

“THE HOLY ROLLERS ARE INVADING OUR TERRITORY”:
SOUTHERN BAPTIST MISSIONARIES AND THE EARLY YEARS OF
PENTECOSTALISM IN BRAZIL, 1910-1935

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ABSTRACT

LAURA PREMACK: “The Holy Rollers are Invading Our Territory”: Southern Baptist Missionaries and the Early Years of Pentecostalism in Brazil, 1910-1935
(Under the direction of John Chasteen)

This paper uses Southern Baptist missionary records to examine the first twenty-five years of Pentecostalism in Brazil. Considering not only at what the first Pentecostal missionaries did but also what they did not do, it argues that the extraordinary success of the Brazilian Pentecostal movement is due in large part to the following reasons: early Pentecostals had neither the funds nor the theological need to focus on education, their personal class affiliations did not incline them to privilege efforts to evangelize the upper classes, there was no strong female Pentecostal missionary presence, and the Pentecostals had been preceded by mainline Protestant missionaries like the Baptists. Without schools to run and reports to write, Pentecostals were free to do the kind of one-on-one evangelizing that the Baptists had hoped to do but found they had little time for, intentionally stealing many of the Baptists’ flock in the process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| “THE HOLY ROLLERS ARE INVADING OUR TERRITORY”: SOUTHERN BAPTIST MISSIONARIES AND THE EARLY YEARS OF PENTECOSTALISM IN BRAZIL, 1910-1935..... | 1 |
| APPENDIX..... | 63 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 68 |

**“THE HOLY ROLLERS ARE INVADING OUR TERRITORY”:
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One hot day in November of 1910, two men dressed in heavy wool suits stepped off a freighter in Belém, Pará, chief port of the lower Amazon River and rubber capital of Brazil. The equatorial weather was hot and humid, hovering somewhere around 80 degrees, not altogether unlike the Chicago summers the men had become accustomed to, though quite unlike the chilly weather of their native Sweden. Perhaps the two men took off their jackets, loosened their ties, and rolled up their shirtsleeves as they made their way through the bustling city. Or, perhaps, for propriety's sake, they kept jackets on, ties tight, and sleeves down they walked slowly through the steamy streets, stopping to rest in the shade of the mango trees which lined their way. There is a good chance they were rained on, and there is a good chance that this rain did nothing to cool them off. It is likely that rivulets of sweat dribbled down their backs as they made their way to the city's single Baptist church, somehow finding directions despite their nearly non-existent Portuguese.¹ They were not expected.

One of these men was Gunnar Vingren and the other was Daniel Berg. Both were

¹ Climatic information from *Atlas do Brasil* (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, Devisão de Geografia do Conselho Nacional de Geografia, 1959), 10. Please note that in this paper, the terms “Southern Baptist” and “Baptist” will be used interchangeably.

Swedish Baptists in their mid-twenties who had emigrated to the United States as teenagers. Vingren was thin and fair with a dark moustache which curled up dramatically into sharp points at each end. A Baptist pastor, he had quit school at age eleven to work as a gardener in Sweden and then as a laborer in the United States before enrolling at the Swedish Baptist seminary in Chicago. Berg, by contrast, was dark-haired and strong, with a broad physique well-suited to his work as an iron-worker. Not only were both men Baptists, they were also part of the Pentecostal movement which was sweeping eastward across the United States at the time, a movement which sought to integrate the practice of Spirit baptism into evangelical worship.

Spirit baptism, the essential Pentecostal belief and practice, is believed to occur when God, in the form of the Holy Spirit, descends from heaven and is incorporated by men and women who manifest the Spirit's presence in their bodies with ecstatic expressions which include shaking, rolling, running, dancing, seizing, and, especially, speaking in tongues. While this practice is centuries old, going all the way back to the day of Pentecost—the moment fifty days after Jesus' resurrection when, according to the Book of Acts, Jesus' spirit descended into the bodies of his apostles²—the movement

² According to the Book of Acts, Jesus presented himself to his apostles after his resurrection and ordered them to stay in Jerusalem. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Acts 1:4-5 (New Revised Standard Version). This event comes to pass and is described as follows: "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability." Acts 2:1-4 (NRSV). This was as the prophet Joel had predicted: "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your

known as the Pentecostal movement³ began with the founding of the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles in 1906, with Charles Fox Parham's 1905 Bible school in Houston, Texas and 1901 Bible school in Topeka, Kansas as Azusa's direct antecedents.⁴ It quickly spread eastward, which is where Vingren learned of and first experienced Spirit baptism in 1910. Berg, for his part, had become Pentecostal during a visit to Sweden in 1908.⁵

The arrival of Vingren and Berg in Brazil marked the fulfillment, in their eyes, of

sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." Acts 2:17 (NRSV). Upon witnessing this miracle—taken to be proof that Jesus had indeed been resurrected—the apostles were unsure what to do. "Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.'" Acts 2:38-9 (NRSV). These verses comprise the essential justification of modern Pentecostal belief and practice. It should be understood that, in the early 20th century, Pentecostalism was not seen as an *alternative* to traditional worship but rather an *addition* to it; it was only when mainline churches rejected the doctrine of Spirit baptism that Pentecostalism began to evolve from a movement to a collection of institutions.

³ In its early years, it was also known as the "Latter Rain" movement. This is a reference to the descriptions in the Hebrew Bible of the second round of rain showers God sends to ensure a good harvest. See for example Joel 2:23-4 (NRSV): "O children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in the Lord your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the late rain, as before. The threshing floors shall be full of grain, the vats shall overflow with wine and oil." (Robert S. Liichow, "Restoration 'The Latter Rain Movement,'" Discernment Ministries International, 2006, <http://www.discernment.org/restorat.htm>.)

⁴ Parham's Topeka Bible school is generally accepted as the site of the first instance of glossolalia, or speaking in tongues, in the United States. Parham, who was white, taught his tongues doctrine in Houston, where William J. Seymour, founder of the Azusa Street Mission, who was black, listened to him outside the Bible school's open windows.

⁵ It was during a visit with his childhood friend, Lewi Pethrus, the eventual leader of the Swedish Pentecostal movement, that Berg was influenced to adopt Pentecostal beliefs. Paul Freston, "Protestantes e política no Brasil: da constituinte ao impeachment" (Ph.D. diss., Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 1993), 70. This location of Berg's conversion is important as scholars typically assume that Pentecostalism is a U.S. import. Even scholars who are aware that Vingren and Berg were Swedish immigrants tend to assume, as, for example, Cecília Loreto Mariz does in *Coping with Poverty: Pentecostals and Christian Base Communities in Brazil* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 25, that Vingren and Berg were "Baptists who discovered the Pentecostal renewal in the United States."

a divine prophecy. A few months earlier, at a prayer meeting held in South Bend, Indiana, God had spoken through their friend Adolfo Ulldin⁶—Berg’s friend, or perhaps his brother-in-law—and told the two men to “depart to preach the Gospel and the blessings of the Pentecostal awakening” in Pará, a place no one present for the prophecy had ever heard of. In fact, determining the location of the mysterious Pará required a trip to see the atlas at the local public library.⁷ Once in Pará, Vingren and Berg befriended the local Baptist missionary who generously let them stay in the dark basement of the Belém Baptist Church. Vingren dedicated himself to learning Portuguese while Berg supported them both with wages from his job at a local foundry. As soon as his language skills were up to it, about six months after their arrival, Vingren began leading prayer and healing services at the Baptist church where he preached the doctrine of baptism by the Holy Spirit. Some of the Brazilian Baptists embraced his Pentecostal message. Others adamantly rejected it.⁸ Forced out by the majority of the church’s members, the two men

⁶ Adolfo Ulldin is the name given by Wilson Harle Endruveit, in his dissertation, “Pentecostalism in Brazil: A Historical and Theological Study of its Characteristics” (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1975), 11, citing Ivar Vingren, *Gunnar Vingren, O Diário do Pioneiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Casa Publicadora das Assembleias do Deus, 1960), 20-1. However H. Joseph Carr Jr. gives the name “Olaf Uldin” in his thesis, “A Missiological Comparison of the Pentecostals, Baptists, and Churches of Christ in Brazil” (M.A. thesis, Harding Graduate School of Religion, 1979), 10.

⁷ Emilio Conde, *História das Assembléias de Deus no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Casa Publicadora das Assembleias de Deus (CPAD), 1960), 14. Conde’s history, published by the publishing house of the Assemblies of God (Brazil), serves as the official history of the church. While Conde does not discuss his sources anywhere in the book, it is safe to assume that he relied very heavily on the journals of Gunnar Vingren and Daniel Berg, neither of which could be obtained by this author: Daniel Berg, *Enviado por Deus, Memórias de Daniel Berg* (Sao Paulo: Grafica Sao Jose, 1959) and Ivar Vingren, *Gunnar Vingren, o Diário do Pioneiro* (Rio de Janeiro: CPAD, 1973).

⁸ According to Freston, this had happened at Vingren’s Chicago church as well, and was the event that led

and seventeen of their followers founded the Apostolic Faith Mission. Seven years later, in 1918, the Mission changed its name and became the first church of the *Assembléias de Deus no Brasil* (AD),⁹ which is now, despite the splits and schisms it has endured over the years, the largest Pentecostal organization¹⁰ in the most populous Pentecostal nation in the world.¹¹

This account of events has rarely been questioned. For the most part, it is all we know of early Pentecostal history. Two Swedish men arrive in Pará by way of the United States and, as if by magic, found the fastest-growing religious movement in Brazil.¹² Most

him to leave Chicago for South Bend. Freston, “Protestantes e politica,” 70.

⁹ Despite sharing similar names, the AD and the U.S.-based Assembly of God have been completely separate institutions since the beginning. The churches have cooperated, but they remain independent.

¹⁰ As André Corten states his book on Pentecostalism in Brazil, “The *Assembléia de Deus* of Brazil is the most important Pentecostal Church in the world in terms of its number of faithful, with at least 5 million members.” (Corten, *Pentecostalism in Brazil: Emotion of the Poor and Theological Romanticism* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc., 1999), 46.)

¹¹ According to the 2000 Brazilian Census, 10.4% of Brazilians identify as Pentecostal. 10.4% of 169 million, which was Brazil’s approximate 2000 population according to the U.S. Library of Congress website (<http://countrystudies.us/brazil/26.htm>), is 17.6 million. A more generous calculation results in far greater number: if Charismatics, a group which includes both Protestants and Catholics who share Pentecostal practices, are included, the resulting group, Renewalists, accounts for 49% of the (urban) Brazilian population, according to the Pew Forum’s 2006 survey (<http://pewforum.org/world-affairs/countries/?CountryID=29>). That would be more than 83 million people.

¹² It should be noted that Vingren and Berg were not the first two Pentecostals to arrive in Brazil. They had been preceded by Luigi Francescon, an Italian who had also come to Brazil by way of the United States. However, because Francescon focused his efforts on the Italian emigrant community rather than on Brazilians, because the church he founded in a Presbyterian community in São Paulo—the *Congregação Cristã* (CC)-is smaller and less influential than the AD, and because the CC has even fewer published sources than the AD, Vingren and Berg presented better subjects than Francescon for this study. For a brief account of Francescon’s work in Brazil, see Paul Freston, “Pentecostalism in Brazil: A Brief History,” *Religion* 25 (1995): 124-5. Also see Francescon’s memoir, *Histórico de Obra de Deus, Revelada pelo Espírito*

scholars of Brazilian Pentecostalism ignore its early years. For the sociologists, anthropologists and political scientists who comprise most of the scholars who have studied Brazilian (and Latin American) Pentecostalism in any depth, the salient concern is identifying and explaining the present-day situation, not determining its historical development. The forty-odd years between establishment of Pentecostal churches in the 1910s and their emergence as powerful political entities in the 1950s and 60s are elided, in most studies, to focus on the second half of the twentieth century.¹³ For them the prophecy serves as a charming anecdote, adding a little color to their story but of no real purpose in making an argument. And historians have done no better, most simply relaying the version of events described in a history and texmemoirs published by the AD's own publishing house.

The AD sources consist mainly of a handful of missionary memoirs and church-sanctioned histories. They are notoriously difficult to work with due both to their triumphalist bias and to their scarcity. As Paul Freston, an expert on Brazilian Pentecostal history and politics, has explained, Pentecostalism has little use for history, which it regards as largely irrelevant. "Taking its name from the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost," Freston writes, "it sees itself as a return to origins" and thus "there is little

Santo, no Século Atual, Fourth Edition (São Paulo: Congregação Cristã no Brasil, 1977).

¹³ Scholars generally rely heavily and uncritically on the church's own accounts of their beginnings, if they pay any attention to them at all. Most focus on the 1960s and beyond and are far more concerned with explaining Pentecostalism's appeal and implications than with investigating its history. A brief summary of the literature can be found in the Appendix; also see the bibliography for a more complete list of sources.

idea of development, since all is contained in the original event.”¹⁴ Because Pentecostalism is understood by Pentecostals as having been created by the Holy Spirit, they see only two important historical moments—*the original Pentecost* (as related in the New Testament) and *its recovery* by those who founded the Pentecostal movement a century ago.

