poder de Dios y del Espíritu Santo todo lo que pueda hacer, creemos en el don de lenguas, buscamos incentivar pero tampoco queremos que un nuevo se sienta incómodo.” 3/P/1.

similarity to Christ and this is our mission, solid men, solid families, a solid church and solid nations.”⁸²

Members

The product and marketing through spectacular worship has been affirmed by most of the members as a factor which motivates them to participate in CDV and can be described as unique market advantage for CDV as a young Emmanuel interviewee demonstrated. “The worship” is a quite common answer for CDV’s interviewees being asked about what attracted them to CDV (3/m/6; 3/m/3); “... it was contrary to the image I had of a church with old people only. 60% of the church are youngsters, singing, screaming and I love that.”⁸³ “It’s very different from what I was accustomed to,”⁸⁴ says 3/m/6 who grew up in Alianza Cristiana and had passed through four different charismatic churches before coming to CDV. Theology student 3/m/2 mentions the “grace” as religious priority (3/m/2). The product of “international citizenship” is often mentioned combined with the supply of international social networks. The presence of American pastors in CDV, gives members the opportunity to socialize with “gringos”. 3/f/1 was just about to leave to study medicine in the USA. She states that CDV helped her to think internationally because “there are always a lot of young people from the US or other parts...”⁸⁵ She mentioned that she appreciates the opportunity to practice her English with them. CDV provided her with a letter of recommendation for the state ministry and a visa form. Therefore it needs to be pointed out, that the role of the church can be significant for the professional career of CDV members and this represents a material level of social progress. 3/f/4 was the only interviewee with an immigration background. She pointed out that an attraction and motivation to be member in CDV was “...to know that I could be part of it.”⁸⁶ She goes on to say, “I felt like part of the family, identified with pastor Robert and I felt that I

⁸² “...primero es la falta de hombres que deben asumir su responsabilidad....Creemos que un hogar fuerte es porque tienen un hombre fuerte ahí, sin embargo mayormente es la madre la sustenta la casa y pueden pero no es tu trabajo sino del varón, queremos cambiar eso. Hombría es sinónimo de semejarse a Cristo, y esa es la misión de nosotros, hombres sólidos, familias solidas, iglesia sólida, naciones sólidas.” 3/P/1.

⁸³ “era el contrario a la imagen que yo tenía de la iglesia solo con gente mayor. El 60% de la iglesia son jóvenes, cantando, gritando y amo esto.” 3/m/2.

⁸⁴ “...es muy distinta a la que estaba acostumbrado.” 3/m/6.

⁸⁵ “...hay un montón de chicos que a veces vienen de USA o de otras partes.” 3/f/1, p. 3; 3/m/6, p.6.

⁸⁶ “..para mí el saber que podría ser parte de esto, eso fue determinante.” 3/f/4.

could grow here.”⁸⁷ CDV therefore offers many advantages to people who which serve as symbolic signs of social progress. On the material level, CDV offers occupational help and the personal contacts which can be used by members to ascertain employment.

An ex-member, (an investigator in social sciences, having a provincial family background), points out the appearance of sophistication of CDV, which attracted him to CDV from an evangelical religious background in a lower class church IEP. “There exists liberty for people who think, it’s a relatively open system, but only at the beginning.”⁸⁸ 3/f/4 was also attracted by the “high society” in CDV, which differed from his own social surrounding. “The second thing that called my attention was the circle of friendships which seemed significant. In my case they (friends) weren’t even a part of my social class, but it permitted me to know them...if we went out to eat, everybody could pay, the language wasn’t religious, but it was more elitist and this makes you think that you are in another world.”⁸⁹ He points out the difference to an evangelical lower class church (IEP), where going out together is difficult, because “friends” usually lack the financial resources to pay for food, drinks etc. In CDV he felt among equals in an intellectual sense and in terms of his personal economy and prestige. The product “social networks” in CDV tends to be not only a side effect, but forms a factor of motivation, because they promise to be “significant” and make people feel part of a “high society”.

In all the cases, interviewees commented that one element of the church that attracted them was an opportunity to develop abilities in teams of volunteers, 3/f/4 and 3/m/6 in the music team and 3/m/2 in the transport team and audiovisual area. The elder generations are rather involved in the traditional ministries such as the prayer team (3/f/7) and training in family courses (3/m/3). When I asked interviewees to prioritize the most significant topics that the church teaches, the answers were highly diverse. Similarly to the local pastor I received a shoulder shrug and an answer like: “Simplemente Jesús” (3/f/5) instead of a doctrine. A young theology student explains

⁸⁷ “...me sentí en familia, identificada con el pastor Robert y sentí que yo podía crecer aquí.” 3/f/4.

⁸⁸ “...hay libertad para gente pensante, es un sistema relativamente abierto pero solo al inicio.” 3/m/9-ex

⁸⁹ “La segunda cosa que llamó la atención fue el círculo de amistades que uno puede llegar a tener,...si íbamos a comer todos podían pagar, el lenguaje no era religioso, había otro tipo de jergas más elite y eso te hace creer que estás en otro mundo.” 3/m/9-ex

the priority of CDV as follows: “Life is not to be endured, but it is there to be enjoyed 100%...God is not a boring God, he is not a strict God”⁹⁰ These answers reveal a lack of doctrine in the church because only emotional characteristics of the of the church are mentioned in response to this very basic question.

Reflection

Apart from “manhood”, “international citizenship” plays an important role in CDV. Having lived in foreign countries and studied in foreign schools, most CDV members are used to constant relocation and it does not surprise me that they feel more like international citizens, than Peruvians. Henceforth their distinctive economical and educational situation separates them from the poor masses. On the other hand, it has been shown that for Neolimeneans like 3/f/4, an important product CDV offers to its members of the lower classes is an international citizenship that helps them to escape a peripheral context of a developing country.

In the case 3/f/4 (who has a migration family background), she identifies with a pastor of very different social status, ethnic group and economic reality. It seems as if the social network she gains in the church gives her the feeling of belonging to the “high society”, having “significant friendships.”

As the observations already have revealed, CDV offers the “product” of self-realization to its members through training in different areas. For 3/f/4 this gave her the opportunity to study music, which would not be possible without church assistance. The church also gives her the opportunity to feel at home in the upscale Monterrico district, which is far away from her family home in Villa Maria del Triunfo not only in terms of distance but also socially. Her case shows how minorities support each other. The opportunity to “be in another world” is also a reason why Peruvians from the upper middle class become members of CDV. There seems to be a strong desire for international recognition. The concentration on emotions and a flexible adaption of the message to the actual needs of the members makes it difficult to define what religious doctrine, if any, is taught in

⁹⁰ “La vida no está para aguantarla, sino que está para disfrutarla en un 100%, que Dios no es un Dios aburrido, no es un Dios estricto....”3/m/2.

CDV. Religious identification seems to be based on feelings rather than religious content. The following section on integration shall reflect further on this.

4.4.3.4 Integration

Robert Barriger

Barriger points out that, a member who volunteers for the church is “paying back” the church for the training he received, paid for by the church. “Someone who does not serve is good for nothing/does not fit”.⁹¹ In order to point out this priority of integration, Barriger organizes regular campaigns that serve to involve members into certain areas and teams in the church. One often repeated vision of Barriger corresponds to the topic of integration, “We are willing to sacrifice one generation in order to gain the following.”⁹² A special integrative force in CDV seems to be the institution of the “presbiterio”. Robert Barriger explains it simply with a biblical verse in Timothy 1, 18 and defines the presbiterio as activity that serves as time to confirm the call. – “It’s basically a confirmation of something that is in your heart”.⁹³ He describes it as an event, which takes place every two or three years and is accompanied with three days of fasting. His description of the event is business like and has to be compared to the perception of this event that members have.

Local pastor

The local pastor defines a CDV integrated member as someone “who has passion for the church where he develops fully.” He refers to “servolución” as the driving force that attracts the members to integrate. These creative, invented terms and others like it, serve as a “secret language” understood by members of the church, which is another factor of integration and reinforces the idea that the members of CDV belong to an extraordinary and distinctive group. “The optimum is to have the passion for the church, I am

⁹¹ “Como dice nuestro pastor: el que no sirve, no sirve. Todos debemos estar dispuestos en el servicio.” 3/f/5. The Spanish language makes it sound as word game that is difficult to express in English.

⁹² “Estamos dispuestos a sacrificar una generación por ganar la otra” 3/m/2, p.3; 3/P/1; p.3.

⁹³ “...es básicamente una confirmación de algo que está en tu corazón.” Robert Barriger, p.6.

convinced that it is in the church where one develops fully and it is the church that will save the world according to the plan of God”.⁹⁴

Members

Compared to the former cases, CDV members do not tend to repeat texts and bible verses that they have learned by memory in a strict manner, but the influence of the charismatic principal pastor Robert Barriger is obvious. His ability to visualize religious matters through symbolic analogies prods CDV members to repeat their principal pastor, using his symbolical analogies. Since the social situation of its members does not require major modification of behavior and habits, CDV members do not have much to say about their actual transformation after joining the church. Consequently, their descriptions about their personal transformations precipitated by joining the church, sometimes seem artificial. 3/f/1 told me that she went from being a rebellious adolescent, to humble adult at the age of 19 who respects authority. This transformation does not present more than a testimony of what usually happens when children pass through the years of adolescence and become young adults. Her testimony also lacks a religious component of Christian principles. CDV members use the expressions like “the following” to describe their integration: “Indeed it (the transformation) has given an enormous reversal because now I see everything in a positive way; I don’t face anything negative, nothing.”⁹⁵ Such expressions do not specify what practical changes the integration into CDV included. This impression is affirmed by 3/f/5 who participates in another church “Campeones para Cristo” as well. Her case shows that the integration into CDV is flexible enough to tolerate a dual church membership. CDV adapts intentionally to the actual needs of their members, as 3/P/1 expressed it: “It changed compared to the style two years ago and it will have changed in two years again”. The fact that members explain the transformation without referencing a religious shift, tends to be the logical consequence of the adaptive style. An ex-member explains: “they have something for every type of consumer...if I’m critical and existentialist they have a product for me.” (3/m/9-ex). He discovered that “everything they give members

⁹⁴ “...optimo que tiene la pasión por la iglesia, entiendo que es en la iglesia donde se va desarrollar plenamente y que es la iglesia la que va a salvar el mundo según el plan de Dios.” 3/f/5.

⁹⁵ “...en verdad para mí ha dado una vuelta enorme...porque ahora todo lo veo de una manera positiva no veo nada más y no le encuentro nada negativo a nada.” 3/f/5.

depends on the vision of the pastor; there is actually nothing to discover. Everything is determined.” Hence the religious actor considers everything religious as part of his transformation which often sounds confusing and lacks a deeper religious experience. The observation of smiling young people who seem as if they are on drugs was affirmed by 3/f/5 and 3/f/4, whose mutual friend introduced them to CDV: “You are impacted by her presence, she is always smiling and one day I told her: take me to your church.”⁹⁶ The impression of some of some members acting as if they were “high”, was confirmed by their answers for the most significant topic the church teaches - “Simplemente Jesús” (3/f/5).

Self-realization seems to be an element of integration. 3/m/2 is in charge of production and the whole audio installation. Since he is planning to study audiovisual communication, CDV gives him the opportunity to manage the sound system. Having such a responsible position as a 21 year old, strengthens him personally and enhances his self-esteem, motivation and participation in the church. He receives the opportunity of self-realization and access to the equipment that makes this possible. Therefore the integration in the church promotes his social progress. Other areas of participation include photography, videography and singing (3/f/4). 3/f/5 is supported by the church through a temporary professional occupation. “I always enjoy that it would be God who cares for me and who gives me all that I need. I have all that I need, I save as well, and it all depends on how you administer your money.”⁹⁷ The prestige and social networks she achieved through the church gives her the feeling of having actually progressed socially. Her objective is to become a musician through the social and cultural capital she gained through the church. Therefore, she works as temporary receptionist in CDV, while preparing for a career as a singer on the music team.

An ex-member (3/m/9) mentions a downside of the integration of members in CDV, namely, the manipulation of church members as he sees it. He points out the negative effect the church had on him intellectually. He says while he was a member of the

⁹⁶ “...te impacta con su presencia, al verla sonriendo mucho. Y un día le dije llévame a conocer tu iglesia.” 3/f/4.

⁹⁷ “Creo que (ganaría) mucho más, pero siempre disfruto mucho que sea Dios quien me cuide y me de todo lo que necesito...tengo todo lo que necesito, ahorro también, depende que cómo administras tu dinero.” 3/f/5.

church, he wasn't able to write and produce intellectually and uses the expression "brainwashing" to describe how the church manages to control the lives of its members. "You will see it in the highest circles when you meet Barriger and first you see his environment of confident people and you will see this even Mafioso structure of a little bureaucracy. All this promise of liberty and no-judgment from the beginning and afterwards you see the magic religious dimension of your future and you become aware of the reality, the shock is severe and my personal experience is that I renounced my intellectual life by not writing anything for two years. That was my personal commitment that I assumed because of the pressure of a determined circle of the church. If I wanted to be happy in this environment that was what I had to do, because in the diagnosis they did of me... my excessive trust in university life, would detain me from being happy and lifting up my hands..."⁹⁸ He talks of a personal awakening that occurred when he came to realize how he was being manipulated by the church bureaucracy over a two year period.

Since clothing has to do with integration as well, it shall be mentioned. The observations have shown that CDV pastors dress quite elegantly. However, the church doesn't have a dress code which reflects its emphasis on "self-realization". The clothing worn by CDV members, as was already pointed out, serves as an element of distinction and identification. 3/m/2 distinguishes between "vestimenta adecuada" and "vestimanta exagerada". The ex-member speaks about integration and group pressure: "You look at the photo of the time (in CDV) and you won't recognize me, because of the clothes and the haircut. I wasn't aware of what I did and of course you do it because of suggestions of other people you and don't even realize it."⁹⁹

⁹⁸ "lo vas viendo en círculos más altos, alguna vez te reunirás con Barriger y primero verás su entorno y gente de confianza y verás esa dimensión hasta mafiosa de una pequeña burocracia, toda esa promesa de libertad y no juzgamiento del principio y luego ves todo esto y esa dimensión mágico religiosa de tu futuro y te das cuenta de la realidad, el choque es muy fuerte, en mi experiencia personal hice una renuncia a mi vida intelectual, a no escribir nada por dos años...era un compromiso personal que yo asumí por presión de determinando círculo de la iglesia, si quería ser feliz en ese entorno eso tenía que hacer porque en el diagnóstico que me hicieron esa era mi atadura, mi mente demasiado vinculada a cuestiones humanas y mi excesiva confianza a la vida universitaria, eso impedía que yo fuera feliz, que levantara mis manos...." 3/m/9-ex, 4.

