

**‘Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Guatemala
With special reference to their presence and social role,
1976-2006’**

Abstract

Israel Ortiz

PhD, OCMS

This thesis analyzes the presence and social role of Neo-Pentecostal churches in Guatemala. It focuses on the laity with a view to understanding how they are thinking and what they are doing about social issues in the light of the fact that they as well as their participation in society have not always been taken into account. Previous studies have been mainly concerned with the opinions of pastors or with the role of some politicians who have emerged from these churches. Indeed, some analysts take it for granted that what the laity thinks is nothing more than a reflection of the opinion of their pastors. Hence this study seeks to open the way towards an understanding of the manner in which lay people see themselves and their role in society.

For the purposes of this study the researcher carried out field work in order to observe, discover, grasp, understand and systematize the ideas and experiences of the laity, examining how they perceive their role in society and how they live it out. The main sources of information were interviews, some documents written by pastors, observations from field work and the use of interviews to gather the opinions of the laity about their role and presence in society. The study argues that social change can be seen in the sphere of culture, which is the context in which the lay people live. It is here that lay people face their personal challenges and take their part in the development of the Guatemala’s socio-economic processes.

This analysis is essentially qualitative in character though it makes partial use of the quantitative method. The interviews were done among a cross section of the Neo-Pentecostals in six churches in the capital city of Guatemala. A questionnaire was also used among a larger number of people in order to gain a wider perspective of the thought and participation in society of the laity in these churches. In the course of the work the researcher took part in various activities, church services and dialogue with pastors and lay people, in order to gain an overall view of their ideas concerning their role and presence in society.

This study shows that potentially these churches have a laity which, with the support of other Evangelical churches, could form a critical driving force for social change in the long term. Social capital is a key factor for the strengthening of democracy and of the social and economic development of society. This thesis is a contribution towards understanding the social role of the laity in Neo-Pentecostal churches which aims to stimulate the growth of a wider consciousness and commitment to Guatemala’s social transformation.

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1976-2006’**

By

Israel Ortiz

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(Central American Theological Seminary)

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DEDICATION

To God, the Father from whom comes every good and perfect gift, for his eternal love and goodness. To Jesus Christ, the Alpha and Omega, the Lamb of God, personal Saviour, Lord of history and the King of kings who is to come, and to the Holy Spirit, the true Comforter, the Giver of life, knowledge and power to the church for the accomplishment of its mission.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACSI	Association of Christian International Schools
ANN	Alianza Nueva Nación (New Nation Alliance party)
ARDE	Acción Reconciliadora Democrática, (Democratic Reconciliatory Action)
CACIF	Coordinating Committee of Agriculture, Commerce, Industry, and Finance Associations
CB	Casa Bernabé (Barnabas House)
CEBs	Comunidades Eclesiales de Base (Base Community Churches)
CEIDAL	Centro Internacional para el Desarrollo de América-Latina (International Centre for the Latin America Development)
CEDEPCA	El Centro Evangélico de Estudios Pastorales en América Central (The Central America Evangelical Centre of Pastoral Studies)
CEMFRAC	Centro de Estudios Ministeriales de la Fraternidad (Centre of Ministry Studies of FCG)
CIEDEG	Conferencia de Iglesias Evangélicas de Guatemala (The Guatemala Conference of Evangelical Churches)
CELAM	Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (Latin American Episcopal Council)
CGV	Comité Guardianes del Vecindario (Neighbourhood Watch Committee)
CLAI	Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias, (Latin American Council of Churches)
COCIEG	Comisión Coordinadora de la Iglesia Evangélica de Guatemala. (Coordinating Commission of the Evangelical Church of Guatemala)
COCIPE	Comisión Cívica Permanente (Permanent Civic Committee of the Evangelical Alliance of Guatemala)
CODESGUA	Confederación de Sacerdotes Diocesanos de Guatemala (Confederation of Diocesan Priests of Guatemala)
COICOM	Iberia-American Confederation of Christian Communications
CUG	Cristianos Unidos para Guatemala (United Christians for Guatemala)
ESH	El Shaddai Churches
ENCOVI:	Encuesta Nacional sobre Condiciones de Vida (National survey of living standards)
ENEI	Encuesta Nacional de Empleo e Ingresos (National Survey of Employment and Wages)
ENS	La Encuesta Nacional Sociodemográfica (National Sociodemographic Survey)
FAEC	Federación Alianza Evangélica Costarricense (Costa Rican Evangelical Alliance Federation)
FCG	Fraternidad Cristiana de Guatemala (Christian Fraternity of Guatemala churches)
FGs	Family Groups
FEP	Foro Evangélico Permanente (The Permanent Evangelical Forum)
FIS	Fondo de Inversión Social (Social Investment Fund)
FLET	Facultad Latinoamericana de Estudios Teológicos (Faculty of Theological Studies)
FMA	Fundación Manos de Amor ('Hands of Love' Foundation)
FRG	El Frente Republicano Guatemalteco (The Guatemalan Republican Front)
FTL	Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana (Latin American Theological Fraternity)
FUEDES	Fundación Educativa el Shaddai (El Shaddai Educational Foundation)
FUNDASEDE	Fundación para la Promoción de la Educación (Foundation for the Promotion of Education)

