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Evangelization or Proselytism of Hispanics? A Pentecostal Perspective¹

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Introduction

Much has been written on the topic of proselytism in recent years, and depending upon where we find ourselves in the world, the group or groups who are labeled as proselytizers vary. To be sure, proselytism is unworthy to be classed as genuine witness to the gospel. It is a perversion of genuine evangelization. It deserves our mutual condemnation. But what is it, exactly?

A number of recent studies of the issue suggest that proselytism may occur whenever:

1. Christians do not recognize the genuineness or fullness of ecclesial claims made by other communities that call themselves Christian and, therefore, attempt to convert the members of other communities into their own ranks.

2. Those who claim to be engaged in evangelization lack the appropriate cultural or ecclesial sensitivity for those they are evangelizing and allow their zeal to outrun their understanding.

3. Force, coercion, compulsion, cajolery, or intimidation of a personal, psychological, physical, moral, social, or political nature is employed in order to gain adherents.

4. Deceptive practices such as unjust, uncharitable, or unbalanced stereotypes, caricatures, or comparisons are brought to bear in order to manipulate a person into making an appropriate decision.

5. Freedom of the individual to make conscious, informed, rational decisions, especially at a moment of crisis or weakness, is violated in a subversion of human dignity, full autonomy, or religious liberty.

6. The motives of the "evangelist" are such that the desire to

¹This article was originally presented as a paper to the National Association of Diocesan Ecumenical Officers in Albuquerque, New Mexico, May 2, 1995. It has been slightly amended for publication.

dominate through unhealthy competition is self-serving or self-aggrandizing.²

Within the Americas, one or more of these charges is often raised against almost any non-Roman Catholic group who seeks to minister among the Hispanic or Latino communities. A great many of them have been raised against Pentecostals. It is to these people that I want to turn our attention.

The Pentecostal Movement had its origins in North America at the turn of the century. It is often traced to the ministry of Charles Fox Parham in Topeka, Kansas, to one of his small, short-term Bible schools, and to the evening of December 31, 1900, or the early morning of January 1, 1901. Over the next half-dozen years, Parham led his followers, who took the name The Apostolic Faith Movement, and extended his influence over Kansas, Missouri, Texas, and Arkansas. His work was in some respects seminal for the movement, but it remained relatively small and regionalized.³ Undoubtedly it had some impact upon Mexicans and/or Hispanic Americans during these early years, although its impact upon the Hispanic community was apparently quite limited.⁴

Of more significance to our question at hand is the work of the African American William Joseph Seymour, pastor of the famous

²Among the more helpful documents from which these statements have been gleaned are: "Christian Witness, Proselytism and Religious Liberty in the Setting of the World Council of Churches," *The Ecumenical Review* 9 (1956) 48-56; "Revised Report of the Commission on Common Witness, Proselytism and Religious Liberty," *The Ecumenical Review* 13 (1961) 79-89; "Common Witness and Proselytism: A Study Document," *The Ecumenical Review* 23 (1971) 9-20; Basil Meeking and John Stott, eds., *The Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission 1977-1984* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans; Exeter, Devon: The Paternoster Press, 1986) 89-91; George Sabia, "Proselytism, Evangelisation and Ecumenism," *Theological Review* 9:2 (1988) 23-36; Alta/Baja California Bishops, "Dimensions of a Response to Proselytism," *Origins* 19:41 (Mar. 15, 1990) 666-9; "Message of the Primates of the Most Holy Orthodox Church," *Ecumenical Trends* 21:4 (Apr. 1992) 57-60; John Paul II, "Opening Address to Fourth General Conference of Latin American Episcopate," *Origins* 22:19 (Oct. 22, 1992) 326, esp. ¶12; "Towards Responsible Relations in Mission: Some Reflections on Common Witness, Proselytism and New Forms of Sharing," *International Review of Mission* 82:326 (Apr. 1993) 235-9; and Thomas F. Best and Günther Gassmann, eds., *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia, Faith and Order Paper*, no. 166 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994) 256-8, ¶13-19.

³James R. Goff Jr., *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism* (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1988), provides the best assessment of Parham and his work.

⁴In "Ordained Elders, Pastors, Ministers, Evangelists and Missionaries of the Churches of God in Christ with their Stations for 1914," *Word and Witness* 12 (1913) 4, a list of 352 names is given, most of whom were originally with Parham. There are no Hispanic surnames among them.

Apostolic Faith Mission at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California. By special permission, Seymour attended one of Parham's short-term Bible schools conducted in Houston, Texas, in December 1905 and early 1906. Answering a call to serve as the pastor of a small holiness congregation in Los Angeles, Seymour left Houston without completing his school term and arrived in Los Angeles on February 22, 1906.⁵

The woman who had pioneered the holiness mission that Seymour had been invited to serve was Julia W. Hutchins, also an African American. After hearing Seymour preach, she rejected him and his message. He was turned out of the Church. Alone and away from family and friends, Seymour was rescued by an African American janitor, Edward S. Lee, a member of that holiness congregation, who gave him a room. Lee also invited Seymour to participate in an evening Bible study held at 214 North Bonnie Brae Street, the home of another African American couple, Ruth and Richard Asberry. On April 9, 1906, this small, largely African American Bible study group not only embraced, but also experienced Seymour's message that the "Bible evidence" of the baptism in the Holy Spirit could be seen in the ability of the recipient to speak in other tongues.⁶ Word spread quickly, and within a week this small group had rented the vacant premises of the former Steven's African Methodist Episcopal Church (now First AME Church of Los Angeles) and had begun to hold meetings. By April 18, they had made the *Los Angeles Daily Times*.⁷

What emerged from this small mission was a revival with international significance and implications. Over the next several years it attracted, challenged, ministered to, and empowered thousands of people, including many Hispanics. The message was the same regardless of race, gender, culture, or ethnicity. It consisted of three parts.

The first thing the mission taught was that everyone needs to come into a living relationship with God through Jesus Christ, that is, one needs to be "born again" or experience some form of conversion to which she or he is able to bear a credible witness.

Secondly, all new believers were encouraged to seek an experience that they understood to be their sanctification. Seekers were told that

⁵W. J. Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission of Los Angeles, California* (Los Angeles: W. J. Seymour, 1915) 12.

⁶On this topic see Cecil M. Robeck Jr., "William J. Seymour and The Bible Evidence," *Initial Evidence: Historical and Biblical Perspectives on the Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism*, ed. Gary B. McGee (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991) 72-95.

⁷"Weird Babel of Tongues," *Los Angeles Daily Times* (April 18, 1906) II, 1.

by this experience their "sin nature" would be entirely eradicated, that through God's grace they could be made holy.