⁹⁹ "Ropa casual es, tú miras una foto de esta época (en CDV) y no me reconoces, por la ropa y el corte de pelo, yo no me di cuenta de lo que hice y claro lo haces por sugerencia de la gente que te rodea y ni cuanta te das.", 3/m/9-ex, 4.

Another institution that plays an important role in understanding CDV and how it promotes integration is the so called “presbiterio” because it reveals how the church is structured and who holds the decision making power. “The presbiterio is a time of prophecies that they give to some persons”.¹⁰⁰ Interviewees described the presbiterio as a turning point.¹⁰¹ 3/f/4 describes the presbiterio as an event which is prepared for a month prior. The leaders select people who they believe have potential to minister and the principal pastors have some of these candidates prophesize to them. This is done because, “Pastor Robert cannot permit that people who come from outside of the house (church) and who are not prepared participate.”¹⁰² By saying this, 3/f/4 is indirectly expressing the exclusive character of the event in which members are told what they are called to do in church. The whole structure of the event seems to have a magical character. The prophets are all “gringos” who come to Peru especially for this event. “Pastor Robert knows them...they have to have a prophetic call and must be trustworthy...they are foreigners and as such, they don’t know you and they tell you things about you that they can’t know and that confirms the call of the person.”¹⁰³ “The prophecy is always fulfilled”¹⁰⁴ Being asked how the prophet knows the person, all members answered, that they don’t know anybody and don’t even see the list of participants. Only the pastor has it...God tells it to them...”¹⁰⁵ The prophets are exclusively foreigners from the northern hemisphere. “I don’t know any Peruvian prophets.”¹⁰⁶ 3/f/4 describes her experiences of the event. “The first of three prophets gave me a prophecy of Isaiah about patience because I am very impetuous and need to be more submissive...I should be a vessel of God, I should follow the process of becoming a vessel.”¹⁰⁷ She realized the implicit critique of her character as an outspoken woman who should be more submissive. Her prophecy suggests that her career as musician is doubtful because submissiveness is not a characteristic of

¹⁰⁰ “...es un tiempo de profecías que se dan a algunas personas” 3/m/3.

¹⁰¹ “Nos cambió la cara” It changed our face/view. 3/m/3.

¹⁰² “Pastor Robert no puede permitir que gente fuera de la casa (iglesia) o que no esté preparada participe.” 3/f/4.

¹⁰³ “Pastor Robert los conoce... que tengan llamada profético y que sean de confianza...son extranjeros y eso es lo que asombra a la iglesia porque no te conocen y te dicen cosas sobre ti que no deberían saber y que confirma el llamado de la persona.” 3/f/4, p.5.

¹⁰⁴ “...la profecía siempre está cumpliendo...” 3/m/3.

¹⁰⁵ “No conocen a nadie y ni siquiera ven la lista de los participantes, esa la tiene el pastor...Dios se los dice...” 3/m/3.

¹⁰⁶ “...no conozco profetas peruanos” 3/m/3, p.5.

¹⁰⁷ “el primero me dio una profecía de Isaías sobre la paciencia porque soy impetuosa y que debo ser sometida...era un vaso de Dios, necesito seguir el proceso del vaso.” 3/f/4.

successful singers. The ex-member confirms my impression that the church has a magical character “it’s magic and the people like it.”¹⁰⁸

Reflection

A church’s elaborate and professional esthetical style is a force that attracts new members to it. At the same time the necessity for self-realization that is offered, enforces the integration of members to serve the church in a particular area. Self-realization and elitist social networks seem to attract educated younger people who can develop very different abilities in the church. This also gives members the impression that they are progressing socially. Integration into the church based on feelings rather than religious doctrine could create an unnatural dependency on the church. This impression is confirmed by an ex-member 3/m/9 who said the church “brainwashes” its members. In CDV, the tribute for gaining self-realization is passion for the church, as reflected by the often repeated saying of Barriger “Quien no sirve, no sirve.”

4.4.3.5 Organizational structures

Robert Barriger

“I have the last word” he said,¹⁰⁹ adding “but I don’t carry it out”.¹¹⁰ In my opinion, this proclamation shows certain contradictions in the decision making process at CDV that have to be explored. “Here (in Peru) many pastors are very abusive with their sheep, a dictator, and I want to change that.”¹¹¹ Barriger explains: “Latin America has experienced dictatorships and that’s what has happened in many of its churches. They (the members) showed loyalty to their pastor and the pastor turned into a dictator and I don’t agree with that.”¹¹² He contrasts his own attitude with that of pastors in other evangelical churches, but at the same time admits that there is no democratic structure in CDV, which could lead to a system of a dictatorship in his church as well. He

¹⁰⁸ “Es mágico y a la gente le gusta.” 3/m/9-ex.

¹⁰⁹ “Yo tengo la última palabra.” Robert Barriger.

¹¹⁰ “..pero no lo ejerzo.” *Ibíd.*

¹¹¹ “aquí el pastor es muy abusivo y dictador con las ovejas y eso lo quiero cambiar.” Robert Barriger.

¹¹² América Latina vivió por dictaduras y así fue también en sus iglesias...se vuelvan leales al pastor y el pastor se vuelve dictador y yo no estoy de acuerdo con esas iglesias.” Barriger.

explains the role of the church's pastoral council: "I have a group of pastors, counselors for spiritual questions, men for the commercial decisions, I submit to them, but I have the last word."¹¹³ He indirectly demonstrates his supremacy by talking about the reasons for the cleavage that led to "Casa del Padre" to split from CDV. "Humildad-humility" is the attitude that he expects from his pastors and leaders.¹¹⁴ He does not explain what he actually means in his explanation of what caused the cleavage, which is also the case in his sermons. 3/m/3 says "he was the second (highest) after pastor Barriger."¹¹⁵ That was before his son Taylor came back to Lima after completing his studies. Aguaya, the Peruvian pastor he trusted in, who he put second in terms of power, took with him the ten financially strongest families from CDV when he founded Casa del Padre. It can be inferred that Barriger believes it was Aguaya's lack of humility which caused the cleavage in the church.

Barriger states that there are woman pastors in CDV. "Yes equality is for everybody, it doesn't matter what hand nourishes you, but the food that it gives you."¹¹⁶

Barriger states that about 80% of CDV's members don't tithe. This does not correspond to the webpage and its strong emphasis CDV puts on tithing. The importance of tithing is also stressed in CDV services and is shown by the elaborated envelopes that members place their tithes in, therefore his claim is questionable.

Local pastor

3/P/1 states: "We try to build (the church) from the bottom up, first there is my father pastor Robert."¹¹⁷ 3/P/1 states that the church has a horizontal structure but claims that Pr. Barriger is in the "first position". This represents a contradiction in terms since in a horizontal structure, everyone is on the same level and decisions are reached by consensus. Barriger himself stated that when it comes to decision making, "I have the

¹¹³ "Tengo un grupo de consejeros para cuestiones espirituales, hombres para las decisiones de negocios, a ellos me someto pero yo tengo la última palabra." Robert Barriger.

¹¹⁴ "Dios resiste a los soberbios, a mí nadie me debe a mí nada". Robert Barriger.

¹¹⁵ "él era el segundo después de Pr. Barriger". 3/m/3.

¹¹⁶ "Si por igual a todos, no importa la mano que te alimenta sino la comida que te da." Robert Barriger.

¹¹⁷ "Buscamos repotenciar construyendo desde abajo, primero está mi padre el pastor Robert..." 3/P/1.

last word”. Therefore, it would seem that the structure of the church is in fact vertical, not horizontal.

In the organizational hierarchy, the pastor mentions “Pedro Infante”, a Latin name, on the second level below Robert Barriger in the council of pastors. 3/P/1 affirms that there are Peruvian pastors in the directory of CDV and that there are women pastors in the church. He affirms Barriger’s explanation on tithes. “We don’t obligate the people to give money. It depends on the person and on God. Therefore I tell you that not all of them give...we have the rule 20/80. 20% cover the 80% who don’t give, because the average salary is very low. People need to take buses to get to Surco and it’s far away from the centre.”¹¹⁸

Members

3/m/3 who compares the church structure to Alianza Cristiana, states that it is less democratic. “While in Alianza the pastoral team takes final decisions, here it’s the principal pastor who decides.”¹¹⁹ The receptionist 3/f/4 in CDV, who works very close to the principal pastor, says “I think he has no Peruvian pastors in the directory, the ones that are there are foreigners that he brings.”¹²⁰ “Pr. Robert brings people together when he sees their potential...For instance he meets the pastors every Tuesday and asks them their opinions on church matters, but afterwards he makes the decisions.”¹²¹

3/m/2 is studying to be a pastor and has reached the level of the pastor’s assistant, having finished his bachelor in theology in the CDV institute of leadership. He comments: “We don’t think that having finished (the university) you are a pastor or

¹¹⁸ “No obligamos a la gente a dar dinero eso depende de la persona y de Dios y por eso te digo que no todos dan...tenemos la regla del 20/80, el 20% cubre al 80% que no da, además el sueldo promedio es muy bajo, la gente debe tomar carros para llegar a Surco que está alejado del centro...” 3/P/1.

¹¹⁹ “En Alianza por ejemplo existe un cuerpo pastoral y un consistorio quienes toman la decisión final. Aquí solo hay un cuerpo pastoral y al final es el pastor principal quien decide.” 3/m/3.

¹²⁰ “Creo que no tiene pastores peruanos en el consejo directivo, los que están son extranjeros que él trae.” 3/f/4.

¹²¹ Pastor Robert los reúne cuando ve su potencial,...se reúne con los pastores los martes y él pregunta y luego toma él decisiones.” 3/f/4.

leader, it only gives you the tools to be prepared if God calls you for the ministry.”¹²² He points out that there is no transparent way of becoming a pastor after having completed a bachelor degree. Another element that is related to the organizational structure of the cases is the presence of female pastors. While in the church, I never saw any women who seemed to be a leader in the church services. However, all the CDV interviewees told me that there are female pastors in CDV. 3/m/2 insists: “we have a lot of female pastors”¹²³, but he admits that they only preach in the night courses for women. The reality in CDV seems to be: “they are the wives of the pastors.”¹²⁴

Every member claims to tithe 10% saying that it is a basic task of a Christian. It would surely be a very embarrassing to admit that they don't, therefore the honesty of the members needs to be questioned in this regard, especially in light of what was reported by Barriger and the local pastors.

Reflection

The organizational structure of CDV contains certain contradictions that shall be reviewed. Robert Barriger describes pastors who turn into dictators. He explains that Latin Americans are loyal to their pastors, but many pastors have become dictators.¹²⁵ However, 3/m/3 said most mainstream evangelical churches have a church structure that institutionally avoids dictatorships through democratic processes that involve a horizontal form of decision making. On the contrary, the structure of CDV is highly hierarchical with a centralized form of decision making. The role of the council as democratic force is not clear.

As in the former cases, the manner in which pastors are appointed seems to be arbitrarily decided by the principal pastor through the “magical” event of presbiterio. Therefore one gets the impression that CDV has a rather authoritarian structure, even though it is more subtle than in the former cases. All interviewees claim that there are female pastors in CDV, but there are no women pastors leading services, which forms

¹²² “No pensamos que al terminar eres pastor o líder, solo te da herramientas para que estés preparado si Dios te llama al ministerio.” 3/m/2.

¹²³ “...contamos con muchas pastoras...” 3/m/2.

¹²⁴ “Son las esposas de los pastores.” 3/f/4.

¹²⁵ América Latina vivió por dictaduras y así fue también en sus iglesias...se vuelvan leales al pastor y el pastor se vuelve dictador y yo no estoy de acuerdo con esas iglesias.” Barriger.

another contradiction. The issue of tithing is also controversial. Even though in different ways, the church emphasizes the importance of tithing and donations, it was communicated to me that only 20% of members tithe. This could be related to the fact that many members are not able to tithe because of their economic condition and since many members are young, they probably don't tithe yet, but will do so in the future.

4.4.4 Potential

Potential has Baptist roots and is supported by the Southern Baptist convention in the USA. As the observations showed, Potential attracts younger generations between 15 and 30 years of age, which are younger than in CDV. I usually could talk to them immediately without making appointments etc. Members seemed extremely laid back and unpretentious during the interviews. In some ways, Potential is similar to CDV, although it's smaller and has more of a family atmosphere. The local pastor was interviewed in English since he is not fluent in Spanish. Services are also entirely in English, which doesn't seem to be a problem. Some Peruvian interviewees also preferred to talk to me in English. The information received in the interviews reveal that Potential is not a typical international church. Daniel Klopp is "campus pastor" and due to the structure of Potential, he functions as local pastor, while the "lead pastor" Troy Gramling is the principal pastor. Unfortunately I did not have the opportunity to interview Troy Gramling; therefore Daniel Klopp was interviewed as campus pastor (as he is called in Potential) and a lay pastor represented the views of a local pastor.

4.4.4.1 Social backgrounds, mobility and Lifestyles

Daniel Klopp

"People come from everywhere in Lima to Miraflores because it's a central district that attracts everybody and is easily reachable" according to campus pastor Klopp. In Potential, descriptions of radical life changes after becoming a Christian among the

interviewees were more common than in CDV, but not among the Peruvians. Klopp himself was a former drug addict.

While the believers come from socially higher associated classes, the principal pastor talks about his life in Ventanilla, a marginal and dangerous district in Callao. He described his life story in detail. He came to Peru in the year 2000 as psychologist to give a conference on how to get out of drugs. Impacted by the poverty in Peru, he founded an NGO in which he worked 12 years. He worked with football clubs to get youngsters in marginal areas in Lima off the streets. In Ventanilla he says, "...we have changed the lives of 50 youngsters. It was very dangerous; my wife and I had to wear bulletproof vests...in Ventanilla Alta, where the program is based, eight of our group carry weapons."¹²⁶ Being asked about what he thinks about his principal international pastor Troy Gramling in Cooper City who regularly boasts about his expensive sports car, he comments: "He knows that he is doing great work to help the people here and in other countries that he is part of that. In my case it is not about money but out of the heart...I lived in Ventanilla without water and a group of Mafioso had put a price of \$5000 on my head. I don't live for myself anymore, but Jesus lives in me and what I am doing is not for me, it's for Christ and what I want to, is impact the lives of people so that they change their lives to Jesus."¹²⁷ He states that by US standards he still lives under the poverty line as a Potential pastor. His dramatic testimony is also reflected in his services. His story is impressive and it probably is convincing to the benefactors in the US who finance the campuses in Peru 100% (4/f/3) and donate the annual budget of two million dollars for the church's community work (Klopp). Since he became the principal pastor of Potential, his NGO now belongs to Potential and is named the Ventanilla campus, and is included in the worldwide campuses of Potential. The only Latin American campuses are located in Peru.