There are no published academic histories on Brazilian Pentecostalism.¹⁵ Freston is the only scholar who has interrogated the standard account of the prophecy. His discussion has been overlooked by most, marginalized by the few who are aware of it, and downplayed even by Freston himself, who is most interested in the political aspects of the Brazilian and Latin American Pentecostal movements. Andrew Chesnut, for example, who researched his *Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and The Pathogens of Poverty* in the AD community in Belém, relegates Freston’s conclusion about the likely role of the Swedish Baptist grapevine in the “prophecy” to a footnote after relating the conventional version—that “two Swedes received a prophecy instructing them to conduct mission work in a place neither had ever heard of: Pará”—in

¹⁴ Paul Freston, “Contours of Latin American Pentecostalism,” in *Christianity Reborn: The Global Expansion of Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Donald M. Lewis (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 223-4. Originally stated in his dissertation, Freston, “Protestantes e politica,” 64.

¹⁵ The closest we have to a critical history of Pentecostalism’s origins is Freston’s 1993 dissertation and his 1995 article which was published based on the historical aspect of that research. As far as the AD is concerned, according to Freston, there are only biographies of church leaders; other churches have even less. (Freston, “Pentecostalism in Brazil,” 119.)

the text.¹⁶ Even this is more than most scholars do; more typical are such quick summaries as: “In an intimate prayer meeting in his home, Uldin prophesied that Vingren and Berg were to go to a place called Para. They did not know where Para was, but they discovered from the city library that it was a state in Brazil,”¹⁷ or, “During this period a Swedish friend of theirs, Olaf Uldin, prophesied that Berg and Vingren were to go to a place called Pará. Discovering Pará was a northern state in Brazil, they booked passage on a freighter to the city of Belém, the capital of Pará.”¹⁸

We cannot continue to overlook the history of the early years of Pentecostalism in Brazil. Consider these widely-accepted numbers: In 1900 there were no Pentecostals in Brazil, in 1930 there were 44,311, and by 1970 there were 1,418,933. To put this into perspective, consider that in 1900 there were 4,582 Baptists, 19,108 Presbyterians, and 5,596 Methodists; in 1930 there were 41,090 Baptists, 46,032 Presbyterians, and 15,480 Methodists, and by 1970 there were 295,295 Baptists, 244,030 Presbyterians, and 58,591 Methodists.¹⁹ Why did the number of Pentecostals grow so quickly? How did the Vingren and Berg—few in number, poorly funded, without institutional support—

¹⁶ R. Andrew Chesnut, *Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 26. His hesitance to overtly challenge the AD official history (or creation myth, as the case may be) could have to do with the fact that he relied heavily on his AD connections to open doors throughout Brazil. See his acknowledgements, p. x.

¹⁷ Endrueit, “Pentecostalism in Brazil,” 11, citing Conde, *História das AD*, 21.

¹⁸ Carr, “A Missiological Comparison,” 10.

¹⁹ Francisco Cartaxo Rolim, *Pentecostais no Brasil: Uma Interpretação Sócio-Religiosa* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1985), 104. Rolim based his figures on three sources: Erasmo Braga and K. Grubb, *The Republic of Brazil* (London: W.D.P., 1932); W. Read, *New Patterns of Church Growth in Brazil* (Michigan: E.P.C. Press, 1955); “Estatística do Culto Protestante do Brasil” (no publication information given).

manage to gain so many converts so quickly when it had taken Baptists and other Protestant groups so much money and so many years to gain comparably so few? Why were they more successful in converting Brazilians than the Baptists and other evangelical groups who had not only more resources but also far more experience with mission work? Were they more appealing? More strategic? Just luckier?

Finding answers to these questions requires that we begin by questioning the prophecy story. In order to do so, we must look outside of the meager Pentecostal sources for answers. Serious historical investigation of Pentecostalism which does more than gloss over its early years requires research which makes creative use of unexpected sources. Fortunately, it is possible to research the early years of Pentecostalism using far more comprehensive sources than the few Pentecostal ones which exist. All of the Protestant churches that were involved in mission work in Brazil in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—a group which includes Southern Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Lutherans—kept extensive records. These records include the personal and professional correspondence of missionaries and mission board members, minutes of various committees and conventions, newsletters and short magazines published for various audiences, photographs, missionary health records, and other materials. By using these sources to place the Pentecostal movement in the context of the development of other Protestant groups, we can understand how Pentecostalism gained enough traction in Brazil to be poised to take off when it did, and why Pentecostalism—and not other forms of Protestantism—exploded in the 1950s and 60s.

Of these sources, Southern Baptist records provide the most useful material for clarifying the success of Pentecostalism. Because Baptist theology, with its emphasis on direct experience, is most similar to Pentecostal theology, and because, as we shall see, most of the early Brazilian Pentecostal churches were formed by *crentes* (Protestant believers) who left their Baptist congregations, the Baptist missionaries were most threatened by the Pentecostal presence in Brazil and therefore made note of Pentecostal activities in their journals, reports, and correspondence.²⁰ Using Baptist sources to investigate Pentecostal history is not easy, however. Along with the fact that such sources contain their own biases, there is the challenge of staying on track. Heading north to go south, so to speak, it can be difficult to keep the ultimate destination in mind. But it is worth going out of our way in order to contrast the experiences and methods of Vingren and Berg with those of the Baptist missionaries who were so much more established in Brazil and yet found so much less success there.

While still a young movement, by 1935 Pentecostalism already had twenty-five year's history in Brazil and that history explains much about its success. Taking a comparative approach which relies on primary sources found in the missionary archives of the Southern Baptist Convention, this paper aims to discover some of the overlooked historical context which was so crucial in facilitating and encouraging the development

²⁰ As David Martin has argued, "Baptists had a more demotic and participatory style and they were ready and/or able to reach some of the poor and the coloured." He continued, "The growing success of Baptists relative to Presbyterians presaged the future success of Pentecostals. The Pentecostals were in most respects like the Baptists, only more so." (Martin, *Tongues of Fire*, 63.)

of Pentecostalism in Brazil by carefully examining what Vingren, Berg, and their followers did to create their extraordinary success. And, just as important, this paper also examines what they did *not* do. In order to achieve a complete understanding of Pentecostal success, it is necessary to consider the strategies, activities, and attitudes that they did not embrace and which would have limited their success if they had done so.

I argue that the Pentecostal movement found success in Brazil for two main reasons: first, because the “historical” Protestant churches had preceded it, paving its way, and second, because the Pentecostal missionaries operated independently, without any institutional support (or interference). Both the context in which it was founded and the particular situations of the founders themselves allowed Brazilian Pentecostalism to develop at an extraordinary pace. The Baptist missionaries—because of their class and race biases, their educational requirements for pastors, their dependence on the Southern Baptist Convention’s Foreign Mission Board, the political circumstances of their arrival, and the fact that many of them were women—became heavily invested, in terms of both finances and energy, in educating the Brazilian upper class. Meanwhile, the early Pentecostals were free to focus on doing just one thing and doing it well: convincing *crentes* to accept the Pentecostal doctrine of baptism by the Holy Spirit. Strategy, necessity, theology, and open-mindedness were the key to early Pentecostal success, and the choice of Pará was far from random. It was, in fact, quite strategic. Pará was a prescription, a plan, a process—anything but a mysterious prophecy.

“. . .the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it.” (John 10:12)

Southern Baptist missionaries sent abroad were required to submit semi-annual reports to the Foreign Mission Board (FMB).²¹ There was no required format and the reports generally consisted simply of letters written by the missionaries to the corresponding secretary of the Board. Some were no more than brief missives dashed off in spidery handwriting, while others contained several typed sheets of single-spaced, densely-packed words which jostled for space on each page. Almost all, however, were impersonal and businesslike, concerned only with such mission matters as requesting reinforcements, arranging furloughs, and purchasing real estate. A rare exception is the collection of letters written by one Edith Allen, missionary to Brazil from 1921 to 1962. As her husband, William (Billy) Allen, was disinclined to write himself, the task of reporting to the Board fell to Edith, and it was a task she undertook with gusto.

Mrs. Allen’s letters are warm, gossipy, unguarded—as was, one imagines, Edith herself. She wrote frequently, viewing her letters less as official reports than as newsy updates sent to her Richmond friends.²² In 1932, just two years after the AD nationalized

²¹ The Foreign Mission Board (FMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention, which changed its name to International Mission Board (IMB) in 1997, will also be referred to simply as the Board.

²² An example of her breezy tone: “Love to Mrs. Ray – we often talk of your visit here. We are having torrid January weather like last year Dr. Love was down here. I will be glad when May comes and cooler weather!” Closing of letter from Edith Allen to T. B. Ray, 5 January 1931. International Mission Board Missionary Collection Allen Microfiche Cards. (Hereafter cited as IMBMC: Allen, etc.) Of her husband, she informed a recent Board appointment, “He is not the letter writer of the family.” Edith Allen to O. E. Maddy, 19 November 1934, IMBMC: Allen.

and moved its national headquarters from Pará to Rio de Janeiro,²³ she described the growing Pentecostal influence in her community:

The Holy Rollers are invading our territory recently – Billy said the other day that he had about come to the conclusion that it was not Catholicism we had to win folks from down here but from the Pentecostals, Spiritualists, Seventh Day Adventists, and such ilk. Their preferred method of approach in Ricardo is to affirm that the Baptists are fine folks but lack just one thing, they need to be sealed by the Holy Spirit so they can cure and be cured, speak in tongues, etc. An ignorant believer can easily be led astray.²⁴

This is one of the best descriptions of early Pentecostal strategy to be found. Allen's frank assessment of Pentecostal development in Brazil is unmatched by most other Baptist reports, and nothing from the AD sources—which invariably describe the growth of Pentecostalism as nothing more and nothing less than a guileless miracle of God—compares. It is rare to find stated so plainly that the main place Pentecostal churches found new members was in the Baptist churches.

From the very beginning—when Vingren, Berg, and seventeen others left the Belém Baptist Church to found the Apostolic Faith Mission in June of 1911—the Pentecostals pursued a clever and intentional strategy of poaching Brazilian Baptists. While the AD official history, which no scholar other than Freston has questioned, claims that Vingren and Berg went to Pará as a result of a prophecy, investigation shows that it was not prophecy but rather clever strategy which sent them there. The AD's

²³ Freston, "Protestantes e politica," 71.

²⁴ Edith Allen to T. B. Ray, 27 May 1932, IMBMC: Allen.

creation story, recounted by Emilio Conde in the AD's own *History of the Assemblies of God in Brazil*, holds that:

God spoke through a prophetic message to the hearts of Daniel Berg and Gunnar Vingren and told them they should depart to preach the Gospel and the blessings of the Pentecostal awakening. The place mentioned in the prophecy was Pará. No one present had heard of such a place.²⁵

However, while it is apparently true that Berg and Vingren felt called by God to do mission work, both men had already expressed this desire prior to the events in South Bend,²⁶ and the suggestion that no one present had heard of Pará is extremely unlikely. This so-called prophecy seems nothing but a myth.²⁷

Investigation reveals that the idea of going to Pará most likely came not from God but rather from the grapevine of the Swedish Baptist community. Erik A. Nelson, a native Swede, had been the Southern Baptist missionary to the Amazon Valley territory, an enormous area which included the state of Pará, since 1893. At the time of the so-called

²⁵ Conde, *História das AD*, 14. Conde's history, published by the publishing house of the Assembleias de Deus, serves as the official history of the church. While Conde does not discuss his sources anywhere in the book, it is safe to assume that he relied on the journals of Vingren and Berg.

²⁶ According to Conde, Vingren and Berg had already met in Chicago where they discovered that they both believed that God wanted them to take the Pentecostal message to distant lands, though neither knew exactly where. Conde, *História das AD*, 13-4.

²⁷ I am not the first to discover the likely source of the "prophecy." In his dissertation, Paul Freston noted: "The pastor of the Baptist church in Belém was a Swedish immigrant from the United States, who since 1897 had been founding churches throughout the Amazon. It is probable that the name 'Pará' had already appeared in the accounts he sent to the Swedish Baptist community in the United States." Freston, "Protestantes e política," 70. Also see Freston, "Pentecostalism in Brazil," 122. However, this is all that Freston has to say on the matter. Everything else I relate about the so-called prophecy and events in Pará are the result of my own research. Additionally, while Freston is correct that Nelson was appointed by the SBC Foreign Mission Board in 1897, he had actually begun his work as an independent missionary five years earlier, in 1893. (See "In Memorium," obituary of Mrs. Erik A. Nelson, site of publication unknown, IMBMC: Nelson.)

“prophecy” he had been serving in the Amazon for nearly seventeen years and was presently in the United States on furlough. Furlough provides a respite from life abroad but not a complete break from missionary activities. When missionaries are home on furlough they typically devote much of their time to speaking at churches in order to raise the necessary funds to support their work;²⁸ after all, the Baptist missionary enterprise depended (and still depends) on the financial contributions of individual church members to the Foreign Mission Board.