Finally, upon their receipt of sanctification they were encouraged to seek the baptism with the Holy Spirit. They would know they had received this baptism when they spoke in other tongues just as the 120 had on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). With this experience they were assured that they would receive the spiritual empowerment necessary to enter into ministry, ordained and unordained alike, in which they could anticipate the employment of various charisms mentioned in 1 Cor 12:8-10.⁸ It could even include a language for use in a cross-cultural or foreign missionary context, and people began to disperse as evangelists and missionaries accordingly.

Hispanics and the Azusa Street Mission

When the Azusa Street Mission opened its doors about April 14, 1906, Hispanics were present. The first date on which Hispanics are mentioned by name as having been present in those meetings is May 29, 1906. Abundio L. and Rosa de Lopez came to the mission on that day seeking the experience of sanctification. By June 5, 1906, Abundio and presumably his wife also had received what was identified as the experience of sanctification and the baptism "with the Holy Ghost and fire." The testimony of Abundio Lopez was written in Spanish and published in a bilingual Spanish-English format:

We testify to the power of the Holy Spirit in forgiveness, sanctification, and the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire. We give thanks to God for this wonderful gift which we have received from Him, according to the promise [Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 39]. Thanks be to God for the Spirit which brought us to the Azusa Street Mission. . . . We cannot express the gratitude and thanksgiving which we feel moment by moment for what He has done for us, so we want to be used for the salvation and healing of both soul and body. I am a witness of His wonderful promise and marvelous miracles by the Holy Ghost, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. May God bless you all.⁹

⁸These items are outlined in a tract by W. J. Seymour, "The Apostolic Faith Movement," which was distributed at the mission. The same content appears in most issues of *The Apostolic Faith*, a newspaper published by the mission from Sept. 1906-May 1908. It is summarized very well in "How Holy Roller Gets Religion," *Los Angeles Herald* (Sept. 10, 1906) 7. Not all Pentecostals hold to this three-step process. Many of them, such as the Assemblies of God, view sanctification not as a crisis event, but as a process of purification that one undergoes throughout the Christian life (cf. 2 Cor 3:18).

⁹"Spanish Receive the Pentecost," *The Apostolic Faith* 1:2 (Oct. 1906) 4. In "Bible Pentecost," *The Apostolic Faith* 1:3 (Nov. 1906) 1, the writer claims that if the

Arthur G. Osterberg, who at that time was paymaster for the large J. V. McNeil Construction Company in Los Angeles and who would later become the district superintendent of the Assemblies of God in Southern California, remembered one Hispanic man, a Roman Catholic, who came to the Azusa Street Mission in those very early months of the revival. He was "wonderfully healed of a club foot," according to Osterberg's report. As a result, this man was very vocal in the meetings, "rejoicing and praising the Lord in Spanish."

Typical of the majority of leaders at the mission, Osterberg wondered when the man had been converted, and through a translator he asked this unnamed Hispanic Catholic that question.

"Converted?" came the response. "I no understand. All I know, one day Jesus, He jump into my heart!"

Conversion language was not part of this man's vocabulary, but the genuineness of his "childlike simplicity," as Osterberg put it, led Osterberg to observe, "We had made our own formula that one must do so-and-so and repent according to the letter of the formula. But that doesn't always work out to be the Lord's way."¹⁰

In late September, a reporter from the *Los Angeles Record* attended a meeting and noted that during a time of loud prayer, another unnamed Mexican man "leaped from among the prostrate forms and jumped up and down and waved his arms, 'I've got it; Hallelujah!' he shouted."¹¹ The following month, the mission's own newspaper, *The Apostolic Faith*, noted the presence of "a good many Spanish speaking people" who were in Los Angeles and it informed its readers that Abundio and Rosa de Lopez were busy "preaching the Gospel in open air meetings on the Plaza."¹² They continued to do so throughout November, ministering on the streets of Los Angeles and "helping Mexicans at the altar" of the Azusa Street Mission.¹³ By December, however, they had left Los Angeles and made their way southward to San Diego for a period of ministry in that city.¹⁴ The Lopezes would

Pentecostal revival had "started in a fine church, poor colored people and Spanish people would not have got it, but praise God it started here." The writer goes on to observe, "It is noticeable how free all nationalities feel. If a Mexican or German cannot speak English, he gets up and speaks in his own tongue and feels quite at home for the Spirit interprets through the face and people say amen."

¹⁰Arthur G. Osterberg, "I Was There," *Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International Voice* (May 1966) 13.

¹¹"Woman, in Religious Frenzy, Remains Rigid an Hour," *Los Angeles Record* (Sept. 24, 1906) 3.

¹²"Spanish Receive the Pentecost," 4.

¹³"Preaching to the Spanish," *The Apostolic Faith* 1:3 (Nov. 1906) 4.

¹⁴"From Los Angeles to Home and Foreign Fields," *The Apostolic Faith* 1:4 (Dec. 1906) 4.

later return to the Los Angeles area where, like many other Pentecostal ministers of that period, they were involved in a "tent making" ministry.

Originally from Guadalajara, Mexico, Abundio Lopez was 37 years old in 1906. He worked much of his life as a manual laborer, but in 1915, without any formal theological training, he was also described as a "Spanish Pentecostal preacher." In 1920 he was listed in the local city directory as serving a Spanish-speaking congregation at 125 1/2 Spring Street, the facility of the English-language Pentecostal Mission known as Victoria Hall.¹⁵

Another Hispanic man who attended the Azusa Street mission in those early months was Brigidio Perez. In November 1906 he was described merely as a "young Spanish boy" who had "received his Pentecost" there. Like the Lopezes, Perez had traveled southward to San Diego. He wrote to the mission in Spanish that he had received his sanctification, had experienced the baptism in the Spirit, and, while praying on September 3, 1906, he had felt impressed that Christ wanted him "to go and testify in His precious name in different parts of the country."¹⁶

Abundio and Rosa de Lopez and Brigidio Perez were joined at the mission in 1906 by yet another Hispanic family, this one with deep roots in the Roman Catholic Church and in the history of Southern California. They were José de Jesús Valdez, his wife, Susie [Villa] Valdez, and their ten-year-old son, Alfred C. Valdez. The grandfather of José de Jesús, Eugenio Valdez, had served as a soldier under Gaspar de Portola when he arrived in Mexico. Following the mission chain northward through San Diego, Eugenio had continued until he finally came to Ventura, about fifty miles north of Los Angeles. There he settled, and in 1782 Eugenio Jr. was born in the Valdez house adjacent to the Mission San Buenaventura. Today that location is marked by Valdez Park in honor of this family.¹⁷

With this family history it is not surprising to find A. C. Valdez describing his mother as "a devout Catholic," even as he described himself as a Roman Catholic because of his "Spanish ancestry."¹⁸ The

¹⁵The *Los Angeles City Directory* for 1910 (p. 895) lists Abundio L. Lopez as a laborer. He is called a "Spanish Pentecostal preacher" in M. B. Woodworth-Etter, *Signs and Wonders God Wrought in the Ministry for Forty Years* (Indianapolis: M. B. W. Etter, 1916) 449. The *Los Angeles City Directory* for 1920 (pp. 26 and 1419) lists him as a pastor.