¹²⁶ "Hemos cambiado la vida de 50 jóvenes. Era muy peligroso, con mi esposa teníamos que usar chaleco de antibalas....en ventanilla alta donde tenemos este programa del grupo ocho tienen armas." Daniel Klopp.

¹²⁷ "...él sabe que está haciendo una gran obra para apoyar a la gente de aquí y otros países y que é les parte de esto.... En mi caso no se trata de plata sino del corazón..yo viví en Ventanilla sin agua...un grupo de mafiosos de Callao habían puesto un precio por mi cabeza de 5 mil dólares. Yo se que ya no vivo, que Cristo vive en mí, que lo que hago no es para mí es para Cristo, lo que quiero es impactar en la vida de la gente para que ellos cambien sus vidas para Jesús." Daniel Klopp, p.1-2.

Local Pastor

The local pastor affirms that Potential has a cultural diversity of members. “We have not only white Americans; we have black and Latin Americans. We want every kind of people from all social classes.” (4/P/1) Due to its location and primary use of the English language, Potential also attracts expats from other countries like Canada and the US (4/P/1). The local pastor says: “Peruvians are very oriented towards the US. They like to go out to taste the world. Peruvians really like the American flavor, more than other Latin Americans” (4/P/1).

Members

When asked about where Potential members come from, 4/f/3 responded, “They are from the Lima center area, not from the conos: Miraflores, San Isidro, Surco... mostly from San Isidro and other similar places having good houses, nice cars and their own enterprises.”¹²⁸ The interviewees from Potential, with one exception, all live in upscale districts in Lima (4/m/5; 4/f/2; 4/m/6; 4/f/3). The one exception lives in the cono district Villa Salvador (4/f/4). All members are professionals or are studying to be professionals in recognized universities. Only two of them came from a migratory background (4/m/1; 4/f/4). The majority comes from classical Limenean families.

The Peruvians from Potential have middle to upper middle class backgrounds with a few exceptions and did not have extreme life experiences before coming to the church. Some are professionals who use the English language in their work and appreciate the opportunity to practice their English in church (4/f/2; 4/m/5). Other are economists (4/m/6) or experts in informatics (4/m/1, 4/f/7), who expect to find a job in an international enterprise or intent to emigrate to the US (4/f/2; 4/m/6, 4/f/7). All interviewees mentioned that they were attracted to Potential by its social capital, which will be expanded upon in the section about preferences. Social issues were seldomly mentioned. One exception is a member who had to come back to Peru from Florida

¹²⁸ “Son del área de Lima centro, no de los conos: Miraflores, San Isidro, Surco....Sobre todo si es gente de San Isidro y otros lugares similares que tienen buenas casas, buenos carros y sus negocios...” 4/f/3.

because of her involvement in gang related crime. As a former gang member in LA, 4/f/4 (a daughter of Peruvian emigrants) spent her childhood from the ages of 12 to 17, in gangs and had a criminal record. Then she moved to Florida to change her life. There she came to Potential. She became the director of a marketing enterprise but when her past crimes came to light, she was deported back to Peru. Now at the age of 35 she is managing her enterprise with the help of her husband in the US from her home office in Miraflores, Lima (4/f/3).

4.4.4.2 Religious background and mobility

Daniel Klopp

The campus pastor, as well as members, point out that Potential aims to attract “people from the street who don’t know Jesus” (4/P/1; Daniel Klopp, 4/f/3). One can infer that the “people” referred to in this quote are non-practicing Catholics, similar to the target group of the other churches.

4/P/1 and 4/f/3 echo the claims presented by the local pastor in the previous section.

Members

It is interesting that various interviewees came to Potential from CDV (4/m/1; 4/f/2; 4/m/5). Other members came from Baptist churches (4/f/4; 4/f/3). The member from the district was Baptist as well, whereas the non-practicing Catholics (4/m/6; 4/f/7) came from upscale Limenean districts.

Potential does not belong to the category “non-denominational mega-church”, because it is a mega-church with a denominational structure, having different campuses worldwide. On the other hand, Potential is a member of the Association of the Southern Baptist convention, which defines them denominationally as Baptists. The fact that several Potential members come from CDV, underscores an interesting trend concerning religious mobility within Neopentecostalism. Two interviewees mentioned having friends from CDV who came with them to Potential (4/m/1; 4/f/2), which

exemplifies this trend. In terms of social and religious mobility, it would be interesting to determine whether the CDV members participated in other Neopentecostal churches before coming to CDV. While 4/m/1 (with a migratory background) converted in Alianza before coming to CDV, Neolimenean 4/f/2 living in Miraflores, was “born” in Alianza and “grew up” in Emmanuel before coming to CDV (4/f/2). On the contrary, San Isidro resident 4/m/5 came to CDV directly as a non-practicing Catholic. Basically the people from the conos demonstrate a religious mobility from other evangelical churches and Neopentecostal churches. 4/f/2 came from a cono district, studied English language and now works and lives in Miraflores. When asked whether her migration from one church to another helped her to adapt to the new social life, she commented that in each of the Neopentecostal churches, she met people in similar situations.

Because the Potential campus in Miraflores is new, as are its members, no trend could be established about why current members might leave the church. 4/f/2 said that Potential reaches believers who are “...the ones that are tired of listening to the same thing in other churches and left, by coming here, they can encounter something new.”¹²⁹ She argues that Potential is even more modern and youth oriented than CDV. “There are more interesting people.”¹³⁰ She found Potential through an Internet search, because as an English teacher, she wanted to have more contact with native English speakers and friends. In Potential she found them. Therefore her mobility did not occur by accident, but on purpose by means of an internet search. How she came to the church supports the idea that new members are attracted to Potential, not only by low-tech media through friends and family, but also by high-tech media (the internet). Similarly, 4/m/6 also mentions the more attractive social capital in Potential.

The interviewee from Villa Salvador mentioned that she came to Potential through a public announcement with the heading: “Do you want to practice your English?”¹³¹ It’s interesting that one looking for an English course ends up attending a church. Coming from a lower social class, she did not find the church through family or friends, which shows that her induction into the church did not occur through her natural social

¹²⁹ “...cansadas de escuchar lo mismo de otras iglesias y se han retirado puedan venir aquí y encontrar algo nuevo.” 4/f/2.

¹³⁰ “Hay más gente interesante.” 4/f/2.

¹³¹ “¿Quieres practicar tu inglés?” 4/f/4.

environment. Through its use of high tech media to increase its market share, Potential shows new and creative ways of attracting new members to the church. On the other hand, by advertising in the poorer conos as Villa Salvador, Potential supports the idea that it is not exclusive. In the other churches, all members came to know the church through low-tech media.

However, Potential's interviewees mostly were gained through low tech media through friends (4/m/1, 4/f/7) and family (4/f/3, 4/f/4, and 4/m/5). Compared to the other cases the interviews with members of Potential show that parents are brought through their sons and daughters (4/f/4; 4/m/5), whereas in Agua Viva it was the opposite.

4/m/1 shows the relationship between church membership and social mobility. His parents came from Cusco "soy hijo de familia provinciana" and are members of Alianza, a typical middle class evangelical church. As a computer professional, he belongs to a socially higher class, international bilingual church in Miraflores – Potential. Therefore it seems that his household is comprised of two generations living in two different very different religious contexts.

The way of 4/f/2 shows almost an ideal case for the present theory. She uses the typical vocabulary to explain the mobility. "I was born in Alianza." "I grew up in Emmanuel" (4/f/2). The creative innovative services attracted her in CDV and even more in Potential.

Reflection

As the interviews with Potential members showed, the claim of the pastors and members that the church targets only non-practicing Catholics, has to be questioned. Most of the interviewees were ex-members of one or more evangelical churches, which are not Pentecostal churches, but mainstream evangelical churches (Baptist) or non-denominational mega-churches like CDV and Emmanuel. Especially members with a migratory background, tend to have participated in other evangelical churches which is supported by the typical vocabulary they use such as "I was born", "grew up" when talking about their experiences in other churches.

Potential not only uses low-tech media to attract people, but also high tech media. The internet and advertisements for language classes attracted the interviewees to the church. The interviews proved that low-tech media is an attractive force for the younger generation who then brought their parents. In Agua Viva, this trend occurred in the reverse – parents introduced their children to the church.

The size of a new, small young church permits each one of its religious actors to play a more important and active role than they typically do in large, traditional churches with many members. This is supported by the fact that most interviewees moved to the smaller church of Potential from CDV, which affirms the theory of market share. The size of a church and its membership plays a role in attracting new members since this is connected to preferences, priorities and motivations that new members have to join a church and therefore should be examined more closely. This is the focus of the next section.

4.4.4.3 Preferences, priorities and motivations

Daniel Klopp

The campus pastor explains why Potential puts an emphasis on Starbucks.

“We do it because Starbucks is very famous US brand and it’s a way in which the people can associate us.”¹³² The association of postmodern people of emerging social classes to international commercial products seems to form an attractive force to come to a church for Potential members.

Local pastor

The local pastor mentions music as significant factor of motivation: “I grew up with rock music and when I came to Potential I thought, wow, this is really rock music, let the guitar scream a bit. I like that too. Cool!” (4/P/1)

¹³² “Lo hacemos porque Starbucks es muy conocido allá y es una forma en que la gente nos puede asociar.” Daniel Klopp.

A specialty of Potential compared to CDV is the presence of the US coffee brand “Starbucks” on Potential’s webpage, in sermons as well as in the interviews. US missionary and local pastor 4/P/1 explains that in the US they serve Starbucks coffee during service. He mentions a “connect list” which invites representatives of successful economic enterprises to attend special events at Potential. He rebutted my argument that this seems to be a way of fundraising by placing advertisements in sermons, etc. by saying, “No, we encourage members to buy Starbucks coffee; in the US we serve it. We tried to do that here but it didn’t work”.

The unusual practice of promoting consumers goods in a Christian service was explained as the church using secular elements that attract secularized people from an international metropolitan city, who don’t know God (4/P/1). 4/P/1 stressed that Potential does not want to make the same mistakes as other churches; Potential accepts that it exists in a commercialized and secularized postmodern society. This seems to be logic behind the existence of Potential as an international church in general. Apart from the marketing, it was difficult to explore the actual priorities of the church. Historically one would expect it to have Baptist religious convictions, but the pastor does not put any emphasis on baptism. “Actually, it is not important” (4/P/1).

Members

The English language itself seems to be product as well as part of a marketing strategy for people who are in the process of social progression. The language forms a distinctive and educationally exclusive element, since one needs to have a certain level of English comprehension in order to follow a 45-minute sermon. Many members join Potential to “know people from another country.”¹³³ The social networks in Potential are described as an important factor of participation. The small size of the church allows members to develop their individual talents, practice English and get to know the different life reality in the US as a country one aims to emigrate to (4/m/5; 4/m/6; 4/f/2). 4/f/3 speaks frankly about another motivation: “... lonely single mothers come to look

¹³³ “...conocer gente de otro país.” 4/m/1; 4/f/2; 4/f/4; 4/m/6; 4/m/5.

for a husband”¹³⁴ 4/f/4 seems to support this when she says: “I actually received an invitation of a person who came to Peru, we fell in love and I planned to go there.” However, because she couldn’t obtain a visa, she could not go to live with him (4/f/4). The idea that the church is a “marriage market” is curious. 4/f/4 says that in Potential: “Unfortunately there are young girls who see an American and are like leaves that move and I think its similar with the men ... so if they see a person like you, who is pretty and white, the men won’t move and are there listening to your sermon and you have a bag full of men who follow you, yes, this is true and it happens with the youngsters. Therefore I think it’s like an attraction for the men.”¹³⁵ She insists that in general the presence of gringos plays an important factor of motivation. “If I ask you (a gringa) to accompany me to the door to call the people I know that they would come because you call their attention.”¹³⁶ Listening to her I was reminded that in all my visits to the church, there were gringos in front of the door who welcomed the visitors. In terms of the reason for participating in the church, many mentioned a new positive attitude (4/m/1; 4/f/2; 4/m/6). The worship was also mentioned as important factor of motivation by all interviewees (4/m/1; 4/f/3; 4/m/5; 4/m/6), 4/P/1).

In the case of the ex-CDV members, their emphasis on worship as a motivational factor surprised me given CDV’s emphasis on high tech in their services, while in Potential the worship is presented with a simple band and partly takes place only virtually on screen. For the interviewees who declared that the Potential worship as more motivational, the use of the English language was mentioned as a motivating factor, which obviously has greater value to the members than the translated Hillsong titles in CDV. It’s worthwhile to mention that every song in CDV was originally written and performed in English, but in order to serve the Latin American audience they were translated into Spanish. It will be interesting to see if CDV, feeling the market pressure of Potential, will follow its lead and also offer services in English.

¹³⁴ “...madres solteras solas o mujeres que vienen a buscar novio.” 4/f/3.

¹³⁵ “... lamentablemente, hay jovencitas que ven a una persona americana y están como hojas que se mueven, creo igual debe pasar con los caballeros...entonces cuando ven una persona así como tú, bonita, blanca, los hombres no se mueven y están allí, si escuchan la prédica y tú dices me voy para allá tienes un maletín de hombres siguiéndote, sí, eso es verdad pasa con los jovencitos, entonces yo creo que es como una atracción para los hombres...” 4/f/4

¹³⁶ “si yo te digiera acompáñame a la puerta a llamar a la gente, sé que la gente vendría porque tú llamarías mucho la atención.” 4/f/4.

In terms of denominational theology, only the ex-Baptist members enforce Baptist priorities by saying that baptism is a very important rite of integration, since it is a Baptist church (4/f/4). The majority don't agree. In fact, the actual religious convictions of members are very unclear and don't seem to play a significant role. Prosperity theology seems to be a significant product of Potential which was affirmed in the interviews, observations of sermons and the webpage. 4/f/3 was asked what she thought about Pr. Troy's sermons on luxury goods, and she responded: "It's important I believe. When I was in the Baptist church the pastor said: I don't have a new car, I don't have anything new, a little house... I don't agree with that, because I am daughter of the king, why would I say that I have little? When I got to Peru someone gave me \$10,000 to help me and I gave testimony that in the US I got more tithes, if they told us to donate a bike I gave two and here I gave \$2500 to a girl, that was everything I had in my bank account. So when I received the \$10,000 I did not say: wow, but this is the Lord and he has put it in the heart of man and when I gave \$2500 it was because the Lord put it into my heart. It's common that one gives and receives."¹³⁷ Her self-description as being "hija del Rey" shows the typical belief of Potential members that prosperity theology generates material blessing".