It is extremely unlikely that the Swedish Baptist community in the United States (which, at this time, was indistinct from the Swedish Pentecostal community, for Pentecostalism was still an uninstitutionalized movement rather than a denomination) was unaware that one of their own was serving as a missionary in Brazil’s Amazon basin, especially when he was presently traveling in the United States. It is likely that news of the Nelsons’ work in Para had made its way to Adolfo Ulldin, the source of the purported prophecy and Swedish friend (or, according to other accounts, brother-in-law or cousin,) of Vingren and Berg, though some combination of networks of friends, family, and churches. While it is possible that Vingren and Berg, not knowing any better, believed that it was indeed a prophecy, we shall see that it is also quite likely that the idea to spread the Pentecostal message abroad by taking advantage of a Swedish connection in Brazil was hatched by Vingren, Berg, and Ulldin together and the story concocted

²⁸ These funds did not go directly to the missionaries but rather to the Board, who then disbursed the money amongst its many mission projects. This will be discussed in some detail later in the essay.

afterward to disguise disingenuous intentions.²⁹

Here is a more plausible version of events than the one offered by the prophecy myth. Once Vingren and Berg arrived in Pará, they quickly made their way to the Baptist church. This was not a simple matter of coincidence, despite Conde's claim that Vingren just happened to find the address of a Methodist pastor by the name of Justus Nelson³⁰ in a newspaper that lay open on a table at his hotel, looked him up, and that the next day, "being that at the time Daniel Berg and Gunnar Vingren were linked with the Baptist Church in America (the churches which accepted the [Pentecostal] awakening kept the same name), Justus Nelson accompanied them to the Baptist church in Belém and introduced them to the man responsible for the work there," one of E. A. Nelson's Brazilian assistants.³¹ Instead, the introduction was premeditated, and the Swedes misleadingly presented themselves as Baptists, withholding the fact that they believed in spirit baptism. It was not an outright lie; as Conde points out, the Baptist churches in the United States which had become Pentecostal were still called Baptist churches at this time. However, it was a deception, one which Conde's official history obscures.

²⁹ While Freston also suggests that Pará was not in fact the result of divine prophecy but rather community connections, ("It's probable that the name 'Pará' had already appeared in their letters sent to the U.S. Swedish Baptist community," Freston, "Protestantes e politica," 70), he does not argue, as I will use the Baptist sources to do, that Vingren and Berg arrived in Pará with the intent to deceive.

³⁰ Justus Nelson was a self-supporting Methodist missionary in Pará from 1880 to 1925. (Kevin D. Newburg, Assistant Reference Archivist, General Commission on Archives and History, United Methodist Church, personal email to author, 30 March 2007.)

³¹ Conde, *História das AD*, 19.

Vingren and Berg successfully passed themselves off as brother Baptists and accepted lodging in the Baptist church basement. However, when missionary E. A. Nelson returned to Pará from his extended furlough in the United States soon after³²— he had been away most of the year on account of sickness, as Vingren and Berg may have known—and finally made his way to Pará, he was at once suspicious of the newcomers. In late January of 1911 he wrote the following to the Board from Pará:

I had intended to be in Manaus by the 1st of Jan. but conditions here are such that Oliveira could not tend them. I therefore sent him up the river to do evangelistic work. This you will remember is the place where Hamilton died.³³ Where Parrak got speared and not doubt where the Devil has his headquarter. We cannot get a missionary to live here but the “antiboard” (Northern) people have two representatives who came from Chicago. They are studying the language. So I made up my mind to stop here for a few months at least and hold the fort. These men seem to be off on “Baptism of Spirit” Doctrine as well and are of course slick. Oh that the Board could find a strong Baptist for Pará so I could look after the crying need in other places.³⁴

Nelson did his best to “hold the fort,” which probably was not difficult given that Vingren and Berg were still learning Portuguese and unable to communicate their Pentecostal ideas to the *crentes*. Eventually, however, Nelson had to leave to visit other

³² Nelson and his wife set sail from New York on August 15, 1910 and arrived shortly thereafter. (R. J. Willingham, “Sixty-Sixth Annual Report of the Foreign Mission Board Southern Baptist Convention,” Minutes from IMB Meeting, 17 May 1911, IMB Archives and Records Services, Accession No. 2686. Hereafter cited as IMB Archives, 2686, etc.) However, as Nelson’s letter of 20 January 1911 (which is excerpted on the following page) makes clear, he did not return to Pará until late January 1911.

³³ Minutes from the 1905 Board meeting recommend: “That we grant \$80 to buy the lot on which Brother Hamilton is buried in Para, Brazil.” Minutes from IMB Meeting, 14 May 1905, IMB Archives, 2033.

³⁴ Nelson to R.J. Willingham, 20 January 1911, IMBMC: Nelson.

locations in his vast mission field. By this time he was either impressed enough with the two men or desperate enough for help that he recommended that Vingren, who was already a pastor by profession, be appointed a missionary by the Board. Nelson's desperation for help was evident; in letter after letter he begged for more help."³⁵ Somehow, despite his initial reservations about their "slickness" and their Pentecostal beliefs, Nelson decided to trust his fellow Swedes. This turned out to be a mistake.

Once Nelson left town to attend to his other territories, which was probably in early April, assuming he had stuck with his stated plan of staying in Pará for a few months, Vingren and Berg began to hold prayer meetings. According to Conde—who not only fails to mention that Nelson has left Pará but in fact never mentions Nelson even once in his entire account—these meetings came about because the *crentes* wanted to know why the Swedes spent so much time in prayer and at this point, Vingren finally knew enough Portuguese to be able to explain the Pentecostal doctrine of baptism by the

³⁵ For examples of Nelson's desperation, see Nelson's letters to R. J. Willingham, 5 July 1912, 15 July 1912, 21 August 1912, 27 May 1913, IMBMC: Nelson. For evidence of his recommendation of Vingren, see "Meeting of the North Brazil Mission," 1 May 1911, IMB microfilm MM30, where it was recommended "that Rev. Gunnar Vingren of Pará, an American Swede who has recently arrived in that city, come to Pernambuco where he is to help in the schoolwork and study the language for one year" and also "that the Board take under consideration the advisability of appointing Bro. Vingren as a missionary to work in Pará." Long-time missionary Solomon Ginsburg took up Nelson's cause as well in his 1912 report to the Board, pleading, "The territory included in this field is half as large as that covered by the Southern Baptist Convention. Think of one man trying to evangelize and develop such a field! It takes Brother Nelson months to go from one end of his field to the other. Brother Nelson must have reinforcement. A missionary couple should be stationed in the State of Piauhy and another in Para. In all Brazil there is not a greater and more successful evangelist than Brother Nelson. Why not loosen his hands?" in Ginsburg, "Report of the North Brazil Mission," presented at FMB meeting on 15 May 1912, IMB Archives, 2687.

Holy Spirit.³⁶ More likely, however, the prayer meetings began when they did because Nelson was no longer there keeping an eye on his lodgers. With the cat away the mice could finally play, and play they did.

By June 2nd the first Belém *crente* achieved spirit baptism after weeks of praying.³⁷ The news spread like wildfire throughout the congregation, which quickly split into two sides: those who accepted the new doctrine and those who did not. On June 12th, with Nelson nearly five hundred miles away in Terezinha, oblivious to the crisis in Pará, the congregation met to address this schism. According to Conde's account, Raimundo Nobre took the pulpit and began to attack the Pentecostals, who responded by speaking in tongues. "In this movement," writes Conde:

. . .the illegal director of this illegal meeting proposed that all those who accepted the doctrine of the Holy Spirit stand up. The majority stood. Immediately Raimundo Nobre proposed that the minority exclude the majority, which was also illegal.³⁸

And thus the non-Pentecostal Baptists, the minority in the church, expelled Vingren, Berg, and their seventeen followers.

Their loss was a calamity for the Baptists. While there is no account of the fateful meeting in Baptist sources, Nelson did make this report upon his return to Pará nearly three months after the split:

³⁶ Conde, *História das AD*, 21.

³⁷ She was the Sunday School teacher, Celina de Albuquerque. (Conde, *História das AD*, 23.)

³⁸ Conde, *História das AD*, 25.

. . . so glad you could not appoint Mr. Vingren to this field. He had left the Baptist denomination and joined the “latter rain” or “Pentecostal” movement in Chicago. Although he did not tell me so. He could get no letter from Baptist churches. He has perverted quite a few of our members in my absence. Both he and they were out when I got back from Pianhy.³⁹

Shortly after, Nelson submitted his annual statement to long-time missionary Solomon Ginsburg, who quoted from it at length in his 1912 “Report of the North Brazil Mission.” Nelson declared his report “the worst I have ever made.” It describes how “the enemy” had taken advantage of the fact that, due to the death of two of his workers, the illness of another, and the departure to Portugal of a fourth, he had been “entirely without workers of an effective kind,” making it easy for this “enemy”—the un-named Vingren and Berg—to do his work. The results of that work:

In the Para church twenty-five were excluded for heresy and others for bad lips. There have been few baptisms and the churches left are too poor to take care of themselves. God knows it all.⁴⁰

Ginsburg then concludes, “All of the above goes to show that we are completely overwhelmed by the many opportunities.” Overwhelmed they were, and Vingren and Berg—whether by dumb luck or sly intention—very cleverly and successfully took advantage of this fact.

The Baptists were already well aware that the demand for their missionaries and

³⁹ Nelson to R. J. Willingham, 19 September 1911, IMBMC: Nelson. It is necessary to keep in mind that an appointment was a financial obligation from the Board to the missionary; this explains one reason why the Board would turn down a willing missionary.

⁴⁰ Ginsburg, “Report of the North Brazil Mission,” 1912, quoting Nelson. The difference in number is most likely accounted for by the fact that Conde did not count the children among the expelled – “17 were members and the others were minors”– while Nelson most likely did. (Conde, *História das AD*, 26.)

their “native workers” was far greater than they could supply. “Invitations to preach, to teach, and to baptize are constantly reaching us,” Ginsburg reported in 1911. “Railroad concessions, new harbors, newly-discovered precious mines, all are combining to make this the opportunity of any man’s life to take this north of Brazil for Christ and the Baptists.” But, he continued:

to accomplish this we urgently need more workers, more teachers, preachers, and above all native evangelists, well-trained and well-prepared native pastors. Look at the Amazon Valley with its open doors everywhere. What can one man [Nelson] do? Two or three more couples are urgently needed and ought to come at once. If the Board cannot support them they could come out anyhow, for the Amazon Valley is rich enough to supply all the needs of any competent man or woman.”⁴¹

In other words, although Ginsburg certainly did not see it this way, conditions in Pará in 1911 were perfect for Pentecostals to begin their work. As it turned out, his call for missionaries was indeed met, except that the missionaries who arrived were not the couple he had hoped for but two men, and though they had once been Baptists and posed as such, they were Pentecostals.

The need for more missionaries was urgent not only in the Amazon; throughout Brazil, Baptists had helped build a demand for pastors which was far greater than they were able to supply. Colporteurs (Protestant Bible salesmen) had been traveling the country for a good fifty years before Vingren and Berg arrived, preaching and holding prayer meetings

⁴¹ Ginsburg, “Report of North Brazil Mission” presented at FMB meeting on 17 May 1911, IMB Archives, 2686.

even in remote villages and towns, so that by the time the Pentecostal movement began to get underway there were many Brazilians who had heard the gospel preached by evangelists at urban preaching points or on rural colporteur expeditions, some of whom had even been baptized by visiting pastors but did not live near churches or did not have resident pastors, who were willing—and even eager—to listen to the Pentecostal message. By the time Vingren and Berg arrived there were groups of Brazilians throughout the country who were already engaged in, or willing to consider, alternate forms of Christianity but had no place to do so.

Baptists eventually pulled away from this type of drive-by evangelism, realizing, as W. E. Entzminger did in 1900, that “it is not worth the while to organize churches anywhere unless pastors can be provided for them,” but not before they had done some substantial work preparing people to respond favorably to evangelicals of all stripes.⁴² Some had already been baptized into the Baptist church, others had asked to be baptized and been refused,⁴³ and still others had been accepted for baptism and then asked to leave

⁴² W. E. Entzminger, “Annual Report of the Rio and Campos Missions” presented at FMB meeting on 11 May 1900, IMB Archives, 2666.

⁴³ The Baptists were selective; they did not allow all who showed interest to be baptized into the church. For example, Mr. Allen reported in 1932 that “several candidates have been rejected or put off until they give further proof of their readiness.” (William Allen to T. B. Ray, 8 October 1932, IMBMC: Allen.) A year later, his wife stated they “baptized I think it was 24 . . . and refused many times that number.” (Edith Allen to T. B. Ray, 17 October 1933, IMBMC: Allen.) On the whole, the people who were refused baptism altogether were from the lower classes, for they were the ones the Baptists feared would fail to meet their expectations over the long-term. Allen, noting that “we have one here and there to eliminate occasionally” urged caution in accepting potential *crentes*, for “it is difficult to realize, or remember, the tremendous pull the world has on these folks who are ignorant and unlettered.” (Ibid.) Many missionaries to Brazil – especially the ones who arrived in the heady days of the 1890s when Brazil was living its first years as a republic – did not attempt to convert any poor people at all, instead focusing their efforts on the upper

the church afterward.⁴⁴ All of these people were Pentecostal targets; people who had been refused or ejected by the Baptists were apt to join up with the Pentecostals. However, even Brazilians who *had* been accepted for baptism by the Baptists were an easy mark for the Pentecostals given the fact that many Baptist churches—like the Belém Baptist Church in Pará—had no full-time pastors.