¹⁶"Preaching to the Spanish," 4. See also "Spreading the Full Gospel," *The Apostolic Faith* 1:3 (Nov. 1906) 1.

¹⁷A. C. Valdez Sr. with James F. Scheer, *Fire On Azusa Street* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Gift Publications, 1980) 21-22.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 2.

Valdez family took great pride in its close affiliation with the Franciscans who had established California's mission chain, including Mission San Buenaventura. Indeed, they had strong affinities to Franciscan spirituality, but what is perhaps most surprising about this is the way that José de Jesús and his son Alfred C. Valdez thought about that spirituality.

José de Jesús told his son Alfred that his own father, José Crescencio, a Roman Catholic who had died long before the Pentecostal Movement emerged, had been "filled with the Spirit," and that on many occasions he had found his father "in the barn on his knees, praying and shaking from head to foot and speaking in tongues." All of this had apparently transpired prior to 1868 when José de Jesús left home and moved to Los Angeles. José de Jesús went on to tell his son Alfred that his own priest had followed St. Francis of Assisi, who had been "filled with the Spirit and possessed of all the gifts [*read: charisms*] of the Spirit, including speaking in tongues."¹⁹ As late as 1980, Alfred wrote of his belief that the founder of the California Mission chain, Fr. Junipero Serra, was also a "Spirit-filled Franciscan priest."²⁰ Whether or not these assertions have any basis in fact, that they were part of the Valdez family lore may be suggestive of how such a strong Roman Catholic family was able to move so easily into the Pentecostal camp. They understood Franciscan and Pentecostal spirituality to be akin to one another. But how, specifically, did the Lopez and Valdez families come to be at the Azusa Street Mission? And how did Brigidio Perez come to attend the mission?

What we know of Brigidio Perez gives us no answers to this question, but our sources do reveal a bit more about Abundio Lopez and about the Valdez family. Abundio and Rosa de Lopez were married in Los Angeles on July 18, 1902, by the Reverend A. Moss Merwin, pastor of the Spanish Presbyterian Church.²¹ Abundio Lopez also testified that it was the Spirit that brought them to the Azusa Street Mission, but since he came seeking sanctification, he must have been influenced by Wesleyan Holiness teaching before he came to the Mission.²² We must conclude, therefore, that before they arrived at the Azusa Street Mission, Abundio and Rosa de Lopez had been influenced in some way by at least two Protestant traditions: the Presbyterians and probably the Methodists. More than that we do not know.

¹⁹Ibid., 22.

²⁰Ibid., 21.

²¹The marriage of Abundio and Rosa de Lopez is registered in the *Groom Register for Los Angeles County, 1868-1902*, on July 18, 1902.

²²"Spanish Receive the Pentecost," 4.

The story of the Valdez family is a bit more complicated. Susie Valdez had been convinced that she had a physical problem, heart trouble. According to her son, after hearing repeatedly from a variety of physicians that she had no such physical problem, she simply knelt in her own room and asked God to give her whatever it was that she needed. Albert Valdez commented that "from that moment on, she had the witness of the Spirit that she was saved—she was born again." No other information is given other than "soon after that she received the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire" at an Azusa Street meeting.²³ Susie Valdez, in turn, invited her 58-year-old husband, José de Jesús, to visit the mission where he was soon saved and delivered from his smoking habit, while their son Albert tagged along as "an enchanted spectator."²⁴ Susie Valdez continued to share her testimony with others in subsequent months, accompanying Arthur Osterberg's mother to the Redlands and San Bernardino areas of Southern California, where together they ministered to many, among them, Hispanic Roman Catholics.²⁵ Albert would later go on to become a Pentecostal evangelist with an international ministry. Much of his own ministry is outlined in *Fire on Azusa Street*.

Work Along the United States–Mexican Border

The Hispanic-Americans who came out of the Azusa Street Mission were not the only ones who carried the Pentecostal message to other Hispanics. There were also a number of European-Americans who carried a great concern for or gave their entire ministries to the conversion of Hispanics along both sides of the U.S.–Mexican border. George Simpson Montgomery was one such individual whose vision for Mexico led to Pentecostal evangelization along its borders as well as deep into its interior.²⁶

George Montgomery was a successful businessman by all accounts, a self-made man who earned two fortunes in his day. Montgomery identified with the Salvation Army and with the Wesleyan-Holiness

²³Valdez and Sheer, *Fire on Azusa Street*, 23.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 24. Valdez does not elaborate on his father's "salvation" experience or its relationship to his own Roman Catholicism.

²⁵Transcribed taped interview of Arthur G. Osterberg, Mar. 17, 1966, conducted in Osterberg's home by Jerry Jensen and Jonathan Perkins, tape 1, p. 10. These transcripts are available from the Assemblies of God Archives, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802.

²⁶The best treatment of Montgomery's life and work to date is Jennifer Stock, "George S. Montgomery: Businessman for the Gospel," *Assemblies of God Heritage* 9:1 (Spring 1989) 4–5, 17–18, and 9:2 (Summer 1989) 12–14, 20.

Movement. An entrepreneur, speculator, and mine owner, he felt strongly about investing his money—especially that which he earned through his mines — in the work of the Lord.

In 1902, he claimed, God had placed a burden on his heart, the burden to “do something towards giving the gospel to the benighted millions of Mexico and other Spanish countries.”²⁷ As a result he began by writing his personal testimony in Spanish and distributing it to the Mexicans he met in his many trips to Mexico and along the U.S.–Mexican border.²⁸ In 1904 he wrote:

Many who could not read would get someone to read for them, and often I had great delight in seeing little groups of people listening attentively while one of their number read the little book telling how a poor sinner found God as a Saviour for soul and body. So much blessing attended this little effort that on my return I was impressed to use the mails to send this and other Bible literature to the largest number possible.²⁹

Soon, Montgomery was receiving letters from places like Cerritos, Pie de la Montaña, Linares, Sinoloa, St. Thomas, St. Nicholas del Oro, and Saltillo.³⁰

The following year while visiting one of his mines near Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico, Montgomery wrote to his wife:

I find the people here receive the Gospel books so readily and come after me for more. Even here in the hotel I have had them come to beg of me my little book. What a contrast with our country, where you insult many if you offer them a tract. I feel such a love for these people, and I do pray that God may use me to help let the light of salvation through his Word be spread through out the land.³¹

The next day he wrote again to his wife:

I staid [*sic*] in my room this morning and had a spirit of prayer and weeping before the Lord. I have been led out in prayer especially for Mexico

²⁷George S. Montgomery, “Publishing the Gospel to the Spanish Speaking People of the Republic of Mexico and Other Countries,” *Triumphs of Faith* 24 (1904) 223.