Reflection

All interviewees negated the advertisements of Mc Donald's that my friend and I saw. To show commercial advertisements during a sermon raises the impression of masked advertising. As the interviews revealed, Potential's authorities clearly feel ashamed of this practice, while on the other hand they publicly promote well known brands that symbolize the American way of life by promoting such brands as Starbucks coffee and Pizza Hut by announcing in services that "hot and fresh pizza", from Pizza Hut awaits

¹³⁷ "Bueno es importante creo, cuando yo estaba en la iglesia bautista el pastor decía yo no tengo carro nuevo, yo no tengo nada nuevo, una casa pequeña. Yo no estoy de acuerdo con ello porque si yo soy hija del Rey entonces porque voy a quedar bien diciendo que tengo poco. Cuando llegué a Perú alguien me dio 10.000\$ para ayudarme y yo doy testimonio de eso, en EE.UU daba más del diezmo, si pedían donar una bicicleta, trataba de llevar dos, aquí le di a una chica 2500\$ que era lo único que yo tenía en el banco. Entonces cuando recibí los 10.000 yo no dije wow, sino dije: así es el Señor y le puso en el corazón del hombre y cuando doné los 2500\$ es porque el Señor lo puso en mi corazón...Es común que uno recibe y da." 4/f/3, p.2.

first time comes after the service. This merger of the commercial and religious worlds shows that Potential tries to attract the emerging social classes through the commercialization of its services. There is no doubt that mainline churches would not look favorably on this practice. Due to the different social islands in Peru, Starbucks is particularly popular in the upper and middle class districts of Lima and attracts the emerging social classes. Using the symbol in Potential, in a way, shows exclusivist tendencies since the “Peruvian masses” would not go to Starbucks because they cannot afford to do so. In Peru, the custom to meet for a coffee in a coffee shop only exists in the upper class colonial quarters of Lima. Today, the religious symbol of “Starbucks” represents a new foreign lifestyle and new cultural identity of Lima’s emerging classes which prefer consuming international products in order to separate themselves from the marginalized Peruvian masses.

4.4.4.4 Integration

Daniel Klopp

Regarding the importance of baptism for integration, Pr. Daniel says, “To me it’s not important, it depends on you. It’s not obligatory. It does not mean that you are not with Christ if you don’t do it.”¹³⁸ His answer demonstrates a flexible usage of doctrine in Neopentecostalism in general. While he downplays the importance of baptism, he does not explain how Potential actually integrates its members.

Local pastor

The local pastor told me that, “Everybody who comes we consider a member...we ask him to help us immediately, play guitar and know Jesus at the same time” (4/P/1). Even though Potential pastors claim the church attracts members from Catholicism, there doesn’t seem to be an actual conversion process. The interviews reflect this. Religious

¹³⁸ “para mí no es lo más importante, depende de ti. No es obligatorio y no significa que no estás con Cristo si no lo haces.” Daniel Klopp.

mobility could explain this, since it this would not be necessary for evangelical members who already were “born” and “grew up” in another evangelical church to go through his process again.

The church takes into account that members need to work. “We consider that people work and the traffic. They usually cannot be in groups during the week from 8.00 am to 9.00 pm and after that, it is too late” (4/P/1). Potential members tend to have a full timetable as professionals and students. They only come to church on Sunday. However, Potential members can also participate in a home group during the week if they wish to do so. An active member in Potential, 4/P/1 spends “at least two times a week” in church activities.

Members

Potential does not seem to put pressure on its members. Members mention an undefined transformation through positive feelings and attitudes that seem to be products of their integration and participation in the church. Prosperity theology has a strong influence on all members’ life dimensions, beyond financial implications. The sermons of Troy Gramling are filled with stories in which he tells people that he did not have anything when he came to faith and how he gave away the last things he possessed, which led him to riches, including a fancy new sports car.

The interviewees of members from CDV did not give similar stories of financial wealth, but they did mention the special atmosphere that made them feel that they were “a part of another world” (4/f/2; 4/m/6). “It feels like I’m in another world and I really like that” (4/m/6).

This “other world” seems to be comprised of the English language, fast food and the consumption of foreign made products. The church gives members the opportunity to live their faith in this new world, which at first sight seems to leave no place for religion.

4.4.4.5 Organizational structure

As the local pastor points out, the worldwide goal of Potential is to establish a network of campuses in different countries on all continents that consists of 50 congregations and about 100,000 people. So far, the international network consists of six to seven campuses. A new campus in New York City is about to open. The Peruvian campus pastor coordinates all Latin American campuses. The sermon and service “liturgy” of the principal pastor Troy Gramling is broadcast live from Cooper City, the main campus in Florida, to all other campuses in order to ensure unification between the different campuses.

Daniel Klopp

“Potential is headquartered in the US and everything comes from there: the sermon, baptism dates, activities.”¹³⁹ ...“We are eight campuses and want to ensure that Miami and Ventanilla all have the same message.”¹⁴⁰ That is his explanation of why the sermon is always on screen in English. One might ask whether the campus pastor actually can be compared to a principal pastor, or merely carries out the decisions made in Cooper city.

Klopp states that only 4% of Potential members tithe. He speaks of 600 members and 8 foreign pastors, who are all male. When asked about how the church is sustained, he openly states that the annual donations for Lima amount to \$144.000 US. Other than that, the church is completely financed from the US. Daniel Klopp is a psychologist and as his formal training he mentions that he completed two years of biblical studies and that he has studied the evangelical doctrine.

¹³⁹ “El formato de Potential es que la sede en EE.UU. es la cabeza y de ellos sale todo, prédica, fecha de bautizo, actividades.” Daniel Klopp.

¹⁴⁰ “Somos ocho sedes y queremos que tanto aquí como en Miami, o en ventanilla todos tengan el mismo mensaje.” Daniel Klopp.

Local pastor

4/P/1 says that his campus pastor “might have studied theology”. His statement expresses the minor role theological education plays in the Potential church, which was suspected in the observations. Academic education in general is highly valued. “Pastor Troy does research about what makes churches unacceptable in society. We want to avoid making the same mistakes as others. He reads a book once a week to stay updated, to learn more, to be right on top” (4/P/1). He however does not explain what kind of books the pastor actually reads.

Members

“It’s a Baptist church.” (4/f/2). The fact that the missionaries have been educated in biblical studies in a Baptist seminary and sent from the Southern Baptist convention suggests that the church shares the same common convictions of the Baptist church. However, Baptist convictions are given little attention in Potential as was pointed out by the pastors of the church. In terms of decision making, 4/f/2 states that the pastor names his people in different areas. The decision “...depends on the maturity and experience of the person who is evaluated.”¹⁴¹ Big decisions are made in Florida. In terms of theological education, the missionaries are foreigners who have been educated in different fields. The church’s structure does not seem to support the appointment of Peruvian pastors since Potential does not have a leader’s school in Lima.

Reflection

The limited theological education of pastors coincides with the role of the Bible in services and sermons. It’s merely glanced at, instead of being the focus of sermons. The

¹⁴¹ “...depende de su madurez y experiencia de la persona evaluada.” 4/f/2.

Bible is also interpreted very arbitrarily to fit the priority of prosperity theology. Academic education in general has high value as the references to statistics and science in sermons reflect. The pastor seems to include this information in his sermons in order to make his message appear more convincing to a secularly educated audience comprised of people in the higher social classes.

The church is connected to the southern Baptist convention. The principal pastor in Lima has little authority and seems to be more of a moderator than a pastor because the actual sermon is broadcast live from Cooper City to the Lima campus. Even the dates for baptism are dictated from the US.

The hierarchical structure of the church perceived through the interviews, coincides to the observations made after viewing the church's internet page and services which celebrate typical American holidays and customs. The very different image of the principal pastor in Cooper city and the campus pastor in Lima requires additional investigation. Though Klopp is also a gringo, he presents himself very differently than the lead pastor in Cooper city. The fact that he lives in a dangerous district and has to wear a bullet proof vest to ensure his safety, portrays him as a brave missionary in stereotyped "dangerous and poor Latin America country".

In comparison, Troy Gramling wears extravagant designer suits and boasts about his sports car. In doing so, he serves as symbol and role model for young emerging classes and future "winners" of Peruvian society. The two different pastoral images seem to be the perfect combination necessary to attract people to the church who have very different economic and cultural profiles.

Even though Potential emphasizes the importance of tithes, it is financed to 100% from the US. This probably has to do with the recent establishment of the church in Lima. The interview with the ex-US migrant and her experience in Cooper city might show an intended future path of Potential in Lima. After listening to the sermons of Troy Gramling, it is difficult for me to believe that members do not donate and/or tithe regularly. In terms of the existence of female pastors, the situation is not clear.

4.4.5 Contrast of the different cases

The following summary compares and contrasts every aspect and subject analyzed in the different cases in order to find similarities and differences among the different churches, member groups and leaders. It must be mentioned that the variables often cannot be separated from one another and will be presented in a flexible way.

4.4.5.1 Social background and lifestyles

As the cases show, a criterion of distinction between the different cases was the cultural and social backgrounds of the members of the churches studied.

In Agua Viva, interviewees described how the church helped them to escape the vicious circle of poverty, addictions, violence, etc. Of the four churches studied, Agua Viva was the only Neopentecostal mega-church, whose members openly admitted that they had suffered from these societal problems. This could be explained by the fact that the majority of the members of Agua Viva have a migratory background (within Peru), are members of the lower social classes who live in the outskirts of Lima, have sub-standard levels of education and perform low paying, menial jobs. This impression is reflected in the religious mobility of Agua Viva members to the church who typically come from traditional Pentecostal and low class Neopentecostal churches. This trend will be explained in the next section.

The situation of members at Emmanuel is similar. A major social problem mentioned by local pastors and members at Emmanuel are dysfunctional families. That also seems to be the case at CDV as well. The majority of members in Emmanuel tend to be younger than in Agua Viva. Many Emmanuel members work as professionals or are studying in universities to be professionals, while their parents are members of the lower social classes, similar to the Agua Viva members. Social mobility among the different generations is the greatest in Emmanuel and most of the local pastors and members have a family background of immigration from the provinces. The

investigation of the social structure of Emmanuel showed that most did not live or work in the upscale San Isidro district in which Emmanuel is located. The majority travel long distances on public transport to attend the church on Sunday and other church functions during the week.

The social reality of CDV members is different. They live in the upscale districts of Lima, are better educated, are professionals and their families have a classical Limenean background in the middle and upper middle classes. This is also true for Potential members who share the same social and demographic characteristics.

The different lifestyle of the younger generation compared to that of their parents, is also reflected in their choice of church. While their parents' generation attends traditional Pentecostal churches, close to their homes, the young generations travel to Neopentecostal mega-churches outside of the districts in which they live, which in essence are their "homes away from home". This is closely connected to the variable of religious mobility.

The interviews in all four cases affirmed the impressions of the churches by viewing the churches' webpages.

Agua Viva gives the impression of members having a rather "conservative lifestyle". The church's younger generation seems to gain the basic conditions of social progress, by turning their backs on unhealthy and/or addictive habits (already mentioned). The strict discipleship courses, strict rules of the church, and pressure to evangelize require Agua Viva members to structure and manage their lives carefully and this serves as the foundation for social progress which is reinforced by the coaching of members provided by the church, similar to Pentecostalism. Members and local pastors contradict the claim of the principal pastor that the secondary and university education that members receive through the church is highly valuable.

Emmanuel members clearly demonstrate a different social situation than those of Agua Viva. Emmanuel members, also belong to lower social classes from the con-urban districts of Lima, however, they usually belong to the second or third generation of

Neolimeneans who have socially progressed, in comparison to their parents generation. This young generation is working hard to prosper and seem to have a “progressive lifestyle” according to the scheme of Arellano. Examining the social backgrounds within families has proven to be interesting, especially in the case of Emmanuel where social upward mobility is perceivable among the younger generation, whose different lifestyle seems to influence their religious taste and promote religious mobility. The attraction of Emmanuel seems to be closely connected to its character of integration. The church can be characterized as being moderately progressive and integrates a broad variety of social realities into the “progressive lifestyle” identified by Arellano.

Members of the other two churches (CDV and Potential) have a “sophisticated lifestyle”, characterized by a classical Limenean background, private school education and have lived in a foreign country or are preparing to do so. Therefore CDV and Potential represent a certain exclusivism, which compared to Emmanuel’s focus on integration, seems to demonstrate a habitus of distinction of religious actors on the religious level and in terms of social inequality.

In all cases, the different groups of interviewees were asked for their perception about the social origin of members. It can be summarized that in Agua Viva the principal pastor clearly stated that people come from the lower social classes. The local pastors, as well as members themselves, stated that people come from all over Lima and from different social classes. Similarly in Emmanuel, the claim that the church attracts people from all the different social classes is consistent in all groups. However, information gained from the interviews of members as well as the service observations, show that the majority of church members live in the outskirts far away from the church’s location in San Isidro. Since the message in the church is prosperity, they seem to promote the “illusion” that members belong to the higher social classes, which tends to be a motivation for people in the lower social classes to participate in the church. It needs to be pointed out that this motivation was not mentioned directly by the interviewees, but indirectly in code/words such as blessing, which involves all different life dimensions.

In CDV and Potential, local and principal pastors claim that their churches attract people from all over Lima, however information from the interviews and statistical

information (in the case of CDV) has shown that new members come primarily from the middle and upper/middle classes. Since both churches promote international citizenship, a significant motivation for members is to be part of a religious community that builds bridges between the different life realities of its members. The results of the interviews shall determine to what extent Neopentecostal mega-churches have been successful in doing this. The role of religious pluralization as another element of distinction, a factor of prestige etc. will also be examined in this regard.

All the churches are located in central areas and attract many people who are from the lower social classes. For many of them, these churches represent the only option for finding a “home” in a district that they don’t live in. They could not attend the schools, clubs or restaurants in those areas for financial reasons. However, the churches are public places that welcome people from the conos because they do not charge entry fees etc., and therefore are inclusive and don’t discriminate.