But it was the model which Vingren and Berg established in 1911—going after members of existing churches—which became standard operating procedure for the AD. While they did not ignore non-Protestants completely, the Pentecostals focused on poaching as a major means of gaining followers. Conde does not state this directly, but he does allude to it: “the events which culminated in the foundation of the AD had profound repercussions through the various evangelical denominations.”⁴⁵ Even more importantly, he describes the response to it. Comparing the mainline evangelicals to the biblical Jews who were united by their opposition to Christianity, Conde states, “The way in which the AD absorbed other denominations led them to band together against the Pentecostal Movement.”⁴⁶ This aggressive response, which was unique in the previously amicable

classes. This will be discussed in detail below.

⁴⁴ For example, on his 1900 visit to Pernambuco, a city where Entzminger had founded a church eight years earlier, Ginsburg decided to, as he reported, “reorganize the work, uniting thirteen believers into a new church, leaving out about sixty as unworthy material.” Ginsburg, “Annual Report of the Pernambuco Baptist Mission for 1900” presented at FMB meeting on 11 May 1900, IMB Archives, 2666.

⁴⁵ Conde, *História das AD*, 28.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

history of missionary cooperation in Brazil, was a consequence of the Pentecostals' unexpectedly nefarious methods.

Before, Protestant missionaries had typically cooperated with each other. Methodist Justus Nelson's directing Vingren and Berg to the Baptist church is just one example of this cooperation.⁴⁷ Brazil is an enormous country with a huge population of (mostly nominal) Catholics; from the missionary standpoint, this had meant that direct competition was unnecessary as there were plenty of people and places to go around. Vingren and Berg, however, refused to abide by this gentlemen's agreement. Rather than pursue the Catholic "non-believers," they went after the *crentes*. To be fair, it must be noted that the Pentecostals may not have seen what they were doing as poaching. In their eyes, they were being forced out of their own churches for speaking a truth which the closed-minded were unwilling to hear. However, as far as the Baptists and others were concerned, it was stealing, plain and simple, to harvest what another farmer has planted.

As the church which Vingren and Berg had founded in Pará continued to spread

⁴⁷ Examples of interdenominational cooperation also include the tours Presbyterians gave Baptists of their schools in order to help the Baptists develop their own, as described by Ginsburg in his "Annual Report of the Pernambuco Baptist Mission for 1900," as well as this expression of regret offered by Baptists at the passing of a Presbyterian missionary: "The Mission heard with genuine and deep regret the news of the death of Dr. Butler, Presbyterian medical missionary and lovable colleague and our benefactor. A committee wired our sympathy to the family." ("Meeting of the North Brazil Mission" 22-30 May 1919, IMB microfilm MM30.) This history of cooperation extends outside Brazil. For example, in 1902 Quaker, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Episcopalian, and Northern and Southern Baptist missionaries met in an interdenominational conference in Cienfuegos, Cuba in order to determine how best to share the island. (Louis A. Pérez, "Protestant Missionaries in Cuba: Archival Records, Manuscript Collections, and Research Prospects," *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 27 No. 1 (1992): 105.)

throughout Brazil, Pentecostal missionaries continued to employ the same *modus operandi* that they had in Pará, an undertaking easily accomplished with the Baptists stretched so thin and so many of their churches lacking permanent pastors: they brought the doctrine of Spirit baptism into existing churches. For example, M. G. White reported from Bahia in 1917 of the trouble caused by “various sects at work in the field. ‘Holy Rollers’, ‘Darbyists’, ‘Independent Baptists’, and so on; *all working among the believers, instead of seeking the unsaved.*”⁴⁸ Similarly, a report from Mexico in 1919 described how “several good but simple-minded Baptists were carried off their feet by these pretenders,” so-called Holy Rollers who were finding so much success that special services were held to counteract their influence, as it sighed that “it seems that error flies like the wind, while truth crawls toward the goal.”⁴⁹ If it weren’t for the strategic need to send positive, self-congratulatory reports to the Board so that much-needed funds would be provided to them rather than sent to one of the other mission fields, candid reports such as this one would probably have occurred with far greater frequency.

Eventually, emboldened by their successes and the declining Baptist presence effected by the Great Depression,⁵⁰ the Pentecostals also began to poach from churches with pastors as well. In 1931, for example, the national Baptist convention was set to vote

⁴⁸ W. C. Taylor, “Annual Report” of the North Brazil Mission, presented at FMB meeting 16 May 1917, IMB Archives, 2693 (italics mine).

⁴⁹ J. S. Cheavens, “Report of the North Mexico Mission,” presented at FMB meeting on 14 May 1919, IMB Archives, 2700.

⁵⁰ This will be discussed in some detail below.

on whether to expel the Engenho de Dentro church of Rio for heresy. While Edith Allen's own opinion (which she could always be relied on to have) was that "it is not heresy but an erroneous interpretation of the Scriptures, and should be treated as such," she acknowledged that many "consider that it is heresy and of course refuse to recognize any rights of the Eng. De Dentro church." It appears that the church had been entertaining Pentecostal notions and was refusing to "retract and go back to their former position."⁵¹ This situation is the same as the one enacted twenty years earlier at that first church in Pará, only on a larger scale; members of a Baptist church had once again been expelled for accepting the Pentecostal practice of spirit baptism. Religious plurality, so much a part of Brazilian culture, was considered unacceptable by the Baptists. Once the Pentecostals made inroads at a particular church, that church was likely to leave the Baptist convention and become Pentecostal, if not by choice, then by mandate.⁵²

Pentecostals poached the Baptists' flock throughout their first decades in Brazil. Some lambs were forced out when they accepted the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism; some opted to leave because they were offered more autonomy by the Pentecostal shepherds; some might have joined up with the Baptists had they been given an opportunity but simply met the Pentecostals first. The Pentecostals were the wolves

⁵¹ Edith Allen to T. B. Ray, 20 November 1931, IMBMC: Allen.

⁵² The case of the Engenho de Dentro church was not an isolated incident. Pentecostal ideas were introduced into other Baptist churches as well. Allen reported being pleasantly surprised that the 1932 Sunday School convention turned out to be "surprisingly orthodox and evangelistic in its utterances," with only two or three people making comments that "savored of the hash they have been dishing up these past years." Edith Allen to T. B. Ray, 5 September 1932, IMBMC: Allen.

who pounced when the shepherds were not looking, and the Baptists simply did not have enough shepherds to protect their flock.⁵³ In 1918, Z. C. Taylor reported from Recife that the single Baptist church there “is the only church in a vast region where the people are clamoring for the gospel, and where the Spiritualists and Holy Rollers are invading the country and offering the people stones for bread.” He went on, “It makes one heart-sick to see the opportunity we are losing for want of workers in that great field.”⁵⁴ But with only one missionary for every one million Brazilians,⁵⁵ there simply were not enough Baptist shepherds. Baptist missionary Everett Gill’s 1932 report from Hungary applies perfectly to the Brazilian case as well: Of the Pentecostals encountered there, he wrote, “It seems that they prefer stealing sheep to raising lambs.”⁵⁶

“But you stay here with me so that I may give you all the commands, decrees and laws you are to teach them to follow in the land I am giving them to possess.” (Deuteronomy 5:31)

Continuing with this analogy (although acknowledging the problematic way in which it

⁵³ Keeping in mind the parallel history of the Baptists and Catholics, one might also say, “The Baptists were the wolves who pounced when the shepherds were not looking, and the Catholics simply did not have enough shepherds to protect their flock.”

⁵⁴ W.C. Taylor, “Report of the North Mexico Mission,” presented at FMB meeting on 15 May 1918, IMB Archives, 2694.

⁵⁵ See Ginsburg’s memoir, *A Missionary Adventure: An Autobiography of Solomon L. Ginsburg* (Nashville: Southern Baptist Convention, 1921), 207.

⁵⁶ Everett Gill, “The Hungarian Baptist Union Annual Report,” presented at FMB meeting on 13 May 1932, IMB Archives, 2729.

denies Brazilians of agency, as if they could not possibly have made the decision to leave the Baptists and join the Pentecostals of their own accord), begs a question: Why were the sheep so eager to be stolen? One reason for Brazilians' enthusiastic response to Pentecostalism was that it empowered them. Power in the Catholic Church was held by (mostly foreign) priests; power in the mainline Protestant churches was held by foreign missionaries and Brazilian elites; power in the Pentecostal churches, however, could be held by anyone—and after 1930, *had* to be held by Brazilians. This was in part a matter of theology and in part a matter of necessity. In the case of the AD, Vingren and Berg knew they would not be able to advance their cause without Brazilian leadership and support. With limited funds and reinforcements available from abroad, they needed the Brazilians and could achieve very little without them. So while the Baptist missionaries doubted Brazilian leadership ability and continued to do so well into the 1940s, if not longer, typically doing a remarkably poor job of hiding their doubts, the Pentecostals could little afford to do so. The Brazilians were thus their equal partners from the very beginning.⁵⁷

As we have seen, *crentes* who accepted Pentecostal doctrine were expelled from their churches and founded their own. Brazilians were thus in charge of things at once, the foreigners too few in number and too dependent on Brazilian partnership for the kind of foreign/native tensions which became so problematic among the Baptists to ever be a significant concern for the Pentecostals. Unlike the Baptist missionaries, who

⁵⁷ See Conde, *História das AD*, 29-59, for descriptions of Brazilian pastors.

depended on the Board to pay their salaries, assign their territories, and approve and fund their projects, the Pentecostal missionaries had no choice but to work independently because they were spreading a new religious message which was still becoming institutionalized. This enabled them—and also *compelled* them—to be far more effective than their mainline Protestant predecessors and contemporaries.

Brazilians—especially non-elite Brazilians, who of course comprised the majority of the population—embraced Pentecostalism because it embraced them. This was not the case in the Baptist churches. Despite Ginsburg’s 1900 warning to the Board: “Brethren, if Brazil is ever to be converted, it will only be through Brazilians [so] let us therefore prepare our men, so that in the near future they may be able to take our places,” that future was a long time coming, largely because of the way the Baptists went about preparing *their men*.⁵⁸ Because biblical literacy is considered essential for Baptist pastors, and because when the Baptists first arrived in Brazil in the 1880s, biblical literacy for anyone other than priests was unheard of (and even for priests was unreliable).⁵⁹ Therefore, any Brazilian who wanted to become a leader in a mainline Protestant church—either as a pastor (an option available only to men) or as a missionary (a possibility for both women and men)—had much to learn.⁶⁰ The Baptists thus decided

⁵⁸ Ginsburg, “Annual Report of the Pernambuco Baptist Mission for 1900.”

⁵⁹ In Catholic Brazil there were no versions of the Bible in the vernacular and the Latin versions were available only to priests.

⁶⁰ Baptist training requirements were less than those of other churches, but were still significant for people starting from nothing. Pentecostal requirements, however, were even less: Pentecostals believed that

early on that they ought to follow the Presbyterians' example and focus on opening schools.

Founding schools in Brazil became, as missionary Z. C. Taylor put it in a 1900 letter, "the necessary outcome of missions."⁶¹ Before a Brazilian could lead a Baptist church, he needed formal study of the Bible. The Baptists looked to the Presbyterians, who had been in Brazil since 1861, for models. According to Ginsburg, who toured their school(s) in Pernambuco, the Presbyterians had found great success by investing in theological training:

They have a good church in this city, and several others in different parts of this State. I attribute their excellent success to the wisdom of their first missionaries, who, as soon as they had the opportunity, prepared some young men for the ministry, and these are spreading their cause with a zeal worthy of esteem and appreciation.⁶²

A focus on education continued to be the primary Baptist strategy over the years, mandated by the Board and supported (if not always enthusiastically embraced) by missionaries in the field.

Over thirty years after Taylor and Ginsburg first urged them to do so, the Board continued to believe, as Executive Secretary Charles E. Maddry wrote to missionary Edith

because power and knowledge come directly from God via baptism by the Holy Spirit, they did not invest in theological training because beyond basic biblical literacy. The ability to read and interpret the Bible, while useful, was not absolutely necessary.

⁶¹ Z.C. Taylor to unknown correspondent (first four pages of letter are missing from archive) circa Summer 1900, IMBMC: Taylor.

⁶² Ginsburg, "Annual Report of the Pernambuco Baptist Mission for 1900."

Allen in 1934, “that the hope for our work in all lands is through the young people . . . [and] we ought to concentrate on institutions, agencies and individuals that train our young people for future leadership.”⁶³ Allen, for her part, despite feeling confined by her teaching duties in Rio and wishing she could “go to some town where there is no work and build up a work from the ground” and experience that “soul satisfaction [found] in the constant fresh contacts in talking to others about the gospel who have not heard it that nothing in a school routine can substitute,” also believed in the importance of the Mission’s educational efforts. “I feel more and more and the years pass,” she wrote to Maddy, “that some of us have got to give our time and strength to these institutions that must prepare the leaders for the work out on the fields, and in that conviction am glad I can serve here in Rio college.”⁶⁴ A month later she repeated those sentiments (perhaps trying to convince herself she believed them), writing that experience “convinces me more and more that the most lasting results come from training the children into young people capable of serving the church, and preparing a few of the choice ones for leadership” and “right there comes in the vital need of our college and its contribution to the denominational development.”⁶⁵

Forty years later, the general consensus among the Baptist missionaries, according

⁶³ O. E. Maddy to Edith Allen, 14 December 1934, IMBMC: Allen.