²⁸This tract was published in at least two editions, “Testimonio con acuerdo a la Salvación” by George S. Montgomery, an 18-page account apparently published in Oakland, Calif., by Montgomery himself, and “Testimonio tocante a la Salvación” by George S. Montgomery, a 12-page account with slight changes, published in Los Angeles by the Sociedad de Tratados Libres.

²⁹Montgomery, “Publishing the Gospel,” 223–4.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 224–6.

³¹“Extracts from Mr. Montgomery’s Letters,” *Triumphs of Faith* 25 (Feb. 22, 1905)

that a revival may break out in this land, and in fact that God may pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh.³²

Montgomery was not alone in this concern. The Presbyterians and especially the Methodists had been there before him.³³ The ensuing years would be difficult for Montgomery's continued work largely because of the Revolution, but even as he moved into the Pentecostal Movement in 1906 his commitment to Mexico did not change. Others worked the border towns in Texas, people like R. E. Winsett, a publisher of Pentecostal hymnals who wrote to A. J. Tomlinson, founder of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.) in the spring of 1910 from El Paso, Texas:

We preach every day to hundreds of Mexicans, who give such earnest attention that it always touches my heart. God bless them; they need salvation. We have distributed about three thousand tracts, besides many gospels, etc.

Anyone who has good tracts in Spanish send them to me, and I can use them to good advantage; also could use many Spanish Testaments and Gospels. Dear saints, help give them the gospel before Jesus comes. We are in touch with about thirty thousand of these poor deluded beings here in El Paso and Juarez. Pray much for Mexico.³⁴

Montgomery continued his work in Mexico and influenced others to join in his vision. Cornelia Nuzum, a close friend and colleague of George and Carrie Judd Montgomery, worked tirelessly along the border in towns like Douglas, Arizona, then Nacozari and San Jose de Playitas, Sonora, Mexico, then back to Douglas and on to Nogales, Arizona. The passion of Nuzum shows in one letter she wrote to Carrie:

These border towns are at present golden gates of opportunity. They lie partly in Mexico and partly in the United States. All of them are overflowing with war refugees from all parts of Mexico. When these get saved, they take the light and the Gospels and tracts to their friends in Mexico, either by mail or in person when they visit or return home. I have been able to do much in this way for lower California as well as southern, eastern and western Mexico.

³²*Ibid.*, 71. His allusion to Joel 2:28 = Acts 2:17 demonstrates that within the Wesleyan Holiness camp, language that would become normative among Pentecostals was already in use. It would be two more years before Montgomery would visit the Azusa Street Mission and embrace for himself the Pentecostal message and experience.

³³George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 153.

³⁴R. E. Winsett, "El Paso, Texas," *The Evening Light and Church of God Evangel* 1:6 (May 15, 1910) 6.

Those living on the United States side of the line are not accustomed to meetings, and do not know our language, and so get no help from us unless we visit their homes and talk to them in Spanish.

Read God's commands to us concerning the "stranger within our gates" [Deut. 31:12-13]. Believe with me for a soul for each gospel given.³⁵

Another of Montgomery's friends was Alice Luce, who began a small Pentecostal work on the central Plaza (La Placita) in Los Angeles, which spread into the San Joaquin Valley as many of her farm-worker migrant congregation moved northward with their seasonal employment.³⁶ She would later work with Henry C. and Sunshine (Marshall) Ball, who established work on behalf of the Assemblies of God in Kingsville, Texas, in 1916.³⁷ My grandfather, Axel Edwin Robeck, a Norwegian-American, was the associate pastor in Kingsville. He helped to build and support the first Hispanic Pentecostal Church there.³⁸

Ball began the publication of a monthly paper called *La Luz Apostólica*, which would in September 1917 become the formal house organ for the Hispanic Assemblies of God.³⁹ By January 1918 the Assemblies

³⁵C. Nuzum, "The Lord Working in Nogales," *Triumphs of Faith* 35 (1915) 86-87. See also C. Nuzum, "The Lord Working in Tucson, Arizona," where she speaks of work with a Pima Indian family; C. Nuzum, "I Am the Lord that Healeth Thee (Work Among the Mexican People)," *Triumphs of Faith* 37 (1917) 141-2. Mrs. Nuzum is particularly noted for the tracts and pamphlets she wrote through the years as well as for being a "missionary to the Mexican people." See C. Nuzum, *The Life of Faith* (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1928) foreword.

³⁶Alice E. Luce, "Mexican Work in California," *Triumphs of Faith* 38 (1918) 179-80; Victor de Leon, *The Silent Pentecostals: A Biographical History of the Pentecostal Movement Among the Hispanics in the Twentieth Century* (no city: Victor De Leon, 1979) 21-23, speaks specifically of Luce's work in Southern California.

³⁷See Gary B. McGee, "Pioneers of Pentecost: Alice E. Luce and Henry C. Ball," *Assemblies of God Heritage* 5:2 (Summer 1985) 5-6, 12-15.

³⁸He is listed incorrectly in the *Combined Minutes of the General Council of the Assemblies of God in the United States of America, Canada and Foreign Lands, 1914-1917*, p. 36, as Alec C. Robeck, Assistant Pastor, Kingsville, Texas. He and H. C. Ball remained lifelong friends. The white congregation was pastored by F. A. Hale, whose name appears in the 1915 minutes but is missing from the combined minutes of 1914-1917. Others listed as serving in or from Kingsville, Texas, in the combined minutes of 1914-1917 were H. C. Ball (Missionary to Mexicans), José V. Garza (Assistant Pastor), David W. Edwards, and Iver O. Nelson (Evangelists).

³⁹*Minutes of the Central Council of the Assemblies of God in the United States of America, Canada and Foreign Lands* held at Bethel Chapel, St. Louis, Mo., September 9-14, 1917, p. 8 notes: "A feature of interest to all was the report that the Council now has a paper published in Spanish as well as the *Evangel* in English. This paper, *La Luz Apostólica* under the management of Bro. H. C. Ball of Brownsville Texas, is carrying the Pentecostal message to many Spanish-speaking people. Bro. Ball needs help in a financial way in getting out the paper. Send money for this paper direct to him at Brownsville, Texas."

of God was completely committed to ministry among Hispanics in the United States. Segrid A. Johnson, John A. Preston, H. C. Ball, Fermin Escarcege, Loreto Garza, Alice Luce, and Florence Murcutt all held Assemblies of God credentials for ministry among Hispanics along the U.S.-Mexican border.⁴⁰ Another disciple and beneficiary of George Montgomery's support, the Mexican sometimes known as "the great Aztec," Francisco Olazábal would serve as an Assemblies of God evangelist, then move on to found the Concilio Latinoamericano de Iglesias Cristianas, yet another Pentecostal denomination. Still another, Juan Lugo, would take the message to Puerto Rico.⁴¹

In this brief overview, we have seen how a few Pentecostal pioneers brought their message to the Hispanic and Latino communities on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border. Was what they did evangelism, or was it proselytism? From the Pentecostal perspective it was evangelism, and their converts were given a clear message, the assurance of salvation, and a community of like-minded believers. Others might call what they did proselytism. But one can hardly fault these early pioneers for their motives. They believed they had experienced something of God that they simply wanted to share. Their love and concern for those they evangelized is genuine. And it shines through quite clearly.