FUNPRONI	La Fundación Protectora del Niño Huérfano (Foundation for the Protection and Defence of the Orphan Child.)
GSNPL	General Survey of Neo-Pentecostal lay people
G12	Grupo de los 12 ('Group of the Twelve' churches)
ICV	Iglesia Cristiana Verbo (Verbo Christian Churches)
IFD	Iglesia la Familia de Dios (The Family of God Churches)
ILES	Instituto de Liderazgo (Leadership Institute)
INAP	Instituto Nacional de Administración Pública (National Institute of Public Administration)
INE	Instituto Nacional de Estadística (National Institute of Statistics)
ISAL	Iglesia y Sociedad en América Latina (Church and Society in Latin America)
ISER	Instituto de Estudo da Religiao (Institute of Religious Study)
IVF	La Iglesia Visión de Fe (Vision of Faith Churches)
Ladino	Ladino refers to the mix of Indigenous and Spanish races
LDG	Iglesia Lluvias de Gracia (Rains of Grace Churches)
MAS	Movimiento de Acción Solidaria, (Movement for Action in Solidarity)
MPV	Movimiento de principios y valores (Movement of principles and values)
NEOP	Neo-Pentecostalism
NPCs	Neo-Pentecostal churches
NPL	Neo-Pentecostal lay people
NPS	Neo-Pentecostal pastors
NPPs	Neo-Pentecostal politicians
NRB	The National Religious Broadcasters
OCG	Organización Cívica de Guatemala (Civic Guatemalan Organization)
OIT	Organización Internacional del Trabajo (International Work Organisation)
PACE	El Programa de Habilidad Mental (Programme for Mental Skill)
PPV	Partido Principios y Valores (Party for Principles and Values)
PEI	Programa de Enriquecimiento Instrumental (Programme of Instrumental Enrichment)
SEPAL	Servicio Evangelizador para América Latina (Evangelical Service for Latin America)
SBTNP	Seminario Bíblico Teológico Neo-Pentecostal Panamericano (Neo-Pentecostal Panamerican Theological Biblical Seminary)
SNPEP	Survey of Neo-Pentecostal Entrepreneurs and Professionals
UD	Unión Democrática (Democratic Union)
UNE	Unidad Nacional de la Esperanza (United National Party for Hope)
URNG	Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (The Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit)
VIVA	Partido Visión con Valores (Vision with Values Party)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Who are the Guatemalan Neo-Pentecostals? Where did they come from? Why is it important to investigate this subject? These are some of the questions this introductory chapter seeks to answer. A working hypothesis will be put forward and the objectives and methodology for the investigation will be explained as well as the definition of some key concepts.