⁶⁴ Edith Allen to O. E. Maddy, 23 September 1934, IMBMC: Allen.

⁶⁵ Edith Allen to O.E. Maddy, 19 November 1934.

to Allen, was that Brazilians were still not yet ready to take over, for “moral character and stability aren’t developed in one generation.”⁶⁶ Others of her letters offer evidence which bolsters her assertion that this opinion was widely held. Describing Daniel de Sarmo, who was made secretary of the Brazilian Baptist Convention in 1931, Allen wrote that “his principal peril will be in speaking too frankly to the Brasilians about their faults. *He sees them as we do*, and has been exceedingly plainspoken, which isn’t always the best thing.”⁶⁷ And, a few years later, when some of her comments on Brazilian (in)competence were excerpted from a letter she had written to Maddry—for example, “that there is considerable character building to be done yet, before we will have a Brazilian constituency in condition to take over full responsibility of the work”—and published in the *Baptist Courier* without her permission, she chided her correspondent that “the Brazilians know that *most of us feel that way*, and it does not help any to see it in cold black and white.”⁶⁸

It certainly did not help to see it spelled out so clearly, as it only served to fuel the resentment the Brazilians already harbored toward the foreigners. After all, the Baptist missionaries were certainly aware of the *crentes*’ eagerness to spread the evangelical message. In his memoir, Ginsburg described the enthusiasm of the converted Brazilians.

⁶⁶ Edith Allen to Ruth Ford, 20 February 1940, IMBMC: Allen.

⁶⁷ Edith Allen to T. B. Ray, 20 November 1931 (italics mine).

⁶⁸ Edith Allen, “Notes From Rio de Janeiro,” *The Baptist Courier*, 5 December 1935, and Edith Allen to O.E. Maddry, 31 December 1935, IMBMC: Allen (italics mine).

“If there is one characteristic that distinguishes the Brazilian convert more than any other it is his desire to tell the good news to others,” wrote Ginsburg. “He just bubbles over with joy and he cannot keep quiet. He must go out and tell others.”⁶⁹ Typically the Baptists were happy to see Brazilians bringing their friends, relatives, and neighbors to Protestantism, but most were reluctant to give the kind of real leadership roles which the Pentecostals so liberally offered.

It became such a problem for the Baptists that they even had a special term for Brazilians who wanted the missionaries to grant them more power: they were called “radicals” by the missionaries and the Board. It was a much-discussed problem which often came to a head at conventions. For example, Allen reported that her 1931 district convention sessions “were even more disquieting than those of last year” as “the radicals were plainly in the ascendancy, and the anti-missionary spirit was manifest more than once.”⁷⁰ A few months later she reported that “some of the missionaries are worried at radical croppings out in different places.”⁷¹

The efforts that the missionaries and the Board made to address the problem did little to help. For example, in a 1931 letter T. B. Ray encouraged missionaries to give contributions toward Brazilian pastors’ salaries to their churches rather than directly to

⁶⁹ Ginsburg, *A Missionary Adventure*, 215.

⁷⁰ Edith Allen to T. B. Ray, 20 November 1931.

⁷¹ Edith Allen to T. B. Ray, 24 February 1932, IMBMC: Allen.

the men themselves, for “if the Mission pays directly to a pastor any portion of his salary, that reduces by so much his responsibility to his church.” Ray continued, “A pastor ought to be made to feel that first of all that he is pastor of that church and not a servant of the Mission.”⁷² But friction between missionaries and Brazilian leadership continued. For example, while the Allens were in the United States on furlough for fifteen months in 1936-37, a Brazilian family moved into the house they had intended to occupy upon their return, while others spread rumors that the Allens would not return at all—the pastor who made “the biggest campaign against Mr. Allen” said “he wasn’t returning, and no good as a teacher”—and angled to take their jobs.⁷³ “Not a speck of appreciation, but that is the order of the day down here now. . . by the bunch that is running things,” wrote Edith Allen.⁷⁴

The power struggle was ongoing, and often it was ugly. It undoubtedly was inefficient as well, slowing down the work and thereby creating opportunities for Pentecostals. The Baptist party line, as expressed by Ginsburg, was that evangelism and the “opening up” of new territories must be practiced by missionaries, not Brazilians. “Although in some places a competent native could do it, as a rule it has to be done by the missionary, who in a certain way can demand, if necessary, the protection of the authorities.”⁷⁵ While such

⁷² T. B. Ray to William Allen, 31 October 1932, IMBMC: Allen.

⁷³ Edith Allen to O. E. Maddy, 16 March 1938.

⁷⁴ Edith Allen to Ruth Ford, 21 September 1936, IMBMC: Allen.

⁷⁵ Ginsburg, *A Missionary Adventure*, 217.

protection might have been needed in the early days of Baptist missionary work, back when missionaries often had to rely on their political and social connections to secure permission to preach and occasionally get them out of jail, it was no longer was the case—at least not universally—by the time Vingren and Berg were beginning their work.

Foreign Mission Board Assistant to the Executive Secretary Ruth Lucille Ford, with whom Edith Allen kept up a regular correspondence, got it exactly right when she wrote in a 1940 letter to Allen, “I am very much afraid . . . that these dissensions and divisions and lack of harmony do much to retard the work, and that is a thing to be deeply regretted.”⁷⁶ While the Pentecostals found fantastic success sending Brazilians out to evangelize, the Baptist effort stagnated, and what slowed the Baptists’ work speeded the Pentecostals’ as some disillusioned Brazilian Baptists, frustrated by the missionaries’ endless “character building,” tired of being treated like children, responded well to Pentecostalism’s promise of greater power. The Baptist lack of harmony, which, borrowing from Deuteronomy, one might describe as resulting from the Baptists’ insistence on keeping the Brazilians by their sides in order to make sure they learn and follow all the Baptist commands, decrees, and laws before giving them *their own land* to possess, could only be celebrated by the Pentecostals.

The 1930s brought additional reasons for celebration to the Pentecostals as they watched the Great Depression severely disable Baptist missionary work. By 1933, according to

⁷⁶ Ruth Ford to Edith Allen, 9 March 1940. IMBMC: Allen.

Edith Allen, “Our missionary force [was] nearly at its row’s end with no reinforcements and no hopes of any anytime soon.”⁷⁷ At the same time, the Pentecostal movement was growing exponentially.⁷⁸ While it would be too simple to claim a simple inverse correlation between Baptist reduction and Pentecostal growth, the two are not unrelated. Was it purely a coincidence that 1930, the year in which Baptists began curtailing their work in Rio in response to the crisis, was the same year that the Assemblies of God moved its national headquarters to that city from Pará? Perhaps. Still, the fact that mainline Protestant power decreased at the very same time that Pentecostal power was increasing bears investigating.

Baptist missionaries were dependent on the United States for money. Almost all of their funds came either came from or were approved by the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Virginia. In keeping with policy, even when potential donors wanted to give directly to missionaries they were often put off until the Board could be consulted. Of course—given the state of communications (and the expense of sending telegrams)—this slowed things down tremendously. For example, a man who was interested in donating money to help build a new church in Rio was told “to wait a little longer” by his pastor who did not “want our Baptist people to help a man personally unless he is all right with the Board” because he “believe[ed] that we ought to consult our Mission Board about our

⁷⁷ Edith Allen to O. E. Maddy, 5 December 1933, IMBMC: Allen.

⁷⁸ I refer again to Rolim’s figures: 0 Pentecostals in 1900, 44,311 Pentecostals in 1930, and 705,031 Pentecostals in 1960. (Rolim, *Pentecostais no Brasil*, 104.)

missionaries so as to guard against embarrassing the Board in any way.”⁷⁹ In no way were the Baptist missionaries financially independent.

Thus, because their financial well-being was completely tied up with the state of the U.S. economy, the Great Depression dramatically affected the Baptist mission work.

1931 was, according to corresponding secretary T. B. Ray, “the hardest year in our Foreign Mission Board work I have ever known:

The awful burden of debt is about to kill us, and then we have added to this debt during the present year nearly \$200,000.00. We thought we had cut down enough to take care of the situation, but we missed it. We didn’t calculate that our people would drop in their gifts as much as they have done during this year. I think we must have surely gotten just about down to the bottom.⁸⁰

But it got worse. In 1932 the Southern Baptist Convention ordered the Foreign Mission Board to cut the 1933 budget to 12 percent below 1932 expenditures. This meant that the 1933 budget was less than half of the 1930 budget, a decrease so dramatic that Ray confessed concern that, even if they were “able to appropriate enough to keep the work alive,” it would not be “anything like the support that is deserved and called for by the needs.”⁸¹ Appropriations for “native work” were halved, thirty missionaries were kept at

⁷⁹ Unknown author (illegible) to R. J. Willingham, written on letterhead from “Office of Administration, William Jewell College, Liberty, MO,” 18 June 1910, IMB microfilm 873/227AR. The letter concerned the Brazilian pastor Soren, who was visiting the U.S for medical, educational, and fund-raising purposes.

⁸⁰ T. B. Ray to Edith Allen, 9 December 1931, IMBMC: Allen.

⁸¹ He continued, “We have been awfully pressed on making the budget this year. The Convention has so instructed us to cut the budget down 12% below the actual receipts of 1932, that it is forcing us down to a \$600,000.00 level. This is less than half of what we appropriated two years ago.” T. B. Ray to Edith Allen, 1 October 1932, IMBMC: Allen.

home “on indefinite furlough without salary,” and no money at all was allotted for those who were supposed to return in 1934.⁸² By February of 1933 the Board reported that more missionaries would be called home should income continue to decline as it did in January. Ray summed up the situation well when he wrote, “We face a fearful situation with reference to our whole foreign mission program.”⁸³

The situation became so dire that in 1933 the Board asked missionaries to sell Board property. As recorded in the minutes of a special meeting of the South Brazil Mission, the Board requested “in any case where it may be done without damage to the work that mission properties be sold and the proceeds reverted to the Board.” The money would be “applied on the debt in the banks here in Richmond.” A request was made at the same time that “a detailed list of native workers and expenses” be sent to the Board, which suggests that the Board was considering cutting the salaries of Brazilians who worked with missionaries just at the time when they were most needed.⁸⁴ Although there was talk of making efforts to replace furloughed missionaries with Brazilians, given the Baptists educational requirements and limited funds, it was difficult.⁸⁵

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ O. E. Maddy to William Allen, 17 February 1933, IMBMC: Allen.

⁸⁴ Minutes from “Called Meeting of Executive Committee South Brazil Mission” 6 January 1933, IMB microfilm MM30.

⁸⁵ O. E. Maddy to William Allen, 17 February 1933: “I wish very much indeed that some native preacher could be sent into the region covered by Brother Sherwood [furloughed missionary] and the Executive Committee of the South Brazil Mission will take whatever steps are necessary with the money in hand, to take care of this situation.”

The Pentecostals' financial situation was extremely different. They were not dependent on funds sent from the United States and could receive donations directly and immediately, without waiting for letters to be exchanged, meetings held, and donations approved. Furthermore, almost all of their money came from their church members in Brazil rather than from the United States and, because they were not running a worldwide mission project as the Baptists were, nearly all of it stayed in Brazil.⁸⁶ Nor were Pentecostal numbers negatively affected by the Depression the way the Baptists' were; all Pentecostal pastors already were Brazilians, so there was no need to replace missionary pastors who were unable to return to their posts. In sum, the fact that neither their financial nor their human resources were in any way dependent on the United States meant that the Great Depression affected Pentecostals far less than it did the Baptists.

This is not to say that the depression did not affect Brazil. It did. But it did not affect Pentecostals in the same way it affected Baptists. One reason for this is that most Brazilians were used to want and gave in spite of it. There is evidence which demonstrates that, while donations from the U.S middle- and upper-classes fell precipitously in the 1930s, donations from poor Brazilians remained the same (and even improved). In 1932 Allen had exclaimed, "I can't get over how these folks manage to give

⁸⁶ The AD did send a few missionaries to Portugal; the first to go left Brazil in 1913. (Conde, *História das AD*, 36).

out of nothing.”⁸⁷ Later that same year, her husband, reporting on the Federal District convention, wrote that “contributions held up pretty well. . . [sic] almost up to the last year’s level in spite of worse conditions economically due to the unstable situations.”⁸⁸ Baptist fund-raising in the United States plummeted with the disappearance of discretionary spending, but Brazilians continued to give. This suggests that Pentecostal income, which relied nearly exclusively on Brazilians, most likely remained stable in the 1930s.

Another reason that Pentecostals suffered less than the Baptist missionaries in the 1930s was that the political instability of the time, beginning with the Revolution of 1930 military coup and continuing through the early Vargas years, made it more difficult for foreigners to come and stay in Brazil. Visa problems kept missionaries in the U.S. for most of 1932. Referring to the turmoil, William Allen reported that “open-air work in general” was “hampered” due to the “unsettled conditions of the country.”⁸⁹ The large prayer-tent meetings which the Baptists had been employing so successfully at least since the beginning of 1931⁹⁰ were now limited to suburban areas.