These pioneers seem not to have engaged in coercion or force of any type. They appear to have practiced no form of deception. They did not violate any form of individual freedom or religious liberty. Their words give no hint that they engaged in their evangelistic work for any self-serving reason. Even if one were to argue that they took advantage of displaced people during the Mexican Revolution, it can be argued equally well that their intention was to bring aid and hope in the midst of that turmoil. They appear to have given themselves and their message away, sometimes without adequate follow-up, but convinced that what they had given was true and that God would use the seed they had sown to bring forth good fruit in due season.

Where these pioneers might be faulted may lie in their failure to recognize whatever other ecclesial claims figured into the lives of their converts, in a sense, a lack of cultural and/or ecclesial sensitivity. But even here the case has two sides. When Hispanic Pentecostals choose to share their personal testimony with other Hispanics and encourage them to seek the same thing, thereby evangelizing them, have they actually violated their own culture? Furthermore, while Montgomery

⁴⁰*Combined Minutes, 1914-1917*, pp. 32, 36, 39-40.

⁴¹The stories of Olazábal and Lugo are most fully told in Roberto Dominguez, *Pioneros de Pentecostes: En el mundo de habla Hispana*, 3rd ed. (Rexville, Bayamón, Puerto Rico: Roberto Dominguez, 1971, 1980) 15-133. See also de Leon, *The Silent Pentecostals*, 23-39.

called the people to whom he ministered the "benighted millions of Mexico and other Spanish countries" and R. E. Winsett described them as "poor deluded beings,"⁴² these statements reveal not a hint as to why they were thought to be benighted or deluded. One would have to guess that this language may have pointed a finger at their understanding of popular Roman Catholicism, but that is only a guess.

Since the 1920s, conditions have changed dramatically among Hispanics and the influence of Pentecostals on the Hispanic and Latino communities has grown tremendously. There are literally millions of Hispanic and Latino Pentecostals in the Americas and their growth continues, seemingly unabated.⁴³ The growth rate of Pentecostals in Latin America has been very significant and claims are now being made that on any given Sunday morning there are more Pentecostals in church in some Latin American countries than there are Roman Catholics.⁴⁴ Even in the United States the number of Hispanics moving out of the Roman Catholic Church and into some Pentecostal church is not insignificant. According to a recent article in *Christianity Today*, there are now seven million evangelical Latinos in the United States, and approximately sixty thousand Hispanics are leaving the Catholic Church each year and joining other churches. In a survey accompanying the article it is estimated that 36 percent of them have found their way into Pentecostal congregations.⁴⁵

There are a number of reasons why Hispanics are moving into Pentecostal churches. Many of them are sociological and Latin American based. The most significant assessment of the reasons for rampant growth of Pentecostalism in Latin America to date is an essay by Assemblies of God missionary Everett A. Wilson. He has listed seven major features in the Pentecostal growth process that he believes go

⁴²See above nn. 26 and 33.

⁴³David B. Barrett, "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 1995," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 19:1 (Jan. 1995) 25, places the number of Pentecostal/Charismatics globally in mid-1995 at 463,741,000. If one assumes that the number of Pentecostal/Charismatics parallels the number of total church members by continent, then 23.6% or 109,442,876 Pentecostal/Charismatics reside in Latin America and another 11.5% or 53,330,215 live in North America, among whom must be numbered a significant Hispanic/Latino population. While Barrett's statistics must be used with care, it is clear that the number of Pentecostal/Charismatics is on the leading edge of the Christian growth curve. This is especially true among Hispanics and Latinos.

⁴⁴See Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Addison-Wesley publishing Company, 1995) 168.

⁴⁵Andrés Tapia, "Growing Pains," *Christianity Today* 39:2 (Feb. 1995) 38-39. See also "Hispanics Turn Evangelical," *Christian Century* 111:30 (Dec. 14, 1994) 11-83.

far to explain the phenomenon. Among these are the roles played by (1) crisis, (2) community, (3) experience, (4) power, (5) mobilization, (6) moralism, and (7) versatility.⁴⁶ Others have echoed these and similar ideas both in Latin America⁴⁷ and in the United States.⁴⁸ Father Allan Figueroa Deck and Kenneth Davis both note the role of popular religion, not unlike the ideas expressed by A. C. Valdez, which may play a significant part in facilitating such a shift.⁴⁹

Bishop Ricardo Ramírez, C.S.B., has done much to raise the consciousness of the Catholic Church in the United States by speaking clearly and forthrightly on the subject of Hispanics and ecumenism on several occasions.⁵⁰ He has addressed questions of evangelization and proselytism in these speeches. The Catholic Bishops of the United States and Latin America have also spoken to the issues in their document "Fostering Ecumenism in the Hispanic Community."⁵¹ The national conference held at Loyola Marymount University in July 1994 also provided an important bit of data to the internal discussion of these issues among Roman Catholic leaders.

Each of these efforts is significant and the players need to be affirmed for the leadership they have taken in this regard. But more needs to be done, and it is to some of these issues to which we now turn our attention.

⁴⁶Everett A. Wilson, "The Dynamics of Latin American Pentecostalism," *Coming of Age: Protestantism in Contemporary Latin America*, Calvin Center Series, ed. Daniel R. Miller (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1994) 89-116.

⁴⁷See Juan Sepúlveda, "The Pentecostal Movement in Latin America," *New Face of Latin America: Between Tradition and Change*, ed. Guillermo Cook (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1994) 68-74; and José Miguel and Stella de Angulo, "El movimiento pentecostal en América Latina," *Boletín teológico* 27:57 (Mar. 1995) 45-54.

⁴⁸Allan Figueroa Deck, "The Challenge of Evangelical/Pentecostal Christianity to Hispanic Catholicism," *Hispanic Catholic Culture in the U.S.: Issues and Concerns*, The Notre Dame History of Hispanic Catholics in the U.S., vol. 3, ed. Jay P. Dolan and Allan Figueroa Deck (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994) 409-39; Kenneth Davis, "The Hispanic Shift: Continuity Rather than Conversion?" *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology* 1:3 (May 1994) 68-79.

⁴⁹See also the comments made by Assemblies of God minister Samuel Soliván in R. W. Dellinger, "Evangelicals View Hispanic Evangelization Differently," *The Tidings* [Archdiocese of Los Angeles] 100:27 (July 8, 1994) 10-11.