This phenomenon has to be interpreted keeping in mind the different dimensions of the theoretical framework. On the one hand, the members’ ethnical and social backgrounds demonstrate that members in the four churches differ greatly in terms of social backgrounds, lifestyles, occupations and demographically. CDV and Potential showed various aspects that place them in the category as that of highly exclusive institutions including clubs, schools, beaches etc. On the other hand, the churches do not charge entry fees and therefore present unique options for encounters among different social classes in a fragmented society.

4.4.5.2 Religious mobility

In general, all principal pastors and local pastors refuse to admit that they target members from other evangelical denominations and claim to target only non-practicing Catholics. However, CDV principal pastor Robert Barriger, claims to heal the wounded sheep of other evangelical churches. His statement reflects the fact that CDV actually attracts a majority of its new members from other evangelical churches to a higher extent than the others. The official church voices probably do not want to be accused of

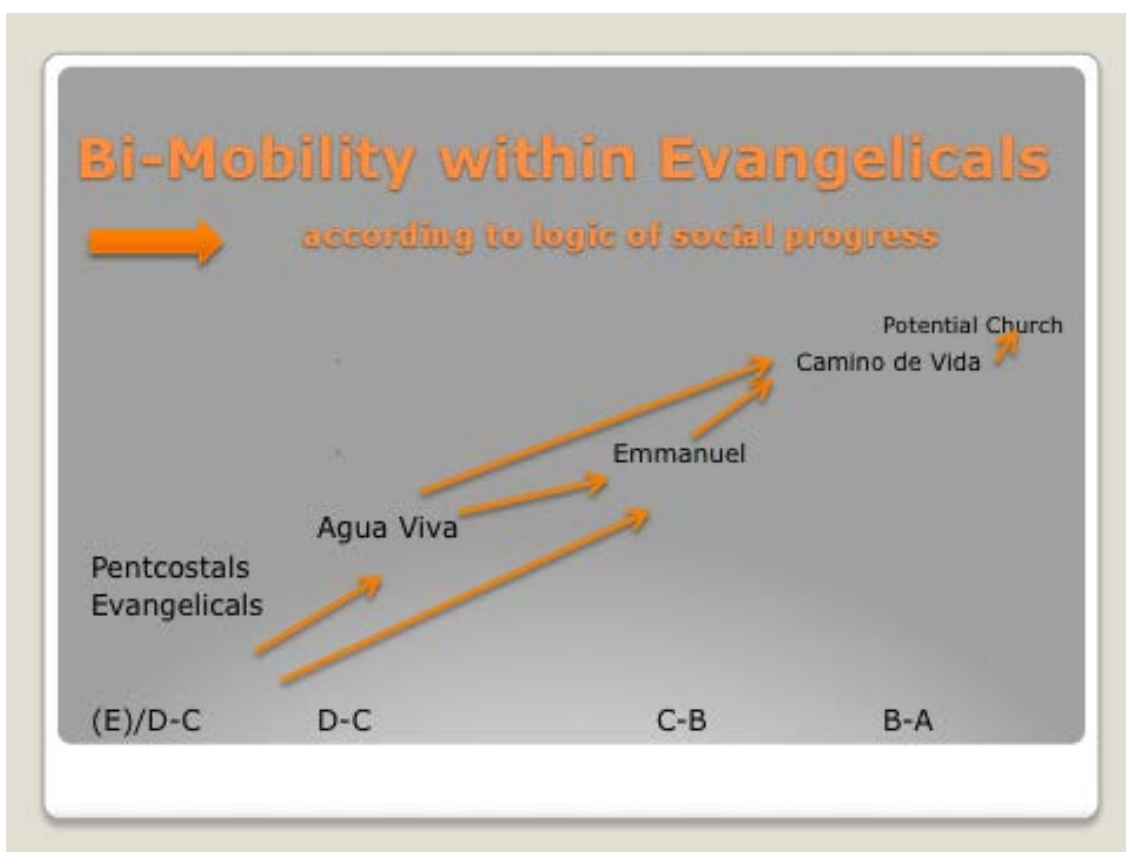
“stealing” members from other evangelical churches, as some churches have been accused of doing. The claims of these leaders were partly contradicted through some of the interviews with members who pointed out that their church also attracts many members from other evangelical or Pentecostal churches, however, mobility of non-practicing Catholics directly towards the Neopentecostal churches also exists and since Catholicism forms the majority church, it is expected.

In general, the expected tendency of religious mobility from evangelical churches to Neopentecostal churches and within Neopentecostalism can be affirmed through the results of the interviews in all different churches. The answers of principal leaders about where their members tend to move to, coincided for the most part with the answers given by local pastors and church members.

In addition to indentifying general trends in religious mobility, I wanted to determine specific ways members move among churches, which on a qualitative level has to be approached with caution. Nevertheless the interviews suggest that particular ways of mobility are stronger than others. For example, not a single interviewee moved from Agua Viva to Potential, but there was strong mobility of members from CDV to Potential, although the churches share many similar characteristics. Likewise it was commonly accepted that Agua Viva members are attracted to Emmanuel rather than CDV, although the direct mobility from Agua Viva to CDV was also established by the interviews with local pastors as well.

In Agua Viva and Emmanuel there seems to be many more members with a migratory background, who live in the conos and come from Pentecostal churches such as AD, as well as low class Neopentecostal churches such as MMM. The majority of members in the socially higher connoted churches CDV and Potential, have classical Limenean family backgrounds, belong to the middle and upper middle classes and are ex-members evangelical churches such as Alianza Cristina. In my opinion, religious mobility can be visualized more specifically on two levels as the following diagrams show. I like to point out that the second tendency does not present a contradiction of the expected tendency, but serves as additional insight into the most common mobility of church members.

While the expected tendency is supported by all different groups of interviewees in all the different churches, the second tendency presents an assumption, which is based on the perceptions of mobility in the members' own groups. As has been previously mentioned, the strongest mobility is from CDV towards Potential. Both churches attract members from almost the same demographical groups living in the central districts, but in both cases, there are examples of people who come from the conos as well.



As I already mentioned, not a single interviewee in the member groups actually moved in the way described in the hypothesis from lower class connoted Agua Viva to higher class connoted CDV, as the upper diagram shows. According to the results of the analysis of interviews, religious mobility from evangelical to Neopentecostal churches tends to happen on two levels and is marked by the different social background of Neolimenean classes with migratory background on the one hand, and classical Limeneans of middle and upper middle classes on the other. In Agua Viva and

Emmanuel, members typically moved to these churches from Pentecostal churches and broad (lower class) evangelical churches. In the case of Agua Viva, it needs to be mentioned that there is a huge social gap between principal pastors and high ranking founders of the church who came from the Catholic church during the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement and have a classical Limenean background, compared to the majority of lower rank members of the church who tend to be ex-Pentecostals and typically have Neolimenean family backgrounds.

As the analysis in the previous section on priorities, integration and organizational structure has shown, in each church the two Neopentecostal cases on each level show certain similarities which could explain the tendency why members show affinity towards the other in each case (Agua Viva towards Emmanuel and CDV towards Potential). This trend is especially evident in the direction of movement of members from Agua Viva to Emmanuel and CDV members to Potential. I would like to focus on other possible aspects that enforce the religious mobility within the Neopentecostal cases.

Especially younger generations tend to move away from Agua Viva to Emmanuel. The more spectacular staging of sermons at Emmanuel is one factor of attraction, but to my mind, the interviews of members at both churches disclose another aspect of this attraction. While older religious actors show a tendency to stay in the same church, younger generations tend to move from Agua Viva to Emmanuel. The strict and demanding pyramidal system has been mentioned by pastors and members alike, as the principle reason why members leave Agua Viva. A possible explanation of this trend is that that younger members of Agua Viva, who want to progress socially, feel that they outgrow the rigid pyramidal system of Agua Viva that requires members to dedicate the vast majority of their non-working (or non-studying) hours to the church, combined with the pressure the church places on members to bring new members to the church. In contrast, Emmanuel seems less demanding in this way and offers members the opportunity to participate in socially higher connoted networks that could lead them to progress socially. While parents of interviewees attend local lower class churches in their cono districts, their children who want to progress socially, travel to Neopentecostal churches far from their parents' homes. Emmanuel seems to be the most

inclusive church because it attracts members of all generations interested in upward social mobility who want a church home in an attractive district.

Different intergenerational religious tastes exist in other churches as well. One Potential interviewee, the son of parents who migrated to Lima from the provinces, attends Alianza Cristiana in Pueblo Libre, a typical middle class evangelical church. In addition, as a young professional, he belongs to a socially higher class, international bilingual church in Miraflores (Potential), which seems to be typical, since the younger generation has gained upper social mobility. Often the church district, which differs from the home district, is close to the place of work or university of the interviewee.

As I said previously, the second tendency shall serve to accentuate and interpret the strongest affinities within the segment of Neopentecostalism, but by no means aims to contradict the broad expected and affirmed tendency.

The second tendency addresses social origin and highlights the caesura that exists between classical Limeneans and Neolimeneans. Therefore the connection between Emmanuel and CDV should be further examined, since it connects the two different social worlds of classical and Neolimeneans. The interviews show that there are a lot of visits and religious mobility from Emmanuel to CDV. Nevertheless the interviewed Emmanuel members, who did not move to CDV, spoke of an atmosphere of exclusion in CDV. “Technically they are better but they are more distant, they involve you in the church but they don’t get involved with you. Here (in Emmanuel) it’s more personal.”¹⁴² Although he describes CDV’s staging as being better than Emmanuel’s, he does not feel at home in CDV. It could be concluded that Emmanuel gives him the possibility to connect to a different reality, but the step to CDV is too far, which would explain his hesitancy to join CDV. This step would be even greater taken from AV, however, Emmanuel could be seen as a stone that is situated between two river banks that the member can step on to get to the other side, but without that stone the distance would be too far to traverse. In my opinion, his example shows how his different social background as Neolimenean presents an obstacle that prevents him from feeling

¹⁴² “En lo tecnológico son mejores pero son más distantes, ellos te involucran en la iglesia pero no se involucran contigo. Aquí es más personal.” 2/m/5.

accepted in CDV. This impression shows that the mobility through the caesura of classical Limeneans and Neolimeneans is difficult to traverse for some members given the fragmented Peruvian society. Nevertheless the interviews of the members of these churches revealed that there is a common mobility from Emmanuel towards CDV, since many Emmanuel interviewees were first introduced to CDV as guests of former Emmanuel members who had joined the church. Therefore the diagram of the mobility on two levels needs to be interpreted with caution.

An interesting tendency demonstrated by the interviewees was the mobility from CDV to Potential. In comparison to CDV, Potential is still new and is a comparably smaller Neopentecostal mega-church, although it seems to have attracted a significant portion of its members from CDV. Even though members as well as the interviewees themselves affirm the tendency, it is neglected by the local CDV pastor who is in charge of the new Miraflores location that recently opened some blocks away from the convention center where Potential has its services. When asked why CDV opened its new branch in Miraflores so close to the Potential location, the explanation given by the local pastor took the form of an analogy. He said that in Miraflores, no matter how many Starbucks open, they would all soon fill up with people. His point being that, there are enough Potential church members to fill up all the churches in Miraflores as well, regardless of their number. His comparison indicates that he believes the two churches are cut from the same cloth (the Neopentecostal mega-churches), which could explain the general acceptance of mobility between similar Neopentecostal churches. His comparison, in a way, affirms the comparison suggested by the market theory. CDV in Miraflores differs in style from the main church in Monterrico and is aesthetically more like Potential. I believe that this is by design and proves that there is competition between the two churches. The interviews have shown that an exceptionally high number of interviewees in Potential moved there from CDV.

In general, it can be summarized that the interviews affirmed the hypothesis that religious actors use the Neopentecostal mega-churches as springboards to gain higher social capital and lifestyles through the social networks that members in these churches belong to. It needs to be pointed out that in order to be used as springboards, there

needs to be a number of members who already belong to the social classes that upwardly mobile members want to be part of.

As I pointed out, the different groups of interviewees in all Neopentecostal churches accept that there exists mobility from their own church to other mega-churches. In comparison, the Pentecostal AD-directing council, vehemently refuse to admit that people move from AD to Neopentecostal mega-churches. In my opinion, this can be explained by the fact that Pentecostals identify themselves through their religious content (as do the majority of traditional churches) by explaining that their members are spiritually well “nourished”. Consequently, members leaving the church would be interpreted as a symptom of spiritual malnutrition. On the contrary, Neopentecostal churches offer members a flexible religious content, which is adapted to their life realities. Consequently, they have to accept that members leave their church after having reached a point of saturation and seem to need another message, another social network etc. The usual answer “it’s okay that people leave as long as they are participating in a church” can be interpreted as a logical consequence of the flexible message and a possible realization by the principal and local pastors of the religious mobility within Neopentecostal mega-churches to socially higher connoted churches exists. This acceptance might reveal a certain form of connection between the mega-churches, whose leaders feel close and started to have “friendships” with one another. A consciousness by the pastors that they represent the same “denomination” even though they define themselves as non-denominational would be a possible explanation, since all of them define themselves as charismatic.

In the religious mobility from evangelical churches to Neopentecostal churches, Alianza Cristiana is mentioned in all the different cases. While interviewing researchers in the evangelical field, I discovered that in the last decades, Alianza has changed its aesthetical style to that of Neopentecostal churches by employing rather spectacular elements in its services. This leads one to believe that Alianza Cristiana has discovered the tendency that its members move to the Neopentecostal churches, and is developing strategies stem this flow. This realization is also evident in the cases of Agua Viva and Emmanuel as well, which from former Pentecostal expressions and priorities have adopted Neopentecostal expressions and prosperity theology. In addition, the

evangelical practice of visiting of different churches of friends and family has also become routine in all churches. It is a common practice that evangelicals visit each other's churches for service and invite one another to church. The trend of Agua Viva members visiting Emmanuel, exemplifies a typical trend in social mobility. The ways of visiting, clearly prove the expected tendency. Similarly, CDV members often visit Potential, before they join the church.

According to Chesnut's criteria of marketing, these visits are a form of low tech marketing. The interviews in all groups and all cases demonstrate that low tech media plays a major role in exposing members to a particular church.

These visits also illustrate the importance of family ties and individualism in mobility between churches. In Agua Viva people get to know the church through family members. Often the parents bring their daughters and sons (1/P/1; 1/P/2; 1/1/f/5; 1/f/6), but not exclusively, while in the other cases it tends to be the contrary, the younger generation brings their parents to the church. In Potential the parents are exclusively brought through their sons and daughters (4/f/4; 4/m/5).