If anything, the Depression helped Pentecostals, as they benefited from the same situation which caused the Baptists so much heartache. Not only were they less affected

⁸⁷ Edith Allen to T. B. Ray, 5 September 1932.

⁸⁸ William Allen to T. B. Ray, 12 November 1932, IMBMC: Allen.

⁸⁹ William Allen to T. B. Ray, 8 October 1932.

⁹⁰ See Edith Allen to T. B. Ray, 5 January 1931, IMBMC: Allen.

financially, as the 1930s brought a surge of industrialization throughout the country with the installation of Vargas, but there is also the fact that in tough times people turn to religion. Allen observed this phenomenon in 1932:

When I see how our folks down here manage to sacrifice and give, and that facing absolute want, and when I see folks coming confessing the Lord right along (we have six awaiting baptism right now) and increasing interest on all sides, in part due to the fact that folks are up against it and are turning to the Lord, some of them, as a desperate last resort, there are blessing to be found in the difficulties.⁹¹

And if one religion is not fulfilling their needs, especially in a religiously pluralist society like Brazil, they turn to another. Those who were already inclined to embrace Protestantism—especially among the lower class—could turn to Pentecostalism. The Baptists were still rejecting them, but the Pentecostals never did.⁹²

The political and economic crises of the 1930s did put pressure on the Baptist missionaries to make Brazilians more equal partners. Billy Allen, finding “blessings’ in the silver lining of “these troubled times,” wrote of “the absolute necessity . . . of the native churches coming to selfsupport.” He went on: “while money was comparatively easy to get, the training for the native constituency was not quite so insistent of that point, but since hard days came many a congregation that thought it impossible to support itself had

⁹¹ Edith Allen to T. B. Ray, 5 September 1932.

⁹² At least, I have yet to find any evidence indicating that Pentecostals – or, to be quite precise, the AD from its inception until 1935, which is the time the paper addresses – ever rejected anyone.

to or die, and the result is a stronger group than before.”⁹³ It was, however, a case of too little too late. The Baptist mission was still structured for a long apprenticeship, but how can you “stay and learn” from someone who has left?

Even the optimistic Edith Allen acknowledged “the tragedy of open doors that have closed and of millions who have not heard the gospel because there was no one to tell them.”⁹⁴ Because the Baptists had dragged their feet, keeping most of the leadership power to themselves and failing to appoint very many Brazilians to the pastorate, the decline in missionary numbers and funds was an enormous blow to their work. Not so for the Pentecostals, who had experienced this pressure from the very beginning and formalized an institutional structure in 1930 which ensured that each church would act as an independent unit.⁹⁵ While Baptist tensions simmered into the 1940s, slowing the work, whatever tensions that did exist between Pentecostals on a regional or national scale were of little consequence.

In sum, the lack of a group dedicated to funding Pentecostal mission work was more a help than a hindrance. The fact that early Pentecostal missionaries operated

⁹³ Edith Allen to a Miss Coleman, 7 August 1934, IMBMC: Allen.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ In response to escalating tensions between missionaries and Brazilians, a general meeting was held in 1930 where the decision was made that all churches would be taken over by Brazilian pastors. The decision was made on scriptural grounds; as Vingren put it himself, “We all believe that each congregation should be free and independent as were all the congregations mentioned in the Scriptures, and we therefore reject all kinds of organization and establishment of denominations except the foundation of local churches.” Vingren, p. 157-8 as quoted in Endruweit, “Pentecostalism in Brazil,” 34.

independently—without the support of a mission board—turned out to be an advantage, as it left a legacy of missionary independence and foreign/native partnership. While Baptist efforts to expand were slowed by their determination to inculturate and educate Brazilians before handing over the reins, Pentecostals were able to work quickly. No existing institutional structure demanded a system of united decision-making; each church was able to operate as an independent entity. No mission board demanded that time be spent on writing reports, organizing meetings, and traveling to regional and national conventions. Instead of spreading themselves thinly among projects and places as the Baptists did, the early Pentecostals focused on doing just one thing and doing it well: convincing *crentes* to accept the Pentecostal doctrine of baptism by the Holy Spirit.

“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” (Mark 4:9)

Gunner Vingren and Daniel Berg were working class immigrants from Sweden who, despite their light skin, were considered “ethnic” rather than “white,” a term which when applied unmodified at the turn of the twentieth century referred normally to white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. As Freston argues, they were men who, given the place of Baptists on the outskirts of Swedish society, were accustomed to marginalization. Anti-intellectuals who were uninterested in social climbing and unconcerned with institution-building, Vingren and Berg were comfortable building communities as socially excluded as they were accustomed to being as Baptists in Sweden, immigrants in the U.S, and

Pentecostals in Baptist churches.⁹⁶ In many ways, they could not have been more different than the Southern Baptist missionaries, most of whom were educated white men and women who had grown up in the Reconstruction U.S. South, with all the race, class, and social baggage that entailed.

These differences in personal background mattered. Class and color affected whom missionaries felt most comfortable working with and how they viewed the Brazilians with whom they came into contact. And while the Baptists were not unwilling to baptize poor and black Brazilians, they saw them as “other” in a way that the Pentecostals did not. Consider the following which missionary Frances A. Bagby wrote in a letter upon returning from furlough to Brazil:

We reached our destination safely – and our whole trip was pleasant, with very calm weather, and some congenial passengers, although the majority were not the class of people we would choose for companions, unless for the purpose of helping them. We had professional boxers and professional dancers in our number. Mr. Bagby held the service on Sunday over in the first class social hall, and quite a goodly number of passengers from first and tourist class attended. We also had the opportunity of evangelizing a very cultured Portuguese gentleman, who has spent his life in Brazil. . . . He seemed to be such a sincere person, and a perfect gentleman of culture and learning, and persons of his type could be so useful in reaching others of the higher class.”⁹⁷

A distinction is made between those who are social equals—the passengers from first and tourist class—and those who are not—the professional dancers, boxers, and their ilk—with clear preference shown for the former. What would Bagby have thought of Berg

⁹⁶ Freston, “Protestantes e politica,” 69 and Freston, “Pentecostalism in Brazil,” 122.

⁹⁷ Frances A. Bagby to Ruth Ford, 6 October 1937, IMBMC: Bagby.

had she met *him* aboard the ship, an iron-worker traveling third class?

This Baptist preference for evangelizing the upper classes was more than the personal inclination of missionaries like Frances Bagby. It was, in fact, official Baptist policy, at least in certain areas of Brazil. For example, when Edith and Billy Allen returned to Rio de Janeiro after their 1937 furlough, they found themselves installed in the fine home of the Almirante Henrique Guilhem Barreto—the Secretary of the Brazilian navy—a house chosen for its proximity to the Baptist college and the church which had recently been organized to serve the college community. Edith Allen wrote that “the nice house, we feel is part of the Lord’s plan for that particular contact we will make” during this new term which “is to be more largely with the educated, cultured class instead of with the poorer class as it was this last term.”⁹⁸ Despite her often-expressed personal preference for working with “the humble folk” and the difficulty with which she had to “reconcile [herself] to a future that is confined to just school contacts or those related to it religiously” and excludes “working in some section where the gospel is not known,” the Board’s priority was the upper class college community and hence that is where she and her husband were sent.⁹⁹

The Baptist fascination with the upper classes (and corresponding antipathy for the lower classes) was longstanding and was, I argue, one of the main reasons they became so deeply involved in education. Founding schools gave missionaries a way to influence, as

⁹⁸ Edith Allen to Ruth Ford, 29 July 1935, IMBMC: Allen.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

they so often phrased it, “the best people” and “the better or ruling class.”¹⁰⁰ Pioneer missionary Z. C. Taylor, for example, visited the Presbyterian school in Sao Paulo, which had already been there thirty years and where they had educated, according to him, “the children of governors, the presidents of the Republic, city mayors, the law-making society and sentiment-making people of the state and country.” Taylor wanted the same for the Baptists, and there was no reason they could not achieve it, as the Presbyterian schools could not serve all the powerful families of the city. “As ex-governor told me,” wrote Taylor, “there were not reliable boarding schools in the city, and having tried to get his son into Presbyterian schools in vain, [he] sent him to Europe.”¹⁰¹ Laura Barton Taylor described men from “the very best families of the city” of São Paulo who “come and plead with me to take their children and train them up in the way that they should go,” while Ginsburg reported similar conditions in Pernambuco, where he was asked “by some of the influential citizens of this city, who are tired of the Jesuitical teaching, to open a place where they could put their children in our charge” and who “have even offered to help raise the means for starting a school if a good teacher is sent.”¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ These two phrases come up again and again in Baptist minutes and correspondence. Two examples are found in a letter written by Z. C. Taylor letter to x in which he states, “. . . our schools will attract the better or ruling class. . .” (Taylor to unknown correspondent, circa Summer 1900) and a letter written by Laura Barton Taylor in which she refers to “the very best families of the city,” (Laura Taylor to R. J. Willingham, 26 June 1900, IMBMC: Taylor).

¹⁰¹ Z. C. Taylor to unknown, circa Summer 1900.

¹⁰² Laura Barton Taylor to R. J. Willingham, 26 June 1900 and Ginsburg, “Annual Report of the Pernambuco Baptist Mission for 1900.”

Meanwhile, in São Paulo, William Bagby reported in 1908 that the Girls' School had "greatly prospered" and had received pupils "from many of the best Brazilian families in the city."¹⁰³

The Baptists' focus on the upper classes extended to rural areas as well. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a boom time throughout Brazil: sugar in Bahia, dairy products in Minas Gerais, rubber in Manaus, shipping in Rio and Pará, manufacturing in Recife and, overshadowing all else, coffee in Sao Paulo. Elites were building their fortunes throughout the country, and Baptists were intent on following them. Even rural areas had their aristocracies with liberal elites who were eager to help the Protestants. For example, in 1911 in Castanhal, Pará, Julia Menescal, the wife of a merchant navy captain who spent most of his time away from home, held down the Baptist fort. Converted in 1900, she dedicated herself to keeping up "the work," as the missionaries called their efforts, in the absence of a pastor, and serving as "the pastor, Sunday school superintendent, general visitor, and what not." Another woman, Dr. Amelia Calvalcante, a medical doctor, also supported the work "in her own sphere and way."¹⁰⁴ These were upper class women, a demographic which the Baptists were very interested in reaching, as demonstrated by the Bahia mission's efforts to develop a cooking school in order to attract, in the words of a fundraising brochure distributed in

¹⁰³ Helen Bagby Harrison, *The Bagbys of Brazil* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954), 134.

¹⁰⁴ Ginsburg, "Report of North Brazil Mission," 1911.

Missouri, “the high class of Bahia women—those cultured, wealthy, lovely women of leisure who have come from the aristocracy of Europe.”¹⁰⁵

Of course some Baptists did focus on the poor, but rarely exclusively,¹⁰⁶ and even missionaries who expressed a desire to work with “the common people” expressed prejudices against the lower, darker classes. Edith Allen, as mentioned, frequently expressed a decided preference for working with the “humble folk.”¹⁰⁷ Still, it is clear she did not consider herself of these people, but rather, like Frances Bagby, saw them as *other*, not peers but rather objects of salvation. Allen’s letters made her class prejudice clear in the disrespectful way she described her servants. One servant was “better than nothing but far from ideal,”¹⁰⁸ her cook was “my piece of a cook”¹⁰⁹ who needed to be “lined out” regularly; and a maid she fired as “about the last word in ignorance and unwillingness to learn anything new,” complaining, “and there are so many like her in

¹⁰⁵ “Building Project, Bahia, Brazil,” Woman’s Missionary Union, Kansas City, Missouri, April, 1935, pp. 5-6 (IMB microfilm 880/231AR).

¹⁰⁶ While there is certainly evidence that the Baptists’ mission project did not exclude the poor—for example, a 1909 letter from a long-time (20 years) *crente* described his Rio church’s members as “mostly poor but exceedingly earnest and active”—for the most part their strategy was to focus on the rich. (Unkown correspondent (name illegible) to a Mr. Levering, 28 August 1909, IMB microfilm 873/227AR) This strategy was based on the logic that by converting the rich they would put themselves in a better position to help the poor, thinking which originated in the fact that they needed powerful men to protect them from Church and ultra-montanist officials and in their focus on training “capable” (read: elite) Brazilians to help them lead. (See Premack, “After the ‘Religious Question’: Masons and Missionaries in Late 19th Century Brazil,” 2006 (unpublished).)

¹⁰⁷ She often expressed preference for talking to “common people” rather than working with “educated folks” in the school. See, for example, Edith Allen to Ruth Ford, 19 March 1935, IMBMC: Allen.

¹⁰⁸ Edith Allen to Ruth Ford, 16 March 1938.