⁵⁰Cf. Bishop Ramírez, "Bringing Ecumenism to Hispanic Christians," *Origins* 22:3 (May 28, 1992) 40-44; "The Crisis in Ecumenism Among Hispanic Christians," *Origins* 24:40 (Mar. 23, 1995) 660-7.

⁵¹US/Latin American Bishops, "Fostering Ecumenism in the U.S. Hispanic Community," *Origins* 24:40 (Mar. 23, 1995) 657, 659-60.

What Can We Do to Help One Another?

In two senses, the issue of proselytism is a terrible and demoralizing one. First, it destabilizes congregations and denominations, thus crippling the Church. But second, it also communicates to the world a message that violates the very heart of the gospel, which proclaims that there is something worth emulating in the *claims and actions* of those who have been freed from condemnation and, through the love of God demonstrated uniquely in Jesus Christ, have been reconciled both to God and to each other.

1. It would seem, then, that the first basic step in moving past this state of name calling is for the churches to begin to take one another seriously. Unilateral actions that violate others do not communicate community. Neither does name calling, nor making accusations to third parties without first addressing the perceived offender in a direct and loving manner. In order for us to take each other more seriously, we need to speak and listen to one another on an equal footing. The dialogue table at which one "partner" has the advantage is not a genuine dialogue table.

In the current situation many of us are barely willing to trust one another, with the result that we carry our suspicions and conflicts into every new field we touch. At the beginning of taking one another seriously, we need to be open to the possibility that *we* might be wrong, that *we* might have to forgive, that some things might better be forgotten, that there might be new ways in which we have to think, that unity and diversity must be carefully balanced, and that *we* might have to change.⁵² We must learn to live the gospel *with* each other, not simply preach it *to* one another. We will have to learn the art of confrontation that will lead not to further separation, but to genuine *koinonia*.

All of this requires both intentionality and persistence. It is not an easy task to seek out those with whom we currently may have a more

⁵²See the testimony to his own personal growth on the subject in Charles E. Hackett, "Building Bridges of Fellowship with Charismatics—Part I," *Higher Goals: National Church Growth Convention Digest*, ed. Gwen Jones et al. (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1978) 229. He writes to Pentecostal leaders: "I had a struggle several years ago believing Catholics could really be saved—unless they did everything as I thought they should. . . . But God helped me to have an appreciation for all the body of Christ. . . . You need to learn to lift up Jesus and not major on the minors. Look for areas of agreement. Don't attack any member of God's family. Do you know what makes us attack other Christians? Spiritual insecurity. The more secure I am in what God has done and is doing in my life, the more secure I am in the family of God. I don't feel threatened by charismatic Catholics. . . . I see them as God's children. I see them as part of the body of Christ. I welcome them as brothers in the Lord. And I fellowship with them."

or less adversarial relationship, but in many ways we need first to look at one another as potential friends and allies. It is not an adequate response to dismiss the inability to make substantive contacts because it is alleged that most Hispanic Pentecostals are represented by "little storefront churches" which "don't represent a linkage." Nor is it acceptable to capitulate to doing nothing on the grounds that "it's impossible to network with them, because they don't network with anyone else."⁵³

The task of maintaining whatever unity—however incomplete it might be—that is held between Roman Catholics and Hispanic Pentecostals is one that cannot be taken so lightly. It is true that Pentecostals are vulnerable to the charge of independence. Even many Pentecostals lament the extent to which the spirit of individualism frequents the movement. But there are a number of very solid Hispanic or Latino denominations within the Pentecostal Movement, and they are connected with one another and with many independent churches in a variety of ways. The real issue is whether there is a willingness on the part of Roman Catholics and of Pentecostals to pay the price necessary to initiate and nurture the contacts that would be necessary to improve understanding and whether there is a willingness to confront one another in love on issues in dispute, such as the limits of legitimate evangelization.

It is also important to note that the term "sect" is not a helpful way of categorizing Hispanic Pentecostals. In 1993, Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy told a meeting of Catholic ecumenical leaders that they were not to confuse issues by "lumping under the term 'sect,' groups that do not deserve that title. I am not speaking here," he went on, "about . . . Pentecostals as such. The Pontifical Council has had fruitful dialogue and significant contact with . . . Pentecostals. Indeed, one can speak of a mutual enrichment as a result of these contacts."⁵⁴ This fact must be communicated to all levels of the Catholic Church and to Hispanic Pentecostals as well. Continued name-calling or pigeon-holing will only drive a wedge further between the various parties.

2. Our methods of relating to one another will also need to change. Personally, I find it interesting and hopeful that the Church most willing to address the situation from that perspective, at least on the international level, is the Roman Catholic Church. In many ways it provides a model for Pentecostals as well as others on two fronts. First,

⁵³"An Interview with Cardinal Mahony," *America* 72:2 (Jan. 28, 1995) 11.

⁵⁴Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy, "Prolusio" [Given at the Meeting of Representatives of the National Episcopal Commissions for Ecumenism, Rome, May 5-10, 1993] in the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity's Information Service, 84 (1993/III-IV) 122.

in spite of general Pentecostal ambivalence about, and sometimes even outright hostility toward, the International Roman Catholic–Pentecostal Dialogue, Rome has been willing to engage Pentecostals in a way that no other denomination has been willing or able to do. For more than twenty years it has attempted to understand Pentecostals, and I believe that some excellent progress is being made.⁵⁵ Second, it has begun to acknowledge and address some of its own weaknesses in a way that I find laudable. Self-criticism is an important part of all ecumenical dialogue. Even in its works that seek to counter proselytism among Hispanics—such as that which the Alta/Baja California bishops wrote in 1990 or was found in the papal address to the Latin American bishops in Santo Domingo in 1992—Roman Catholic weaknesses were acknowledged. In the recent study of New Christian Movements in Africa and Madagascar, undertaken by the Meeting on African Collaboration (MAC) and in the working paper for the 1994 Special Synod of African bishops, weaknesses were again lifted up and addressed.⁵⁶

Of what do these self-identified weaknesses consist? One of the most significant is the lack of adequate pastoral care due to a scarcity of priests.⁵⁷ This “pastoral vacuum” is exacerbated by what John Paul II called “pastoral agents” in whom “the faithful do not find . . . that strong sense of God that such agents should be transmitting in their lives.”⁵⁸ People feel isolated, vulnerable, and in some cases have come to have strained relations with the Roman Catholic Church by this shortage of workers and the lack of spiritual direction among some clerics. Some of this isolation clearly stems from the shortage of priests. But it has also been noted that “too many experience the Catholic Church as controlled by a priestly class . . . the Church of these professionals . . . [who] seem to have all the authority, make all the decisions, control all the numbers,” and are educated so far beyond those they serve that the people are alienated.⁵⁹ Perhaps something can be done to make more or better use of the relatively uneducated yet effective Abundio Lopez and Francisco Olazábal still in the Catholic Latino or Hispanic communities in the Southwest.