In Agua Viva the pressure to evangelize within a family, means that members need to change the profile of the family as a whole. This may be especially difficult in the lower social classes in Peru because family ties seem to be much stronger than in the more individualist metropolitan lifestyles of higher social classes, where people have the economic resources to live on their own during their studies and/or have lived in foreign countries, and subsequently are used to being separated from their families. Consequently, members of CDV and Potential, tend to have been attracted to these churches through friends and colleagues from university rather than by their family members. In Emmanuel, half of the members tend to come through friends and colleagues. This makes sense given the different lifestyles and religious tastes the younger generation has, compared to those of their parents' generation. Therefore the way in which members are introduced to a church serves as a way to classify the churches demographically and socially.

Agua Viva has many elderly members, however, the local and principal pastors claim most new converts belong to younger generations. Agua Viva is the only church of the

four cases that has a ministry for elderly people, the so called “edad de oro”. Emmanuel concentrates on other ministries such as youth, kids, matrimony, etc. Emmanuel aims to attract whole families, while CDV and Potential seem to concentrate on younger generations. These differences between the churches provide details about the demographical and social profile of the churches in the city of Lima where the younger generation is predominant.

Low tech media is used by all churches to attract new members, however, only Potential attracts members through high tech media through its webpage and advertisements for English classes. In the other cases, members are introduced to the church by family or friends who are already members.

The emphasis on conversion in Agua Viva seems to indicate that most recruits are non-practicing Catholics. The religious priority on conversion is strongest in Agua Viva and to a lesser extent in Emmanuel. In CDV and Potential there is no focus on conversion, which supports claims that these churches don't actually expect to gain non-practicing Catholics, but rather evangelicals who have already converted in other churches. In CDV the principal pastor affirms that he is aware that his members come from other evangelical churches, since CDV identifies itself as part of a renewal movement within evangelical landscape.

4.4.5.3 Products, priorities and motivation

The focus on the cases shall not exaggerate the Peruvian situation. The phenomenon of emotionality as postmodern axis compared to the more rational considered modernism is a worldwide phenomenon in the religious field, which shall be discussed in the last chapter, while in this section it seems important to restrict the interpretations to the Peruvian context.

Aesthetically Agua Viva tends to be a classical church that distinguishes itself from Pentecostalism predominantly through its strong emphasis on prosperity theology. In contrast, Emmanuel shows an aesthetical style of a hypermodern Neopentecostal mega-church. However, the marketing strategies of Emmanuel were affirmed but apologized.

Emmanuel describes its audiovisual style as something unwelcome but necessary to call the attention of postmodern members, until the “word” is accepted by all. Humberto Lay indirectly explains this in his negative statements about postmodernism. At the other end of the media spectrum, CDV does not make any excuses for its targeting of postmodern individuals through the use of all forms of media available. CDV and Potential interviewees do not deny that they primarily employ modern media and daily themes in church, in order “not to make the same mistakes” as the traditional churches, as the local pastor in Potential points out.

The interviews affirmed that CDV and Potential, to a much higher extent than the first two mega-churches, are characterized by the postmodern leitmotif of patchwork, as Bastian described this phenomenon in Neopentecostal churches. Their marketing strategies are tools in the rapidly developing Peruvian capital where a church faces competition from all sides because of a radical change of culture caused by the globalization of the world.

Doctrinal priorities, partly mentioned on the webpages and expressed in the interviews, reveal that apart from Potential of all the churches examined, seem to be rooted in Pentecostal convictions. A connection between religious convictions and practice seems most evident in Agua Viva, since manifestations of the Holy Spirit and healing prayers are visible. When asked about their religious priority doctrine, the principal pastors of Emmanuel and CDV referred to glossolalia (a manifestation of the Holy Spirit), as a primary element of services in Pentecostal churches.

In Emmanuel, there was a small number of members who were speaking in tongues, while the majority were crying and weeping. Compared to Agua Viva and Emmanuel, CDVs emphasis on glossolalia does not correspond to the observations made in the services. In none of CDV services, did I observe anyone speaking in tongues. When asked about this, CDV interviewees’ talked of the danger of making new members or visitors feels uncomfortable. This imparts important information about social status of the intended “new” members and visitors that CDV wishes to attract. As a “sophisticated” church, CDV aims to attract higher educated classes, namely, rational thinking people who may consider speaking in tongues to be a rather primitive expression of faith.

In Agua Viva and Emmanuel, members receive regular courses of indoctrination where they study the basics of their faith often by learning the texts by memory. In the higher class connoted churches CDV and Potential, there is no similar requirement for members. Consequently, it is more difficult for members to express actual religious convictions in these churches because the focus of sermons is on emotions and therefore religious convictions do not seem to play a significant role for their identification with the church. This is exemplified by the often repeated answer “simplemente Jesús” that members gave when asked about their common religious convictions. When they were asked to specify what “simplemente Jesus” meant, members mentioned a personal transformation through positive feelings and attitudes gained in the church. In the cases of Agua Viva and Emmanuel, the process of transformation is explained by members as a personal transformation in terms of a different commitment, changes in specific habits, perspectives of life etc. In CDV and Potential, transformation is a process of change in the emotions of members rather than an altering of religious convictions. However, members are expected to immediately participate in the church as the comments of the principal pastor indicate, “Everybody who comes we consider member...we ask him to help us immediately” (4/P/1). “Who doesn’t serve is worth nothing.” (Robert Barriger). The emphasis of transformation in CDV and Potential seems to be on action rather than confession. The focus on serving also is shown in Agua Viva and Emmanuel, where evangelization presents a priority of active members to attract new members. These priorities correspond to the products these churches offer potential members who differ in terms of education, social class, age their religious taste.

To describe priorities and factors of motivation in the market theory, I need to point out that all of the interviewees prioritized their religious motivations and often responded using expressions like “God brought me here”, to explain why they had joined the church. The interviewees indicated that belonging to social networks played a major role as a factor of motivation and this supports the idea that they should not be seen simply as consumers who went “church shopping” in the mega-church marketplace. It seems they sincerely wanted to find a new church home, new friends and above all, wanted a personal relationship with God. According Levine (1993), their religious

identities need to be considered and cannot be neglected when describing their priorities.

A particular religious priority that is worth mentioning is related to a predominant social problem in Lima and other Latin American cities - the widespread phenomenon of dysfunctional families which do not have a father figure. The religious emphasis on the father role of God, which many interviewees especially in Emmanuel and CDV mentioned, seems to be a direct product offered by churches which aim to fill the void left in families by an absent father. Another religious priority which is closely connected is “manhood” as described by Barriger, the principal pastor of CDV.

The product and priority of “prosperity” as an influencing factor of social mobility are mentioned by believers in a codified way by speaking of “blessings” in life dimensions. To be a “hija/o del Rey” (daughter/son of the king), discloses a product and priority of all cases even though it tends to be differently presented in each church. All churches promote prosperity theology, but it plays a greater role in Agua Viva and Potential. In Potential it seems to have stronger financial implications than in Agua Viva. In Potential, prosperity theology exists in its purest form: You have to give financially in order to be “blessed”.

When I asked about priorities and products in the churches that enforce social mobility, I found out that the churches offer different “products” on a material and symbolical levels. In Emmanuel, interviewees mentioned courses to establish one’s own enterprise, management of money etc. In Agua Viva, social progress is a significant element of the church’s work through the principal pastor. In CDV, social progress takes the form of achieving self-realization through the development of one’s own creative talents and interests which may also be useful to develop the abilities needed to be successful in a related professional career. In Potential these abilities were also mentioned as motivational factors. As a smaller church with fewer members, Potential needs every hand.

Self-realization as a significant aspect of post-modernism, is a product offered by these churches and represents an expression of religious practice in Neopentecostal mega-

churches which is promoted by the organizational structure of the churches which emphasize the importance of a diverse lay leadership through teams and ministries.

Due to their international orientation, CDV and Potential offer international citizenship to its members by giving them the opportunity to practice the English language in church. The English language has become a key component for upward social mobility, and fluency in the English language, is increasingly becoming necessary to get a well paid job.

For all cases, social capital gained by participating in social networks is a significant factor of religious mobility and is closely connected to the aspirations of members in this regard, especially in CDV and Potential.

Having mentioned the actual priorities and motivations which correspond to social necessities, the phenomenon shall be looked at from the theoretical framework. As the last section concluded, there seems to exist an observable caesura between classical or Neolimeneans from different social and ethnic backgrounds. The churches in the central districts of the city, present people from the outskirts with an opportunity to find a new home in the middle class of society. The middle and upper middle classes from the central districts of Lima, prefer attending international churches or foreign dominated churches. Their strong desire to be considered international citizens motivates members to attend such churches as CDV and Potential since they have a strong foreign element and foreigners from the north are generally perceived as “high society”. Membership in these churches, give members a feeling of prestige and a sense of belonging to the developed world. The strong emphasis on consumption of foreign goods serves as a religious symbol that reflects the preference of members in the elitist churches CDV and Potential.

4.4.5.4 Integration

In this section, I will summarize how religious priorities are used by churches to integrate members in the churches. The interviews revealed that Agua Viva and

Emmanuel members know church doctrine by memory. In addition, Agua Viva members frequently mentioned that they have to consult their authority before answering my questions. These observations can be contrasted to the disposition of CDV and Potential members, who spoke more naturally, using their own words in the interviews. CDV members repeated the phrases imparted to them by their charismatic principal Barriger, who influences his members through his teaching which he himself learned from his own coach and teacher of charismatic leadership, John C. Maxwell. The discipleship courses in Agua Viva or Emmanuel provide members education and active involvement in the church. CDV and Potential provide their members with courses on manhood and womanhood which give them the opportunity to achieve self-realization in other fields of interests that at the same time are put to use in the church services. By making it possible for their members to study in foreign countries, these churches promote the use of the English language, which is a key factor in upward social mobility.

In Agua Viva, integration into the church involves social transformation and giving up unhealthy living habits such as smoking, drinking alcohol etc. Members of Emmanuel show how they have been transformed by adapting to a new social sphere and lifestyle. The conversion process in CDV and Potential is highly flexible and even permits a double membership in two churches as the case of 3/f/5 shows. This is reflected in the interviews by the difficulty members have describing their religious convictions, in terms of actual religious content or doctrine.

In Agua Viva and Emmanuel, integration takes place through conversion and clearly involves a religious transformation and a new religious identity of members, in CDV and Potential it seems to be less explicit, but all members refer to a personal transformation in life and a religious identity. The conversion people often underwent in other churches is not neglected but rather seems to be integrated which shows that members experience their mobility towards Neopentecostal churches within the same religious landscape. The missing element of conversion in CDV and Potential rather affirms this tendency since these churches accept that conversion of the believers already occurred in other churches. A sense of belonging is highlighted in all churches and groups of interviewees. In general the section on integration could show that all the

churches emphasize a religious identity, which the market theory does not recognize. Even though the member group in each case defines the personal transformation differently, the religious focus on religious identity as a transformation in life shows clearly that they cannot be compared to consumers.

In the context of involvement one key phrase is “quien no sirve, no sirve”, as stated by Barriger. The case of CDV shows that even though a church does not require members to accept a particular doctrine, active involvement in the church’s teams and ministries creates belonging. The situation in Potential is similar; since the pastors pointed out that they try to involve the new visitor right away. The flexible process of integration in CDV and Potential makes it difficult to describe the integration process for members (as is also the case when trying to describe religious products or priorities), but at the root of this process is a feeling of “belonging” and because of this, members cannot be depicted as mere consumers. Agua Viva and Potential represent the two extremes of the integration spectrum. In Agua Viva, the short time members need to commit to the church presents an important factor of integration. Answers about education given by the members did not go beyond the doctrinal subjects and were restricted to the discipleship courses. Integration takes place through indoctrination in the discipleship courses of Agua Viva. Members of Agua Viva need to dedicate most of their free time to the church and in doing so, renounce unhealthy living habits which help transform informal lifestyles into highly structured ones. Members mentioned this aspect as transformative force in their lives towards prosperity.

On the other hand, Potential because of its loose structure and the relatively few requirements asked of members (apart from attending the Sunday service), attract people who are part of the higher social classes with full schedules in the secular world such as business people. It can be summarized that the different strategies of the churches to integrate believers, demonstrate that they are targeting very different social classes.

4.4.5.5 Organizational structure

Even though the churches attract people from very different social classes, in terms of organizational structure, the churches are similar in many respects.

Agua Viva's pyramidal vertical hierarchy explains why members in the lower ranks and even local pastors respond to questions by stating "I am not authorized; you have to ask my leader..." In Emmanuel's vertical bureaucracy, the principal pastor plays a special role. Because of the sophisticated discourse of Barriger, the authoritarian elements at CDV are more difficult to detect but these elements became discernable when he stated in the decision making process "I (Barriger) have the last word".¹⁴³

As a small church, Potential has more of a family structure, but due its dependence on the headquarters in Florida, even relatively little decisions are decided in Cooper city. The principal pastor preaches via a live internet feed to all campuses, relegating Lima's Campus pastor to the role of a moderator.

Compared to most evangelical churches, which have democratically elected councils, the Neopentecostal case-churches are structured top down with the principal pastor. None of the churches have a democratically elected governing body. This detail needs to be considered in the context of Peru, as a young developing democracy in which this group of churches forms the most visible segment within the evangelical landscape and has a strong influence on Peruvian society.

In all churches the way of becoming a pastor is not transparent. Theological education is considered an important element but an academic degree is not a determining factor as to whether someone becomes a pastor (or not). In Agua Viva, future pastors need to "bear fruits", which means they need to bring at least 2000 new members to the church to prove they are worthy of this vocation. In Emmanuel interviewees of the different groups all affirmed that the appointment of pastors is done arbitrarily by the higher authority and is based on "the rights of the principal pastor". In CDV, the institution of presbiterio not only forms an arbitrary practice of the principal pastor to elect leaders of certain areas of church, but it also has magical elements, since there are prophets, who

¹⁴³ "Yo tengo la última palabra." Robert Barriger.

come from the US as “godly messengers” to tell members about who they are and how they ought to behave. In this way, Barriger deflects responsibility for these decisions from himself to others.

The interviews show that becoming pastors and leaders in the cases is based on arbitrary decisions of the principal pastor in authoritarian structures, even though all the churches show a strong plurality of lay leadership.

The ways in which churches attract members is connected to the organizational structure of the churches and must be correlated to the perpetuation of the churches.