¹⁰⁹ Edith Allen to O. E. Maddy, 16 March 1938.

this world down here!”¹¹⁰

It must be noted that the Baptist concern with the “better class” had begun as a matter of political exigency as much as one of snobbery. The precarious situation of Protestants in nineteenth century Brazil meant they needed powerful allies in order to protect them from Catholic attacks and to keep them out of jail. Mainline Protestant missionaries had established schools in Brazil not only because they needed to train Brazilians to serve as pastors, but also because they needed a way to ally themselves with Brazilian elites. These elites, for their part, were eager to embrace the missionaries because of the liberal, republican ideologies they represented, viewing the missionaries both as harbingers of progress and as challenges to the hegemony of the Catholic Church.¹¹¹ As a 1971 report commissioned by the mission board of the Methodist church explains, nineteenth century Latin American intellectual elites, who “admired and endeavored to introduce into the subcontinent the political, economic, and cultural forms for Anglo-Saxon countries. . . abetted – in some cases, even invited – and protected the entry and work of the Protestant missions.”¹¹² It was not difficult for the early missionaries to befriend wealthy and educated Brazilians; most wanted progress, which to many of them meant

¹¹⁰ Edith Allen to O. E. Maddry, 9 May 1938, IMBMC: Allen.

¹¹¹For more on the political relationship between liberal elites and foreign missionaries, see bibliography for works by Jean-Pierre Bastian, David Gueiros Vieira, Antonio Gouvêa Mendonça, and Adam Anderle.

¹¹² “River Plate Study Group Report” for the World Division of the Board of Missions of the United Methodist Church (Buenos Aires: July 2, 1971), published in “The Missionary and Social Justice: Latin America” in *The Future of the Missionary Enterprise* series, *IDOC-North America* 51 (March 1973): 40).

making Brazil politically, economically, and ideologically more like the United States and Europe. This required weakening the power of the Catholic Church by turning to Protestantism instead.¹¹³

While Protestant missionaries had a negligible affect at first, converting and baptizing very few, they were influential in other ways, particularly the way in which they helped powerful Brazilians publicly enact their struggle against the Catholic church and then advising them on transitioning from empire to republic. It was not uncommon for politicians to turn to missionaries for political advice, especially during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Brazil was in its early days as a republic.¹¹⁴ As the young Republic developed, Brazilian elites continued to seek missionaries' advice. In particular, Baptist missionaries were asked for input on the development of a national public education system. According to Z. C. Taylor, Baptist

¹¹³ As historians David Gueiros Vieira and Antonio Mendonça have argued, the insertion of Protestantism into 19th century Brazil was not a case of missionaries forcing their liberal beliefs on unwilling Brazilians, but rather one of powerful, liberal Brazilians encouraging missionary activity because they viewed wealthy Anglo-Saxon countries as models of modernization and progress. See Mendonça, *O Protestantismo, a maçonaria e a questão religiosa no Brasil* (Brasília: Ed. Universidade de Brasília, 1980), 73 and Gueiros Vieira, "O liberalismo, o maçonaria e o protestantismo no Brasil no século dezenove," in *Iglesia, Religión y Sociedad en La Historia Latinoamericana, 1492-1945: Congreso VIII de Asociación de Historiadores Latinoamericanistas de Europa, tomo tercero*, ed. Adam Anderle, (Szeged, Hungría, 1989), 132.

¹¹⁴ For example, some high-ranking Brazilians sought the North Americans' thoughts on constitutional reform, as happened with William Bagby. As his daughter recalls, "Aristides Lobo, who became Secretary of the Interior, called on Father shortly before the establishment of the republic and talked at length about the Constitution of the United States and about reforms which later were put into effect." After the republic was established the contact between liberal politicians and missionaries continued, as the missionaries, again according the Bagby Harrison, "contributed democratic ideas of state and church government and influenced, however inconspicuously, the destinies of the budding nation." (Harrison, *The Bagbys of Brazil*, 82-3.)

missionary to Rio, in 1900 the Baptist school was “constantly visited by prominent men who recognize[d] it as a model.”¹¹⁵

The relationship between missionaries and the liberal elites was a symbiotic one: Brazilians sought the advice of these men whom they viewed as representatives of republicanism and progress, and missionaries desired opportunities to influence powerful men because they needed these men to continue to protect them from emissaries of the Catholic Church who disrupted their preaching and attacked their churches and schools. This relationship was to have exceedingly helpful later repercussions for the Pentecostals. Because of what mainline Protestants had already done in the 1800s and were still doing in the early 1900s, Pentecostals did not need to invest time and energy in forming relationships with elites. A family analogy is useful here: it was as if the mainline Protestants who had begun their work in the nineteenth century were older siblings who had already fought all the battles with the parents and negotiated for freedoms which their younger siblings, the Pentecostals, then effortlessly enjoyed.

By the time the Pentecostals arrived, Brazil was no longer a monarchy, nor was it still a fledgling democracy. There were problems to be sure, especially in the rapidly growing cities where poverty and disease flourished while political unrest was the order of the day, but on the whole earlier missionaries had made much Brazil more hospitable to Protestantism by forging relationships with elite Brazilians. Pentecostals, then, did not

¹¹⁵ Z.C. Taylor letter to unknown correspondent, circa Summer 1900.

face the same pressure to build relationships with powerful Brazilians. Nor did they want to. Vingren and Berg, neither “white” nor upper-class themselves, were not interested in ingratiating themselves with powerful men. They cared little about “the best people” or “the ruling class.” They opened no schools and sought no students, and their mission was far less concerned with politics and ideology than it was with spirituality. Pentecostals simply wanted to spread the news of baptism by the Holy Spirit to as many people as possible.¹¹⁶ One reason why they succeeded so well, I believe, is that Vingren and Berg were men.

Along with class preferences, beliefs about what constituted proper work for women significantly affected the types of projects that missionaries undertook. Political, theological, and socio-racial considerations were three factors which led Baptists to focus on founding schools; the fourth is that women missionaries were determined to play a significant and direct role in mission efforts. Their work was taken seriously and encouraged, with “woman’s work” given separate attention in the reports made each year to the Board. Given that women could neither travel unaccompanied, nor hold public prayer meetings, nor found churches, nor serve as pastors, women who wanted to participate in missionary activities could do one of two things: they could help educational efforts by founding and teaching at schools or they could evangelize by

¹¹⁶ Their motivation was certainly complicated, probably more complicated than my formulation allows. However, my purpose here is to establish what they DID without venturing onto the shaky ground of determining WHY they did it – a question whose answers rely too much on psychology and conjecture for my comfort.

making home visits. The former option offered more institutional power and was therefore more attractive. Its pursuit precluded the latter option. Running schools took enormous amounts of time, energy, and resources.

If these Baptist women had gone to Brazil simply to accompany their husbands, things might have turned out differently. But this was not the case. Most of the Baptist women were there because they felt called to be missionaries. Indeed, in some cases, such as that of William and Anne Bagby, it was the wife who had convinced the husband to go.¹¹⁷ In several other cases, such as that of Edith and Billy Allen and Emma and Solomon Ginsburg, the women arrived in Brazil as single missionaries and met their husbands once they were already appointed by the mission board. In fact, missionary marriages became such a problem that at one point the Board considered a making a policy of appointing no single women because too many complications ensued when they fell in love.¹¹⁸ Ford joked to Edith Allen:

I think I'll open up a matrimonial bureau and marry them all off before they go to the field. It would save us a lot of confusion and future worry. What do you think of the idea?¹¹⁹

The female missionaries were, many (if not most) of them, independent and strong-minded women who were determined to serve.

Such indomitable women were the founders and principals of the Southern Baptists'

¹¹⁷ Harrison, *The Bagbys of Brazil*, 10-30.

¹¹⁸ Ruth Ford to Edith Allen, 25 February 1938, IMBMC: Allen.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

first six schools in Brazil.¹²⁰ Laura Barton Taylor, for example, once her children were grown, taught English classes day and night in order to save enough money to open a school. In a 1900 letter she wrote:

Mr. Taylor tried to persuade me from such a course for more than two years and finally consented, only because he said I would not be happy without it. After making all calculations as to cost, ill health, etc. I told him I would be willing to make every sacrifice and work in every imaginable way (to save money to build the school) for at least five years.¹²¹

Once established, the school depended on Laura Taylor for its success; in 1901 her husband wrote in a letter, “. . .we have been occupied with Mrs. Taylor’s health, for if she does not get a good rest the whole school will fall.”¹²²

Anne Bagby was similarly determined. Upon moving to São Paulo, after twenty years spent raising six children (and burying two more) and keeping house, she became hungry to return to missionary work. As her daughter recalls, “Men had been wonderfully blessed in their pulpit approach to the masses, she [Anne Bagby] commented; a school would furnish her a comparable, if not superior, influence.”¹²³ Anne Bagby cited the fact that President Salles’ own children attended mission schools as evidence that schools could spread the gospel to the upper, powerful classes, for “Roman Catholic children

¹²⁰ Maggie Rice, 1888, Rio de Janeiro; Emma Ginsburg, 1895, Campos; Bertha R. Stenger and Mary B. Wilcox, 1898, Belo Horizonte; Laura Taylor, 1898, Bahia, Emma Ginsburg, 1901, Pernambuco, and Anne Bagby, 1902, São Paulo. Recorded in Harrison, *The Bagbys of Brazil*, 121.

¹²¹ Laura Barton Taylor to R. J. Willingham, 26 June 1900.

¹²² Z.C. Taylor to unknown correspondent (first 3 pages missing from archive), circa 1901, IMBMC: Taylor.

¹²³ Harrison, *The Bagbys of Brazil*, 120.

could patronize a gospel [Protestant] school when attendance at an evangelical [Protestant] church would mean excommunication.”¹²⁴ Once her *Colegio Progresso Brasileiro* was founded in 1902, Bagby was so dedicated to the school that, with the Board’s approval, she chose to forego her 1908 furlough in order to put the money which would have purchased her family’s passage to the U.S. toward purchasing the school building instead.¹²⁵ As soon as women were no longer tied to the home by child-rearing duties, they (re)joined the mission work proper by founding, running, and teaching in schools. In accordance with gender norms, men were nominally in charge, but it was the women who ran the show.¹²⁶

The officialization of the schools in 1930, a result of the Vargas revolution, which required the Protestant schools to adapt their curriculum to new government requirements, only complicated the situation, creating a situation in which the “spirituality” of the schools suffered even more than it already had as a result of the need to hire Catholic teachers and satisfy Catholic parents.¹²⁷ Their schools tied the Baptists down to particular places, determining where missionaries lived and with whom they

¹²⁴ Harrison, *The Bagbys of Brazil*, 121.

¹²⁵ Harrison, *The Bagbys of Brazil*, 124. This instead of the rent she and her husband had been paying out of their own pocket! (Harrison, *The Bagbys of Brazil*, 121.)

¹²⁶ For example, Harrison recalls, “While Mother was absorbed in her educational mission Father, though nominally head of the school and certainly indispensable to the life of the institution, devoted his time to preaching,” (*The Bagbys of Brazil*, 133.)

¹²⁷ See Ed.th Allen to O. E. Maddry, 10 October 1938 and to Ruth Ford 12 October 1938, IMBMC: Allen.

interacted, reinforcing a top-down evangelical strategy which came to absorb more than just the women, affecting all mission work across gender lines and limiting Baptists' opportunities to evangelize. The educational project eventually came to involve men who entered the classroom as professors—taking them away from traveling and public preaching—once colleges were founded to serve the graduates produced by the Baptist secondary schools, for higher education was not women's work. A great deal of the Baptists' energy, time, and funds were dedicated to the educational project, with little spared for other activities, a fact which some missionaries found difficult to accept. For example, Edith Allen wrote in 1933:

What hurts me most, though, is that with the great amount of regular teaching, etc. we do not have time for the contacts with the students and with the church members that is so necessary and valuable both for them and for us. I love the visiting in the homes more than anything other phase [sic] of the work and we are always well-received- how we *do* need to be multiplied many times over.¹²⁸

Allen and her contemporaries became trapped by their schools.

In 1935, Allen took it upon herself to speak for the group of them, stating “I believe that now most of us, if we could choose, so far as our own personal inclinations are concerned, would prefer to be in different ‘evangelistic’ work rather than the institutional work we are in.” They remained where they were, in their educational and publishing institutions, because they accepted the Board philosophy that “the Cause”

¹²⁸ Edith Allen to T. B. Ray, 17 October 1933 (italics mine).

would be best served by preparing others.¹²⁹ Meanwhile the Pentecostals did what Allen and others wished they could be doing – visiting homes, holding prayer meetings, having one-on-one conversations – evangelizing full time.

To summarize, the political situation had changed enough, and the mainline missionaries had established sufficient alliances with powerful Brazilians, that by the time the Pentecostals arrived that they did not need to forge relationships with the elite in order to evangelize freely. In addition to this significant contextual difference, there was also the fact that Pentecostal missionaries were not upper-class, white men and women but rather working-class, immigrant men who did not share the same concerns as the Baptists. Pentecostal theology was still barely emerging and demanded no particular education. Without schools to staff (or women to staff them) Pentecostal missionaries evangelized full time. Finally, during the early years of Pentecostalism the Baptists were far pickier than the Pentecostals. While Baptists were careful about who they admitted and eager to affiliate themselves with the rich and powerful, the new AD was open to all classes and colors of people. Anyone who was interested was welcome. This fact, overlooked by all the scholarship which ignores these early years, is crucial to understanding the eventual Pentecostal explosion.

“Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap.” (Micah 6:15)

In his 1921 memoir, written after thirty years of service as a Southern Baptist missionary

¹²⁹ Edith Allen, “Notes from Rio de Janeiro,” *The Baptist Courier*, 5 December 1935, 7, IMBMC: Allen.

to Brazil, Ginsburg declared:

The first missionaries sent to Brazil were great seed-sowers. They spread the good news far and wide and laid the foundation for the present growth and development. Just as it happened in the time of the apostles, so today: 'I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.'

This statement is followed by a list of the first-generation missionaries who “planted the good seed”—Bagby, Nelson, Entzminger, and others—and those who followed and “watered” that seed. Ginsburg credits God with having “given the increase, the wonderful, marvelous increase” and then asks, “Who can estimate what the future will yet bring forth?” The question is merely rhetorical; Ginsburg makes clear that he fully expects a repeat of the biblical miracle of the five loaves and fishes.¹³⁰ Certain that Baptists will have a great harvest in Brazil, his only real question is just how great it will be. Little did Ginsburg know how much of that harvest would be lost to the two Swedes who had given Nelson so much trouble in Pará just ten years earlier. In the plainest of terms, we can say that the Pentecostals reaped what the Baptists had sown.

If the Pentecostals had never arrived, things could have worked out very differently for the Baptists. Their strategy of patiently sowing now so that a great harvest would be reaped in the future was logical enough. No one knew what an explosive force the Pentecostals would turn out to be, especially in the late nineteenth century when Baptist missionary strategy was first being defined, years before the modern Pentecostal movement had even begun. No one knew that it would not be the Baptists who reaped

¹³⁰ Ginsburg, *A Missionary Adventure*, 214-15.

that harvest. Reflecting on her father's twenty seven years of pioneering Baptist mission work in Brazil, Helen Bagby Harrison described what he had done and what she believed would come next:

A quarter century of soil preparation, of seed sowing, budding, grafting, transplanting, flowering, and pollinating had elapsed. The time had arrived for fruitage and harvest, for storage and distribution.¹³¹

However, most of this harvest for which the Baptists had so lovingly and tirelessly prepared would be reaped by Pentecostals, whose movement could not have grown so fast had it not been preceded by the Baptists and other Protestant missionaries.

Scholarship tends to look at why Pentecostalism *in particular* appeals to Brazilians, but this near-exclusive focus on the particularity of Pentecostalism is unwarranted and overcomplicated. An examination of the first twenty-five years of Pentecostalism—which makes use of Baptist missionary records and looks not only at what the first missionaries did but also what they did not do—offers other clear reasons for Pentecostal successes and adds to our understanding of the movement's extraordinary growth. The Pentecostals succeeded in large part because they followed a strategy which was determined by the fact that they had neither the funds nor the theological need to focus on education, their personal class affiliations did not incline them to privilege efforts to evangelize the upper classes, and there was no strong female Pentecostal missionary presence. Without schools to run, Pentecostals were free to do the kind of

¹³¹ Harrison, *The Bagbys of Brazil*, 127.

one-on-one evangelizing that the Baptists had hoped to do but found they had little time for. Pentecostals could travel and hold prayer meetings, intentionally stealing many of the Baptists' flock in the process. What seemed as first to have been a disadvantage—this lack of strong institutional support for Pentecostal missionary work in Brazil—turned out to be an advantage.

This became especially clear when the economic and political crises of the 1930s hit and the indigenous Brazilian Pentecostal movement which Vingren and Berg had jumpstarted was positioned to take advantage of the very conditions which dramatically slowed Baptist efforts. More scholarly attention needs to be paid to this critical decade as the time when Pentecostalism became a truly national religion in Brazil. Freston's widely adopted formulation of Brazilian Pentecostal history which divides its development into three waves—the 1910s, the 1950s and early 60s, and the late 1970s and early 80s¹³²—misleads scholars who then assume that nothing interesting happened in between waves, when in fact 1930 was a watershed year in both the religious and political history of Brazil. The was the year of the AD's liberation from foreign control as well as the year in which the São Paulo/Minas Gerais hold on the government was broken by Vargas, and it marked the beginning of remarkable growth and development, not only industrial but also spiritual. Ignoring the 1930s means ignoring the crucial decision the AD made in 1930 to give full independent status to each individual church, a decision which gave Pentecostalism a completely unique institutional structure and enabled it to become the

¹³² See Freston, "Pentecostalism in Brazil," 120.

first version of Christianity in Brazil's history to fully empower Brazilians, and not just a chosen few but Brazilians of all socio-economic classes.

As for the reason why so many Brazilians choose Pentecostalism, it was partly strategy, partly timing, and partly something else. Compelling reasons have been suggested, most related to structural societal change—urban to rural migration, industrialization, the breaking up and re-forming of communities—or to cultural continuities, namely the new context and form Pentecostalism provides for the continued practice of popular religion. Arguments have been made for the critical role of social class, of democratic participation, of individuals' fundamental need for health, stability, self-worth, belonging.¹³³ These are all valid, mutually inclusive arguments, and I believe each one plays a role in explaining Pentecostal growth in Brazil. However, I also believe that there is another reason which must be added to the dialogue, and that is the particular history of Pentecostalism in Brazil.

By history I mean the context and conditions—the *specific historical circumstances*—of Pentecostalism's establishment in Brazil. Despite what some would have us believe, the study of Pentecostalism cannot begin in the 1960s. It must begin at the beginning in 1910, it must linger there, and it must not skip over the decisive decade of the 1930s. Only by inserting history into the discussion of Brazilian Pentecostalism can we understand what has happened to Brazil's religious landscape over the past century. It

¹³³ For a brief discussion of these arguments, see Appendix.

is time to recognize the simple and critical importance of the fact that Pentecostalism is not a North American import¹³⁴ but rather a national and nationalist religion whose founding was facilitated by the Protestantism which preceded it and which grew not only because of something particular about the faith it offered but also because of the fact that it offered a faith at all—an accessible, democratic faith which, colorblind and class-blind, was unconcerned with status, with education, with institution-building, and which was not only willing but compelled to offer agency to any who sought it.

Furthermore, while questions of motivation can never be answered with certainty, I believe it would be a mistake for a discussion of the appeal of Pentecostalism to ignore the fact of people’s basic desire for faith. People want things to believe in, religious or secular, which will give their lives direction, meaning, hope. It is certainly true that, as many have argued, Pentecostalism attracts people because it addresses material and physical conditions by focusing on the present—on improving *this* life right now—which is what people who are sick or hungry or simply unfulfilled want and need. However, it is also true that since its beginnings Pentecostalism has appealed to Brazilians not only because of the expressive, personal, participatory, powerful religious practice it offers, but for a more simple reason as well, which is that it offers any religious practice at all. Baptist Missionary Laura Barton Taylor wrote in 1900 that “men come and plead with

¹³⁴ This is a controversial point, and it is true that Pentecostalism in Brazil is not without US ties. However, these US ties were far less important than those with Sweden (as Freston has shown, the AD’s primary relationships, both financial and spiritual, were with Sweden, not with the United States) and none were central to Pentecostalism’s development.

me to take their children and train them up in the way they that they should go, and tell me it doesn't make any difference what religion they have, only they want them (their children) to have some religion."¹³⁵ The Baptists could not or would not serve all the people who wanted to join them. The Pentecostals could, would, and did.

¹³⁵ Laura Barton Taylor to R. J. Willingham, 26 June 1900.

Appendix:

A Brief Overview of The Literature on Pentecostalism in Brazil

The first scholarly works on Pentecostalism in Latin America, written by anthropologist Emilio Willems and sociologist Christian Lalive d'Epina in the 1960s, set the tone for the discourse as it has evolved. Both interpreted the growth of Pentecostalism as a response to structural change wrought by modernization. Willems argued that the new urban poor sought to remedy their collective sense of *anomie* (moral meaninglessness) by creating community through the new churches, while Lalive d'Epina saw Pentecostalism as their new expression of folk Catholicism. See Emilio Willems, *Followers of the New Faith: Culture Change and the Rise of Protestantism in Brazil and Chile* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967) and Christian Lalive d'Epina, *El Refugio de las Masas: Estudio Sociológico del Protestantismo Chileno* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial del Pacífico, S.A., 1968).

Following the near-cessation of research activity during Brazil's 1964-1984 dictatorship, the next significant contribution to the literature was Francisco Cartaxo Rolim's *Pentecostais no Brasil*, which argued that the poor embraced Pentecostalism as a means of engaging in class struggle. See Francisco Cartaxo Rolim, *Pentecostais no Brasil: Uma Interpretação Sócio-Religiosa* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1985). Rolim's work was followed by a flood of literature published in the 1990s. Sociologist David Martin's 1990 *Tongues of Fire* and David Stoll's *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?* of the same year both echoed Willems: Martin argued that Pentecostal churches appeal because they offer the

urban poor rare opportunities for autonomy, stability, and community, and Stolls claimed that the rise of Pentecostalism is a response to disruptions in traditional social organization, many of which were caused by the United States. Stolls also echoed Lalive d'Épinay with his claim that Latin American Pentecostal movements are new expressions of the popular religiosity of folk Catholicism. Both works briefly discussed Pentecostal history; Martin's treatment is unproblematic, but Stolls makes the egregious mistake of stating that Brazil's AD was founded by missionaries from the U.S. Assemblies of God and is headquartered in Springfield, Missouri. See David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990) and David Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?: The Politics of Evangelical Growth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

A 1993 volume edited by Stoll and Virginia Garrard-Burnett, which includes chapters on Brazil by John Burdick, Rowan Ireland, and Paul Freston, continued the focus on class and politics with essays that examine the transformational potential of Latin America Protestantism. No distinction is made between mainline Protestantism and Pentecostalism, and there is almost no focus on history (only one of the twelve contributors is an historian) which leads to some distressing conclusions. Of particular concern is Garrard-Burnett's argument in support of the conspiracy theory which posits that the U.S. religious right is responsible for U.S. foreign policy which in turn created the conditions for Protestant growth in Latin America. Her evidence is the "highly politicized missionary activity from the United States" in the 1960s and 1970s; she

entirely overlooks the fact that Pentecostalism—the greatest force in Latin American Protestantism—was already very well-established by the time these missionaries arrived. See Virginia Garrard-Burnett and David Stoll, eds., *Rethinking Protestantism in Latin America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 199-200.

Poverty and politics continued to be the focus of discourse for the better part of the 1990s. 1994 saw the publication of sociologist Cecília Loreto Mariz's *Coping with Poverty*, which argued that it was not *anomie* which inspires people to become Pentecostal but rather the way that the religion helps people cope with poverty, an argument similar to John Burdick's. See Mariz, *Coping with Poverty: Pentecostals and Christian Base Communities in Brazil* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994) and John Burdick, *Looking for God in Brazil: The Progressive Catholic Church in Urban Brazil's Religious Arena* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). In 1996 political scientist David Lehmann contributed *Struggle for the Spirit*, another work which fails to look at the historical origins of Pentecostalism in Brazil and assumes it is a U.S.-import which seeks to obliterate Brazilian culture. The work of Mariz and Lehmann also represents another trend in the discourse, which is to examine Pentecostalism in the context of progressive Catholicism and CEBs; this approach is an outgrowth of the scholarly preoccupation with liberation theology: in the 1990s researchers tried to address the growing influence of Pentecostalism without abandoning their previous work. See David Lehmann, *Struggle for the Spirit: Religious Transformation and Popular Culture in Brazil and Latin America* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1996).

A greater historical awareness begins to emerge at the end of the 1990s. Historian R. Andrew Chesnut's 1997 work addresses on the question of why Pentecostalism has found so much success among Brazil's poor and his answer takes Pentecostal history into consideration, although his sources are limited to ones published by the AD. He should be commended, however, for taking an important step backward in time, as well as paying attention to the years 1920-1940 rather than skipping over them as most do. See R. Andrew Chesnut, *Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997). Another historically aware work is political scientist André Corten's 1999 *Pentecostalism in Brazil*. Despite the fact that his main concern is with the relationship between poverty and emotion, in his brief treatment of Pentecostal he does not fail to recognize its predominant ties to Sweden (rather than to the United States), and the fact that US missionary influence did not begin until 1934 and even then was limited. See André Corten, *Pentecostalism in Brazil: Emotion of the Poor and Theological Romanticism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1999). Both Chesnut and Corten owe a great debt to sociologist Paul Freston, as they clearly made use of the research which informed his 1993 dissertation and subsequent 1995 article. Freston has since moved away from history, as he followed up his dissertation work with a 2001 book on evangelicals and politics in the Third World. See Paul Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa and Latin America* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Several unpublished dissertations have also addressed Pentecostal history and

development. Of special interest is Joanne Pepper's 1991 dissertation, which, like this paper, also makes use of Baptist sources. Some of Pepper's conclusions are similar to my own: that is that the lack of institutionalization helped spur early Pentecostal growth, that Pentecostals "pirated" Baptist converts, and that the AD made good use of indigenous leadership. I appreciate her pithy summary of Pentecostal success—"In essence, Pentecostalism 'caught flies with honey, not vinegar'"—and I believe her work should receive more attention than it has. See Joanne L. Pepper, "The Historical Development of Pentecostalism in Northeastern Brazil, with Specific Reference to Working Class Women in Recife," Ph.D. diss., University of Warwick, 1991, 85, and see bibliography for more dissertations.)

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