⁵⁵For an overview of the first fifteen years of discussion at the international level between Pentecostals and Roman Catholics see *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 12:2 (1990).

⁵⁶“Evangelizing Mission of the Church in Africa,” *Origins* (Mar. 11, 1993) 87–89.

⁵⁷“Opening Address to Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops,” 326, 12.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*

⁵⁹*New Christian Movements in Africa and Madagascar* (Meeting for African Collaboration—MAC), Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (Rome: Typografia S.G.S., 1992) 24–25.

A second problem that has been lifted up is the lack of structures for evangelization and a genuine lack of vital spiritual formation. From the perspective of Pentecostals, too often, the completion of catechism and first communion has been the back door to the Roman Catholic Church instead of an entrance into full communion with those who are active in the Church. They may have niches in their homes, but fail to enter fully into community with the faithful in any life giving way. The result is that many converts or parishioners or members cannot clearly articulate their faith or describe what God is doing in their lives.⁶⁰ There is a tendency to rely solely on their baptism and popular religion. There is confusion and misinformation not only on their own doctrine but also on the meaning of ecumenism and the teaching of groups with "new" ideas that sound especially convincing to young people. The lack of biblical preaching, biblical training, and biblical literature put the people at risk to outside groups who use the Bible and give Bibles away while giving the impression that the Roman Catholic Church is "not serious about the Bible."⁶¹

These first two problems are somewhat intertwined as people search for meaning in their lives. These studies have isolated young people, the poor, immigrants, and women as being especially vulnerable to evangelization or proselytism from the outside. They clearly do not feel adequately integrated into the life of the Church. Women feel barred from significant leadership roles, which in many Pentecostal communities (though not all) they find open. Young people who look to assert themselves and become leaders are held at arm's length until adequate training is obtained, and they feel that they are in the controlled environment in which people search for personal dignity and power but cannot find it.

A third major problem that has been articulated is the need to inculturate the gospel.⁶² Inculturation is critical to the success of communicating the gospel, but it also comes at the risk of syncretism.⁶³ With proper discernment, however, it can help to narrow the distance between the Church and the people. The Bishops of Alta and Baja California have noted that many Roman Catholics have "a poor experience of God due to a merely ritualistic worship which is not in touch with the present world."⁶⁴ This point is highlighted, too, in the study done on *New Christian Movements in Africa and Madagascar* where, in

⁶⁰Thomas Weinandy, "Why Catholics Should Witness Verbally to the Gospel," *New Oxford Review* 60:6 (July-Aug. 1993) 1-18.

⁶¹*New Christian Movements in Africa and Madagascar*, 28.

⁶²"Evangelizing Mission of the Church in Africa," ch. 2, 664-8, \$49-74.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 667, \$66.

⁶⁴"Dimensions of a Response to Proselytism," 667.

spite of the strengths of ritual, symbolism, and mystery clearly present in Catholic liturgical life and worship, it is noted that it can become "too formalized and stylized." By involving some spontaneous elements, making the services more participatory, including times for narrative expression such as personal testimonies, and by adopting more indigenous music, the African and Madagascar Episcopal Conferences hope to improve Catholic worship in a way that is more authentically African.⁶⁵ Without such things finding their way into the central life of the Roman Church among Hispanics, the people will drift into less desirable popular religious expression such as Santería or Umbanda, or continue to move into other Christian groups such as the Pentecostals, where they believe their needs are better met.

Finally, there is the issue of personal and institutional holiness. The Decree on Ecumenism issued during the Second Vatican Council urged every Roman Catholic to "aim at Christian perfection" because without that "its members fail to live by them [all means of grace] with all the fervor that they should."⁶⁶ It went on to note that "if in various times and circumstances, there have been deficiencies in moral conduct or in Church discipline, or even in the way that Church teaching has been formulated . . . these should be set right at the opportune moment and in the proper way."⁶⁷ What we find all too frequently is the opposite. In a recent interview with *Our Sunday Visitor* Cardinal Augusto Vargas Alzamora lamented that "the number of baptized Catholics who live a life totally indifferent to their faith is dramatically changing the face of the culture."⁶⁸ That which among Hispanics might have been considered to be a Christian culture or even a Roman Catholic culture can no longer be assumed.

What all of this says is that the Roman Catholic Church has taken seriously many (but not all) concerns which Pentecostals have long voiced, and begun to ask how it can address these criticisms in positive ways. The New Evangelization, I believe, is one of those positive efforts to respond. Clearly, it is viewed in this way by Pentecostals in Latin America, but not without some fear, for ultimately a renewed and revitalized Roman Catholic Church *may not now be what Pentecostals*

⁶⁵*New Christian Movements in Africa and Madagascar*, 22-27.

⁶⁶Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis redintegratio*) 4, *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, vol. 1, ed. Austin Flannery (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1988) 458. See also the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen gentium*) ch. V, 39-42.

⁶⁷Decree on Ecumenism 6, *Vatican Council II*, 459.

⁶⁸Alejandro Bermudez, "Evangelizing All Over Again," *Our Sunday Visitor* (June 11, 1995) 12.

want for the future of the Church.⁶⁹ After all, the Pentecostals are on the leading edge of the growth curve, they are now becoming institutionalized in ways that could have been avoided had their message been heeded earlier, and growth together with institutionalization bring with them the interest for self-preservation. The past rejection, persecution, and oppression of Pentecostals, which seems yet to continue in some areas, make them unwilling or unable to believe in a renewed Roman Catholic Church. Suspicion abounds. But ultimately, so does grace.

3. The language and practice of proselytism need to be worked out *together*. The documents of the Second Vatican Council give a good start on some definitions. The use of force, inducements or enticements, and fear engendered by "unjust persecutions" are explicitly condemned as unworthy of use in the task of evangelization.⁷⁰ The term coercion occurs repeatedly as an unworthy device for obtaining "conversions."⁷¹

It is highly probable that such definitions would also be affirmed by Hispanic Pentecostals. But each of these terms or definitions need further elaboration *together* as well. The very fact that Roman Catholics can call some Pentecostal evangelization efforts proselytism rather than evangelization is indicative of this need. How, for instance, do we come to terms with such things as televangelism ministries, with humanitarian efforts of building schools, orphanages, medical centers, or providing food and clothing? When is it fair to consider these as enticements or inducements, and more importantly, who makes that decision? Who decides when one of these actions deprives an individual of his or her dignity as a human being? Who decides when someone has invaded the privacy of an individual when the gospel is shared? And what about large crusades and altar calls? Are these coercive on the first invitation to the altar, or does a subsequent call to commitment become coercive? Is there legitimate room for persuasion in preaching? And what about preaching for conviction? Is a sermon in which fear of God's judgment is elicited *always* unworthy of gospel

⁶⁹See the discussion of Roman Catholic reaction to the Pentecostal invasion of Latin America as outlined in Manuel J. Gaxiola-Gaxiola, "Latin American Pentecostalism: A Mosaic within a Mosaic," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 13:2 (Fall 1991) 123-7.