A. NEW SOCIAL ACTORS

On March 23, 1982 Guatemalans were rudely awakened by a coup d'état that overthrew General Romero Lucas García. General Efraín Ríos Montt became head of a military triumvirate which assumed control of the government. Nevertheless those most surprised by the news were the Evangelicals.¹ For the first time in the history of the country an Evangelical assumed the highest office of the nation, precisely the year in which the Protestant Centennial was celebrated. Ríos Montt added two governing elders from the Verbo Christian Church (ICV) as part of his cabinet and opened the way for Evangelicals to participate in the political arena. The Evangelicals thus passed from being on the margin to seeking political power. The recently founded El Shaddai Church (ESH) acquired international notoriety through their relationship with Serrano Elias who became President in 1990.

At the same time these churches surprised the Evangelical world by their unusual eruption and rapid growth in prestigious areas of Guatemala City. From small family bible study groups in a farm outside the city they became mega-churches with membership drawn especially from the middle and upper classes. Although the Evangelical boom was part of the scene at that moment, these churches, together with other similar churches,

¹ The term Evangelical in the present thesis is used interchangeably with the term Protestant. Both terms include the historical churches, the faith missions, the Pentecostal churches, independent churches and the Neo-Pentecostal churches.

became known as the Neo-Pentecostal churches (NPCs).² Their presence was made known by huge church buildings, media communications and educational institutions; they modified the face of the Evangelical churches in the capital and principal cities of the country. With the exception of one of the churches under study, the majority of the churches were born from small family bible study groups at the end of the 1970s and have expanded throughout the country and around the world.

In Guatemala NPCs represent a significant new aspect of Protestantism. In the 2000s they are the churches that are growing most rapidly within the Evangelical world. According to SEPAL (Evangelical Service for Latin America) of the total Guatemalan population, Evangelicals represent 25.4 per cent, Catholics 58.1 per cent, those without religious affiliation 13.9 per cent, and the religious sects 2.6 per cent, so that one out of every four Guatemalans is Evangelical (actualized report 2003: 5). Today some analysts wonder if the NPCs together with the rest of Evangelical churches have the potential to promote some type of social change in Guatemala (Stoll 1994). Others question this possibility for different reasons (Cleary 1998: 9). All the details about those churches will be discussed later.

The NPCs are not only growing in Guatemala. This religious phenomenon is not a parochial matter but part of world-wide Charismatic Christianity. The studies by Karla Poewe (1994), Harvey Cox (1996), Ian Cotton (1995), Paul Freston (1996 & 1997), Murray Dempster (1999), David Martin (2002) and others, show that the Charismatic Movement is global. Simon Coleman affirms that ‘These Christians are concerned to prompt the “flow” of people, ideas and material objects across the globe, and the idea of cementing interconnections between believers united in “Spirit” is powerfully articulated by them in sermons, oral testimonies and literature’ (2000: 67). For Martin ‘Pentecostalism (and associated Charismatic movements) find a quite different kind of niche deep in the interior

² In the present investigation the terms Neo-Pentecostals and Neo-Charismatics are used to refer to the same phenomenon. A difference is made when charismatic Catholics are referred to. The Neo-Pentecostal churches do not use the term charismatic as this is associated with the Catholic Church.

of major civilizations, or from the margin among ethnic groups which seek differentiation from the wider whole, and want to change inferior status for modernity' (2002: 26). This religious revival seems to be the revenge of religion against secularism that exiled it to a corner of private life. Cox underlines that secularist scholars were mistaken in affirming that religion should be confined to the intimacy of the home as a private element due to the advance of secularism (1996: 14-15).

B. WORK HYPOTHESIS

The NPCs form part of the expansion of world-wide Christianity which has moved from North to South. Protestantism in two thirds of the countries of the Southern Hemisphere grows vigorously and forms in different ways the religious configuration and the institutions of these nations. Because of this some analysts of religious phenomena in Latin America centre their attention on Protestantism and its socio-political role in the region. Its accelerated growth and omnipresence in society are understood by some as the emergence of a movement of social transformation. This thesis is interested in analyzing if this phenomenon is happening among the Guatemalan Evangelicals, which kind of social change are they achieving, and how are they affecting the rest of the Evangelicals and society in general?