While Agua Viva and Emmanuel seem to focus on gaining as many members as possible, CDV and Potential seem to be more selective. Agua Viva and Emmanuel are self-sustained through tithes and donations. In the case of Agua Viva, tithes are collected in the small home groups, called cells. The emphasis of gaining new members therefore is a strategy to generate additional income for the church. The pyramidal system urges every member to lead a cell and the competition between leaders creates growth in church membership and has resulted in Agua Viva becoming the largest mega-church in Lima. The pyramidal structure also requires every member to be involved in fundraising and those members who aspire to be a pastor, must first prove themselves to be successful fundraisers (sales representatives) before they can be considered for this position within the church. The system in Emmanuel seems to be similar, however, the tithes are collected in the service in an anonymous way and the structure of the cells is less rigid but also less transparent. According to Chesnut’s stance on sales representatives, it can be subsumed that in Agua Viva and Emmanuel, where pastor’s salary depends on tithe, most members tithe, whereas the foreign financed churches (CDV and Potential), tithing is not as important and therefore only some members tithe.

In all churches, confusion about the existence of female pastors was common and obvious. This confusion should be examined more closely because it provides insight into the organizational structure of the churches. Members and local pastors usually confirmed the existence of female pastors. In Emmanuel, a wife of a male pastor

identified herself as pastor, while the founder Humberto Lay denied the existence of female pastors. The interviews showed that there is no open discourse regarding ministry by women and gender equality in any of the churches. The position of women in the Neopentecostal mega-churches is interesting. While the secular world gives women the opportunity to progress, the churches studied have patriarchal structures that limit their involvement and progress in the church. The only principal pastor who affirmed the existence of female pastors in his church was Barriger in CDV. However, the patriarchic content of the courses on manhood given in CDV as well as the observations, contradict the existence of female pastors in CDV. In fact, that there are no women pastors, is actually common among evangelical churches in Peru, but the fact this matter is not even discussed, shows a clear bias in the churches which places women in the position of being “second class church members”.

A possible explanation for the varying answers about the existence of female pastors, may be provided by the realization of interviewees that they were being interviewed by a female pastor and as a result wanted to provide answers that are “pleasing” to the interviewer. Most probably however, the answer is rooted in the fact that members, as well as local pastors, are poorly informed about their church structure. None of the cases has a democratically elected council and pulpit interchange and personal friendship seems to exist only between the leading pastors and their families. For example, Sergio Hornung, the son of the principal pastors preaches at CDV, however, the local pastors in Agua Viva do not know of any connection to other churches and aren’t even aware of the fact that Agua Viva belongs to the CONEP. The interviews revealed a similar situation for public appearances, which are restricted to the principal pastors. Since the transformation of society is a priority in all churches, given the structure of the churches, how women members are treated and how the churches present themselves in public, one has to ask if this “transformed society” would be more just, transparent and democratic than it is now.

Comparative Chart

	Agua Viva	Emmanuel	CDV	Potential
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Social background	Lower class Neolimeneans	Lower class in process of social mobility, Neolimeneans	Middle, upper middle class, classical Limeneans	Middle, upper middle class, classical Limeneans
lifestyles	conservative	progressive	sophisticated	sophisticated
Rel. mobility From: Towards:	MMM, AD, Alianza Emmanuel, CDV	Agua Viva, Alianza CDV, Potential, Casa del Padre	Alianza, Ev., Catholics Potential, Casa del Padre	CDV, Baptists, Catholics
Preferences Priorities, products	Prosperity theology, indoctrination	prosperity theology, indoctrination	Self realization, prosperity theology	Prosperity theology, american international symbols, consumption
integration	4 times a week, tithing, evangelization	3 times a week, tithing, evangelization,	3 times a week, no obligatory, volunteering in teams	2 times a week, volunteering
Organizational structure	Self sustained Pyramidal, hierarchical	Self sustained Bureaucratic, hierarchical	Foreign dependent, Subtle arbitrarily hierarchical	Foreign dependent Foreign/internationally hierarchical
Social progress	Claimed by authorities Not proved on material level,	Not claimed by authorities, Material	Not claimed Material through references, development of	Not claimed Material through English courses, internationalization

	Symbolically through puritan lifestyle after conversion similar to Pentecostalism	through courses, coaching, symbolically through location, custom on higher social district	creative facilities, internationalization, symbolically through location in higher class associated district, elitist social networks	, symbolically through international consumption goods, location in foreign preferred developed district, foreign social networks
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5 Results

The last section restated the results of the analysis of the observations as well as the analysis of the interviews within the field of Neopentecostal mega-churches. The different perspectives of the hypotheses developed in the theoretical framework shall be summarized in this chapter. Furthermore the results of this investigation shall be interpreted given the background of general questions and tendencies in the field of religion in Latin America and worldwide.

Market theory has proven to be helpful instrument to characterize the recent phenomenon of religious pluralization in Latin America which forces minority churches to engage in fierce competition to gain new members. The increasing pluralization of many different religious institutions generates inter church competition, which in Latin America is a recent 21st century phenomenon. In my opinion, a closer look at the competition that exists between the churches is useful to describe the behavior of the religious communities and its leaders in targeting potential members. For instance, the CDV local pastor admitted that he was inspired by enterprises in the economic market and literally compared his church to a bakery, which constantly needs to offer fresh tasty bread to its clientele. He also compared the mobility of members from CDV to

Potential to the establishment of another Starbucks in Miraflores which would be destined to fill up with clients quickly, despite the fact that other Starbucks already exist in the area. Neopentecostal mega-churches have proven themselves to be highly competitive and oriented to the aesthetic tastes of members rather than to particular religious traditions. On the other hand, because of their strong religious identification, members should not be characterized as consumers or clients. In light of this, it must be concluded that market theory is not sufficient to describe the behavior of religious actors.

Contrary to mainline traditional churches, active personal involvement and plurality of lay leadership characterizes the Neopentecostal mega-churches and have proven to be an important factor of social integration. The social networks play a major role in helping members identify with a religious community.

Even though the performance and “theatralization” of the Christian faith takes place in very different ways, the conversion process serves to promote member participation in the church to which they belong. In all cases, members spoke of how their lives had been transformed and the new perspective that they had acquired through their participation in a religious community.

Therefore, the investigation shows that religious actors cannot be depicted as mere consumers as the market theory claims. Their priority is not consumption, but devoutness. Even though in some cases it was difficult to detect a particular religious doctrine, the importance of transformation in the individual’s life was mentioned by all believers. This clearly has to be interpreted as a form of conversion, not consumption. Interviewees in all groups in every case named the religious dimension as a determining factor of participation and they were eager to give a Christian testimony. No members perceived their church as an “enterprise” in a “market” but as place to connect to God in accordance to the Christian tradition and the Bible. As I mentioned before, the structure of mega-churches puts a strong emphasis on active involvement and a plurality of leadership through various teams and ministries for lay people.

Nevertheless the emerging religious pluralism in Latin America shows that religion has become an eligible good. The research work asked for the logic and motivations under which religious actors elect their faith community.

The question of religious taste (Köhrsen 2008) can be identified through the variables of the observations in the churches, webpages, church locations, accessibility, the religious style of churches, pastors and members, the staging of services, the use of technology, products and marketing etc. Köhrsen speaks of religious tastes that lead to a religious choice for a particular church. As the analysis shows, in certain matters interviewees express the correlation of fashion as motivating factor. The worship was mentioned in all churches as factor of motivation. In Potential and CDV the American social capital, style and English language played a common role for the decision.

The empirical research on social backgrounds of believers determined that social upward mobility cannot be restricted to the individual, but takes place from one generation to another. The professional opportunities and lifestyles of the younger generation create different religious tastes in this generation compared to that of their parents.

Demographics therefore also shape religious taste. In this regard, CDV and Potential, the most innovative churches with rock music with the strongest emphasis on postmodern aesthetics attract younger generations with a “sophisticated” lifestyle. Agua Viva attracts older people considered to be first generation of Neolimeneans, who have similar needs and characteristics as Pentecostals. Emmanuel predominantly attracts the younger Neolimeneans who are in the process of social progress. The different age profile of the churches gives the impression that members have very different lifestyles. In Agua Viva, the progress seems to occur on a lower level and could be described as conservative. This concurs with the impressions the website of the church and observations made. Younger progressing classes seem to be more attracted to Emmanuel because of its style, location and products.

Therefore the investigation empirically confirmed a tendency of the churches to engage in niche marketing that stands contrary to the “one size fits all” attitude of majority churches. This was particularly exemplified by the separation of the CDV’s “elder high society”, which split from the church and created the church Casa del Padre in La Molina under the leadership of an ex-CDV pastor.

Religious mobility is caused in most cases by the typical evangelical tradition of members visiting each other's churches. Keeping in mind Chesnut's distinction of high tech and low tech marketing, the Neopentecostal cases affirm that almost a 100% of interviewees in the member groups of all churches were introduced to their current church through low tech marketing, specifically through visiting the church of a family member or friend (similarly to the Brazilian cases of Chesnut). In the various life stories of members, a visit to a particular church resulted in them joining that church. As the investigation showed, the way of visiting within the evangelical landscape coincides with trends in religious mobility. Therefore the expected tendency of religious mobility from particular churches to others was generally affirmed by the analysis of the interviews. According to Olson, religious actors tend to move from bigger, more traditional churches (Agua Viva and Emmanuel) to smaller and more innovative religious communities such as CDV and Potential. Social aspects also tend to play a major role, since the socially higher connoted churches (CDV and Potential), tend to be the churches that members of the other churches visit and in some cases, move to. Particularly the group of principal leaders and local pastors has affirmed the typical ways of religious mobility within the Neopentecostal landscape from Agua Viva to Emmanuel in the financial centre of the city, and from there to the more internationally oriented and higher connoted churches CDV and Potential. Members of CDV and Potential do not tend to visit Agua Viva or Pentecostal churches, while the contrary is true. The visits therefore play an important frame of reference. In terms of mobility among the churches, the interviews showed that the people who invite members to their church are often ex-members who have already moved. This was particularly evident in Potential where the majority of interviewees passed through CDV. Within the cases, the most common trends were from Agua Viva to Emmanuel and from CDV to Potential. There was no one who passed through all four churches.

Bearing in mind that a large scale quantitative study would have been very complicated, the small quantitative survey that formed the basis of my findings demonstrates that for Lima's population as a whole, Neopentecostal mega-churches are relatively well known compared to Pentecostal churches, although the number of members they have is relatively small compared to the Pentecostal church AD. This could be explained by the fact that their founders and/or principal pastors are often seen in the public eye which

distinguishes them from their Pentecostal counterparts in terms of social, economical and cultural capital. Since the investigation has utilized qualitative methods, the conclusions presented must reflect certain limitations of the study.

First, since the investigated segment is a religious minority within evangelical landscape, it could not be proven how many believers actually move and how. Nevertheless it could be shown that the majority of the religious actors who move are to be found within the evangelical segment. The qualitative study in all the different groups of interviewees affirmed that. The mobility taking place within the evangelical landscape requires a modification of the common connected element “conversion”. As the investigation shows, converted believers often do not necessarily stay within the religious community that they converted to, which makes the demarcation lines between churches fluid. Believers often “convert” in a particular church, “grow” in another and then move through various evangelical churches before becoming members in a Neopentecostal church. The process of religious mobility also happens within Neopentecostalism. The present investigation confirmed the trend discovered by Olson and Chesnut that religious communities, which have similar religious convictions and practice, tend to be ripe for religious mobility. Therefore the mobility within the Neopentecostal mega-churches tends to function under this theory, and the interviews and evaluations of the all groups of interviewees show a tendency of typical ways of religious mobility.

Other studies mention the phenomenon of “nomadism”. In terms of the general mobility from Catholicism towards Evangelical churches Mgr Strotmann points out “The percentage that comes back to Catholicism is statistically insignificant”¹⁴⁴ (Strotmann, 2007). Therein he affirms that one way of mobility is not typical: the way back to Catholicism after ex-Catholics moved to an evangelical church.

Cleary and Frigeiro speak of “nomadism”, which accordingly functions under certain “patterns”: “In typical patterns, people shifted from indifferent Catholic to Pentecostal, from Pentecostal to neo-Pentecostal, from Catholic to Afro-Brazilian religions.” (Cleary, 2004: 53). The particular contribution of the present investigation is that it

¹⁴⁴ “El porcentaje de los que regresan al catolicismo es estadísticamente insignificante.”

actually traces the patterns of religious mobility of religious actors to Neopentecostalism and within it.

This study tried to shed light on typical trends of mobility in a more specific while relating these trends to the social necessities of church members asking for certain logic behind the patterns of shifting. The research confirms that social contexts of participation are a significant factor of motivation, particularly in a society that is characterized by social inequality. In my opinion, the social aspirations of members in the analysis of the cases show observable tendencies. The reasons for religious mobility mentioned by the interviewees included relocation, a change of friends; work etc.

In addition to these factors, another significant factor of religious mobility within Neopentecostal mega-churches is social progress. The relationship between social contexts and religious taste (according to Köhrsen, 2008) was a major focus of the investigation and a clear connection between religious mobility and social mobility was established.

Research findings show that Neopentecostals, often from a young age, tend to move to socially higher connoted churches. This investigation has revealed that the patterns of religious mobility towards and within Neopentecostalism are closely connected to the aspiration of social progress of the “movees”, who tend to move towards socially higher connoted churches. Mobility in a socially downward direction was not evident. That is to say, none of the interviewees moved from CDV to Emmanuel or Agua Viva or the Pentecostal churches. Observed trends of members of AD and MMM, revealed that this trend is not restricted to the mega-churches, but also happens among lower class churches.

Religious mobility tends to be a trend that occurs by design which is rooted in the aspirations of members to progress socially. In light of this, it consequently has to be explained whether membership in these churches actually support upward social progress.

The products offered by the Neopentecostal mega-churches to support social progress are symbolic as well as material in nature. On the symbolic level, these products are

social networks, locations and language, whereas the actual material products differ in all the cases.

In Agua Viva all members interviewed spoke of a transformation of life habits caused by participation in the church and pointed out that the church helped them to progress by structuring their lives, promoting healthy living habits, etc. In Emmanuel, the interviews with pastors and the member groups, revealed the church offers courses such as how to start a business, how to manage time and money etc., that helps the young generations from the peripheral outskirts to get to the financial city centre and symbolically give them a new home in a higher society.