⁷⁰Decrees on the Church's Missionary Activity (*Ad gentes*) 13, *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, vol. 1, ed. Austin Flannery (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1988) 828.

⁷¹See Declaration on Religious Liberty (*Dignitatis humanae*) 1, 2, 4, 11, 12, *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, vol. 1, ed. Austin Flannery (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1988).

proclamation or evangelistic efforts? These terms and ideas need to be explored *together* in order better to inform and instruct.

The terms evangelism and evangelization need mutual exploration as well. Much of their definition is intertwined with issues of ecclesiology and conversion. How does one become a Christian? Surely there are issues which emerge here that highlight the distinctives which separate a covenantal or sacramental form of theology from one based upon a personal confession of faith followed by believer's baptism. While both affirm the need for faith that precedes baptism, they differ on how that comes to play in the case of the individual.⁷² The issue of conversion as a crisis or as a process also plays into this question. What Pentecostals view as issues of discipleship, and thus as discreet from conversion and subsequent to evangelism, seem to be included in the ongoing process of evangelization among Roman Catholics. Further discussion, therefore, is needed for the development of a common vocabulary to emerge that can be shared by Roman Catholics and Pentecostals. Once definitions have been developed, the practices can be assessed and common witness can emerge. But these discussions call for patience and perseverance by all concerned.⁷³

4. The issue of common witness is, of course, related directly to all of this. It is not impossible at this point, but it is difficult. The recent independent and unauthorized document "Evangelicals and Catholics Together," which was signed by a number of evangelicals and Roman Catholics in the United States, while not perfect, is one such attempt at common witness that at least one Hispanic Pentecostal leader signed.⁷⁴ This attempt at common witness has met with mixed reactions among many in the United States and in Latin America on both sides of the discussion.⁷⁵ Its language about sects in particular unnerved some, and the premature release of such a document without an adequate foundation to enable reception to occur meant that some Pentecostal leaders were placed in a position in which they felt it was necessary to distance themselves from the project regardless of

⁷²"Perspectives on Koinonia," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 12:2 (fall 1990) 126, 43-44.

⁷³Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism* (Washington, D.C.: USCC, 1993).

⁷⁴"Evangelicals & Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium," *First Things: A Journal of Religion and Public Life* 43 (May 1994) 15-22. It was signed by Pentecostal Dr. Jesse Miranda of the Assemblies of God.

⁷⁵Timothy George, "Catholics and Evangelicals in the Trenches," *Christianity Today* 38:6 (May 16, 1994) 16-17; Randy Frame, "Evangelicals, Catholics Pursue New Cooperation," *Christianity Today* 38:6 (May 16, 1994) 53; "Evangelical-Catholic Statement Criticized," *The Christian Century* 111:17 (May 18-25, 1994) 520-1.

what they may personally have thought of it.⁷⁶ In spite of all this, the document is a demonstration that at more than on the official international level, there is a deep concern to participate in some form of common witness.

In some areas of the world it is more difficult to imagine the level of collaboration such a document might require. On the one hand, there appear to be many who are bent upon keeping the status quo. For others, it is time for massive change. It is clear that ideological, political, social, and ecclesiological issues are at stake, to say nothing of competing cultures.⁷⁷ It is at these places where new energy needs to be spent. Whether this can be done from within the geographical context including the American Southwest remains to be seen.

In short, the issues of when and how we might engage in common witness are made complex by definitions, by practices, by culture conflicts, and, ultimately, by an unwillingness for anyone to take a loss. Could it ever be possible for a bishop and a Pentecostal leader in one place to draw up a cease fire in one small area and together pray and talk and plan a way that the spiritual needs of the people could be met? Could it be thinkable that the Pentecostals of that area might submit themselves to the bishop, encouraging all who claim to be Roman Catholic to be faithful to their Church, and enabling and discipling the so-called "nominal" Catholics to become better Christians within the Catholic Church. Would it be thinkable that the Roman Catholics of the area might submit themselves to the Pentecostal leadership, learn from them of the sanctification and power of the Holy Spirit

⁷⁶Thomas E. Trask, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, wrote in *Fax of the Matter* (June 21, 1994) 2: "Evangelicals & Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium"—In recent weeks, we have had a number of inquiries concerning this document which was drafted and signed earlier this year. I want to set the record straight. The Assemblies of God has not signed any agreement with the Roman Catholic Church, nor do we have any intent to doing so. I believe God has raised up this Fellowship to be a Pentecostal voice and to sound a clarion call to a life of separation, a life that is represented by godliness and holiness. Please join me in prayer for this great Fellowship that God will give us a Holy Ghost revival that will sweep across this nation of ours, resulting in many finding Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior."

⁷⁷For an informative overview see Jeffrey Gros, "Culture Wars: The Larger Picture," *New Theology Review* 6:4 (Nov. 1993) 79-87; Guillermo Melendez, "The Catholic Church in Central America: Into the 1990s," *Social Compass* 39:4 (1992) 553-70; Christian Parker, "Christianity and the Cultural Identity of Latin America on the Threshold of the 21st Century," *Social Compass* 39:4 (1992) 571-83; Samuel Palma Manriquez, "Religion of the People and Evangelism: A Pentecostal Perspective," *International Review of Mission* 82:327 (July/Oct. 1993) 365-74; and Karl-Wilhelm Westmeier, "Themes of Pentecostal Expansion in Latin America," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 17:2 (Apr. 1993) 72-78.

and the ability to verbalize in compelling ways the reality of Jesus Christ in their lives? It wouldn't take much to bring about a profound change in attitudes between them as they live with one another's spirituality. Who knows, they might even discover that they are, indeed, sisters and brothers who have been reconciled to one another in Jesus Christ, an eloquent testimony to the grace and power of the gospel to transform lives of ordinary people.

Perhaps something along these lines is exactly what Pope John Paul II is alluding to in his recent encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*. He calls, on the one hand, for more opportunities for mutual prayer. "If Christians, despite their divisions, can grow ever more united in common prayer around Christ, they will grow in the awareness of how little divides them in comparison to what [who] unites them."⁷⁸ But he also notes that everyone has something to bring to the meeting and acknowledges that other Christian communities, such as Hispanic Pentecostals, may even be people among whom "certain features of the Christian mystery have at times been more effectively emphasized,"⁷⁹ than they have been in the Roman Catholic Church. If this is truly the case, then it is time for the exchange to begin.

⁷⁸*Ut Unum Sint*, 22.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 14.