CDV symbolically uses terminology from the English language as a symbol of prestige. CDV trains the young generations to develop their talents and express themselves creatively through music, filming, photography etc as forms of self realization. Young adult members are also prepared to study in the US by the church which exposes them to the different culture and lifestyles in the US on a material level, and on a symbolical level, gives them the opportunity to practice and improve their fluency in English. An extreme tendency of CDV forms Potential that symbolically uses the prestige of the English language as basis of its church belonging as well as the presence of North American consumption symbols. Therefore Potential offers international identity.

In conclusion, on the material level the cases have shown the general behavior of religious minorities and evangelicals in Peru. Believers assist each other in different ways and the social networks woven into the churches play a significant role for social progress.

The churches support members in their daily lives in the form of coaching as pastoral care and leader's supervision in order to encourage members to lead structured and ordered lives with healthy living habits as well as by offering members courses that go beyond religious content. Members study how to be a good man or woman and also how to get a decent profession, or how to manage finances. The use of the English language in a bilingual church, has to be interpreted as material support because of the opportunities the ability to speak a foreign language offers members in the labor market.

Besides these material factors that enforce social upward mobility for believers, the churches tend to promote various other elements of social progress which distinguishes them from other institutions.

On a symbolical level, all mega-churches tend to attract members from lower class churches by provoking in members the feeling of belonging to a higher societal level, even though many of them do not actually have the cultural or economic capital needed to belong to this segment of society.

Corten describes this as an illusion, however, I prefer the expression “symbolic progress”, which takes into account the fact that the living conditions of members in the outskirts do not change, but the churches provide possibilities for members to progress socially by giving them the tools to do so, which have already been described.

Through the profound interviews, the research was able to detect a phenomenon, which was not expected in the hypotheses. The research findings demonstrate the realities of a fragmented Peruvian society and highlights the existing caesura between people with a migratory background and classical Limeneans while providing insight into the complexities of social progress of church members.

Findings revealed that the most innovative churches show signs of being exclusive in some ways, which is not surprising given the fragmentation of the Peruvian society. In the case of Emmanuel members who visited CDV, but did not move to CDV, they admitted the services were impressive but also expressed that they felt uncomfortable and excluded. This formed an obstacle for their religious mobility and serves to demonstrate the social fragmentation that prevails in the Peruvian society. According to Arellano’s lifestyle scheme, the younger generations of both classical Limeneans and Neolimeneans grow together and mix partly by sharing the same lifestyles, irregardless of their economic and social origins. Affirming Arellano, I would like to point out that all the churches investigated have a mixture of members from all ethnical and social backgrounds, which is often not the case in the churches of their parents’ generation. Therefore the investigation of the Neopentecostal mega-churches revealed that the churches are open to receiving people from every social class and ethnic background. The investigation has proven that all cases, to a different extent, present an opportunity for people from the cono districts of Lima to find a home in attractive socially higher connoted districts. People feel welcome in the mega churches, and are willing to spend

hours commuting in order to get to their church in a socially attractive district where they could not afford to visit a restaurant, but they can go to church. Therefore the social contexts and membership in higher connoted society, tend to be significant factors of motivation for the religious actors to move from one church to another, as was expressed indirectly by the interviewees.

The investigation empirically affirms the integrative force of churches; however, findings revealed that classical Limeneans and Neolimeneans do not always mix as Arellano's positive interpretation of Lima's actual situation shows. The second specific tendency of religious mobility demonstrates the caesura that still exists between Limeneans from migratory background and classical Limeneans. This tendency could represent a correction of a positivist stance that neglects the social inequality of Lima's inhabitants as a city of contrasts and suggests different ambitions of their clientele.

Looking at the differences in government of the two church-spectrums of mega-churches in Lima we could find out that Agua Viva and Emmanuel are nationally governed churches with Peruvian roots. The majority of their members come from the conos and want to find a home in a socially higher connoted district. According to Lecaros, recognition forms a social necessity of these religious actors. In an atmosphere of social progress and a context of economical growth, a desire to escape social marginality is reflected in their religious taste.

In the American rooted or US missionary dominated churches CDV and Potential, the majority of members come from central districts and tend to be Peruvian citizens. This does not contradict the tendency of mobility, since the majority want to be in the social position that the moving classes aspire to in order create the impression that they have moved into a higher society. A smaller number of members in these churches come from the conos. The emphasis on the English language shows a yearning among members to have international citizenship and international recognition. As the truth commission discovered, Peruvians in general are suffering from cultural inferiority; the so called "trauma de la conquista". The Neopentecostal churches respond to this particular necessity by offering members international citizenship in many ways.

It also has been shown that, rather than aiming to gain a societal majority, as Pentecostalism does on the larger margins of Latin American cities, the Neopentecostal mega-churches tend to target the growing middle and upper middle classes in Latin American contexts. According to Bastian, Pentecostal churches focus on maximizing members, whereas mega-churches have adopted a “status oriented mission” (see p. 41) in which they carefully select the target group they want to attract to the church. Therefore the investigation showed that social inequality is present in the religious sphere as well. The concept of religious taste and Limenean lifestyles has proven to be helpful to understand why certain social classes prefer particular mega-churches in the field of Neopentecostalism in Lima.

The analysis demonstrated that a significant product of the Neopentecostal churches is “social networks” that symbolize belonging to a “higher society”. In the case of Agua Viva and Emmanuel, members interpret this as having “moved” from the conos to the city centre and having the opportunity to socialize with members of the upper middle class, personalized in public celebrities such as Mirtha Lazo and Humberto Lay.

In the case of CDV and Potential, the Peruvian middle and upper middle classes take the form of a “foreign high society” characterized by the consumption of US made consumer goods and the ability to communicate in English. Being fluent in English is a symbol of social progress due to the professional opportunities this implies. In the case of Agua Viva and Emmanuel, members from the conos desire a citizenship in the centre of the capital city of Lima. Members of CDV and Potential, who are already located in the social classes in which Agua Viva and Emmanuel aspire to, seem to want to escape the Peruvian identity all together.

One of motivations of members in all the Neopentecostal cases is “prosperity”. Prosperity creates a feeling in the religious actors of belonging to “another world”. In Agua Viva and Emmanuel, the “other world” represents the upper (middle) Peruvian class of the Peruvian capital; in the case of CDV and Potential it’s the feeling of belonging to a world metropolis of the first developed (English speaking) world. In both cases, the religious product of “prosperity” generates a habitus in members of being

separate from the poorer and marginalized members of the evangelical landscape and traditional religious priorities.

A further aspect of religious mobility, which has been discovered, is its acceptance. Local and principal pastors and church members affirmed that mobility of members between churches was expected and normal. Lack of fundamental dogma and flexible religious convictions in the churches enforces this. Therefore a member's selection of a certain church is based more on individual taste than religious conviction.

The wide acceptance of religious mobility to other similar churches within the segment of Neopentecostal mega churches shows the existence of a type of "fraternity" among the churches. Pulpit exchange and personal friendships between pastors affirmed this.

The investigation leads one to question whether a paradigm shift in the religious field is taking place. Under the circumstances of religious pluralism, Pentecostal and Neopentecostal churches, as well as other evangelical churches, tend to copy each other's marketing strategies similar to successful enterprises in the business world. As a consequence, religious practice and convictions become fluent and adopt the postmodern leitmotif "patchwork" (Bastian, 2008: 176-177), which allows religious communities to include the most archaic and the most modern mediations, and the eclectic and pragmatic use of religious content. The phenomenon observed in Neopentecostal mega churches indicates that this will probably make classification of churches even more difficult in the future. Acceptance of religious mobility by the different groups of interviews indicates a trend of modification in the religious field. Diversity has not only become an element that diminishes religious convictions in a specific religious community, but also diminishes demarcations and distinctions among different religious communities in general, since a certain church can no longer be classified by its particular religious beliefs and the convictions of its members.

Examining the factors that favor religious mobility, the research could show the flexible religious convictions and the adaption of churches to the needs of members. The observations coincide with the emphasis on the classical evangelical product "conversion" in the four cases. Agua Viva, and to a lesser extent in Emmanuel,

emphasize the typical evangelical element of conversion. CDV and Potential define membership through immediate voluntary involvement in the church. The flexibility of religious convictions not only enforces religious mobility, it also defines how members relate to and identify with a church. Since integration and identification is gained through emotions rather than religious convictions and practices (as is the case in mainstream traditional churches) the more innovative the church, the more difficult it is for believers to speak about their faith. Their religious ideals become so vague, that actual convictions cannot be identified.

While the research focuses on viability and depicts the phenomenon in Lima as a melting pot in Peru, the influence of Neopentecostals in the evangelical landscape has been proven for other Latin American countries like for instance, Argentina (Wynarczyk, 1989; Marostica, 1997; Hong, 2001; Algranti, 2010) and Brazil (Oro, 1997; Mariano, 1995). As was pointed out in the introduction, the phenomenon of Pentecostalism is a world phenomenon and Neopentecostalism exists all over Latin America. Therefore I am convinced that the Peruvian case exemplifies a world phenomenon because the segment of churches investigated does not stand separate, but exists within a transnational network of churches. The non denominational mega-churches and their transnational networks are not restricted to the Latin American continent. All Peruvian mega-churches adopt different elements from churches all over the world from Australia to the USA, as the songs from Hillsong church in CDV showed. Postmodern spirituality, in numerous studies has been defined as emotional and therefore is often identified with emotionalism.

Neopentecostal churches could represent prototypes of churches in postmodernism. The elements of diversity, adopting different church traditions in a patchwork manner, the aesthetic focus and emotionality are three basic elements that must be considered in an attempt to characterize Neopentecostal churches. The growing influence of Neopentecostal churches reflects an expression of intensive cultural changes in the religious field worldwide. Even mainline churches, due to the competition of the mega-churches, are placing more emphasis on emotionality and aesthetics, which are typical characteristics of Neopentecostalism. These characteristics cannot be restricted to Neopentecostals, but rather form a phenomenon that characterizes postmodern religion in general. The investigation affirms that religion in postmodern pluralized Latin

America can be characterized as emotionally, based on direct and individual experience rather than religious traditions.

In an attempt to uncover a specific religious content of postmodern religion, it must be considered whether the churches really satisfy the social necessities of members suffering from marginalization or whether church services generate another postmodern phenomenon: “virtual reality”. One has to ask if the highly optimistic teachings in mega-churches form a virtual reality that presents a psycho-therapeutical solution to members’ problems by provoking a feeling of protection and power? If so, what does this solution signify if at home in the real world, the social situation characterized by dysfunctional families and/or poverty stays the same?

It was demonstrated that a significant product in all cases is “prosperity theology”. Pastors of different churches tend to mention in interviews, as well as in sermons, that they do not promote prosperity theology. The reason is probably the association of this term to the IURD-type of Neopentecostalism. The four cases showed that prosperity theology cannot be restricted to “deceitful” Neopentecostal groups such as IURD. The Limenean Neopentecostal cases have proven to be serious Christian churches, rooted in diverse historical churches. In addition, the cases show, in contrast to the IURD group, prosperity cannot be restricted to the economic dimension. The mega-churches do not ask members to give beyond their limits, but they function as coaches for members and citizens of a collective society who wish to achieve a success oriented, ambitious way of thinking in order to “conquer” all different life dimensions (profession, family, health etc.) The analysis of the products has shown that Lima’s Neopentecostal mega-churches through their location, accessibility, esthetical style as well as sermons aim to respond to the widespread desire of members to advance in a fast developing economy. The mega-churches religiously legitimize achievement and coach members to prosper under the condition of Neoliberalism, which is shaping Peruvian and Latin American politics and influences thinking patterns, especially of younger generations which aim to prosper as a result. Therefore prosperity theology also tends to function as religious expression of a shifting of cultural priorities. Bastian points out that the predominant discourse of prosperity leads to a “sacralization” of the market for people living in economical insecurity (Bastian, 2008: 183). This implies that prosperity theology

cannot be described as genuine religious content of a particular type of churches, even though it is closely linked to Neopentecostalism. Instead, prosperity theology functions as an element of postmodernism in general, since the tendency is affirmed by other evangelical churches that tend to “neopentecostalize”. In this sense, prosperity theology should not be restricted only to Neopentecostals because it is reshaping respectable evangelical churches. The emphasis of churches on prosperity and social progress is connected to individualism which counters the importance of family ties as an element for entering a particular church. It could be demonstrated that individualistic ways of getting to know a church draws the younger generation to more innovative and higher class connoted churches.

Besides prosperity, other major topics of Neopentecostalism are self-realization and happiness, which present postmodern challenges to Christianity and call for reflection. As the interviews have shown, the event oriented services tend to create the impression in members that belonging to the Christian faith results in feelings of “happiness”, “joy” and “delight”. Believers are taught that there is nothing wrong with focusing on oneself and material achievements. This helps the marginalized members of the church to forget their true identities as marginalized, and often discriminated against members of society. Studying the vocabulary of members, it was discovered that typical evangelical and Catholic principals of the “suffering of Christ, death and resurrection” are missing and this was supported by the fact these fundamental elements of Christian teaching were never mentioned in sermons nor in the interviews with members in the mega-churches. Death, as symbol of mortality that can occur to anyone at any time, stands contradictory to the Neopentecostal perspective “God wants us to be happy and prosper and to have a golden mansion in heaven” (Mirtha Lazo). The gospel teaches the limitation of human life, which is contradictory to teachings that people should try to gain as much as possible (Mt. 6,19; Lk.12,15,20). Therefore the three major Neopentecostal characteristics: prosperity, self-realization and happiness, raise questions about the “unhappy” issues of human life. To what extent does Neopentecostalism fulfill the function of a sacred canopy? How does it reflect human experiences of loss, ruin, failure and disease? These questions were not part of the study and require further theological research.

In particular, the organizational structures of the churches require further research. The study affirmed that there exists a massive involvement of lay leaders in diverse realms of church participation. This is a significant aspect of the characterization of Neopentecostal mega-churches worldwide. The plurality of leadership through teams and ministries is combined with authoritarian leaders. This trend forms another typical character of Neopentecostals. Church movements and growth occurs in the presence of a charismatic leader. The hypermodern aesthetic style is contradicted by an intentional return of patriarchalism and authoritarianism as accepted forms of government which is also shaping the organizational structures churches. Neopentecostal mega-churches tend to be the most visible evangelical group of churches in mass media, given the media presence of their founders and principal pastors. This leads one to question how these religious groups enter the public sphere in light of their church structure. How do they influence the process of democratization of society as authoritarian church leaders? What are the effects of their public presence in terms of human rights and gender equality given their patriarchal thinking patterns? Their public activities and the influence of Neopentecostal mega-churches on the shaping of public institutions in the Peruvian public sphere, requires further extensive investigation.

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