For the present research, the starting point will be David Stoll's hypothesis. He asserts that: 'If Evangelical reform is visible anywhere, it ought to be in Guatemala where the percentage of Evangelicals is the highest in Latin America and the elite churches have become more prominent than in other countries' (1994: 102). For Stoll the numerical presence of Evangelicals and the elite character of the NPCs are the key factors in achieving this reform. In his analysis he emphasizes that because of their connections with national institutions, their emergence within rich suburbs, and the special composition of their membership (businessmen, politicians, retired military personnel and professionals) the NPCs are important new social actors. Stoll says that added to the old Evangelical

formula of changing society through changing individuals, the NPCs middle and upper classes include managerial vision, in which Christians take control of society and reform it from above. Today, 'Evangelicals are groping for ways to translate a reformation in personal morality into a reformation in public morality' (1994: 109-110).

Other authors from different angles have arrived at similar conclusions. Martin considers Latin American Pentecostalism a potential movement for social change. He says Pentecostalism gives its members a new self concept, new initiative models and voluntary organizations that could become alternative paradigms for society (1990: 289). For Martin, Protestantism might cause a peaceful cultural transformation, and he emphasises that Pentecostalism 'provides the push and shove of individual or group advancement rather than political revolution' (1990: 202, 204). Miller & Yamamori (2007) indicate that within the Pentecostal churches a movement with a holistic emphasis on mission is rising up which they have named 'Progressive Pentecostalism'.

Virginia Garrard-Burnett affirms that Protestantism has a key role to play in social transformation of individuals and communities in Guatemala. She underlines that 'Protestantism, on a spiritual and practical level, is both a conduit for change and a mechanism for coping with crisis within the traditional community' (1989a: 7, 9, 12). Peter Berger goes further saying that 'within Latin American Protestantism, we can see the emergence of a solid bourgeoisie that can guide the development of democratic capitalism' (1990: ix).

Latin American authors like Mariz (1995a, 1995b), Frigerio (1994) and Wynarczyk, Seman & Majo (1995), consider Neo-Pentecostalism as a Latin Americanized movement and with a larger orientation towards the world. Frigerio points out that their theological orientation and individual action of their members to Christianize society make them a more world-transforming movement (1994: 23). Other scholars of Protestant phenomena do not agree with Stoll's thesis. Jean-Pierre Bastian says that Protestantism (especially Pentecostalism) does not represent social reform but rather an adjustment of

popular religion (1993: 35, 55). Schäfer considers that the Evangelical Neo-Pentecostal movement and the Catholic Charismatic movement find themselves in social sectors with neo-liberal economic interests and a political programme that incorporate a Latin American version of the North Atlantic culture (1997: 141-142).

So Stoll's hypothesis needs to be analyzed critically in the light of the historical, social, political, economic, cultural and religious realities of Guatemala. Above all the researcher proposes to analyze specifically the role and religious presence of NPCs, the articulation and function of their social vision, and possible effects within Protestantism and Guatemalan society. Special attention is given to the social role and presence of the laity since they have not always received due attention. The study proposes to analyse the extent to which these churches and their laity are involved and how they participate in society to stimulate social change. The period of analysis covers the churches developed from 1976 to 2006.

C. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

To analyse the thinking of Neo-Pentecostals

This thesis proposes to analyse the social vision of the NPCs with a view to knowing and understanding how the leadership and laity think. The pastors' teaching in the churches has an important role in the formation of the faithful. There is a need to analyse the ideas and teaching they have about the social role and presence of the church. It is also important to know the social thoughts of the laity and observe to what extent they differ or follow their pastors' teaching and the doctrinal positions of their churches.

To find out what is the relationship between religious faith and social issues

An analysis will be carried out to discover how the NPL understand and relate their Christian faith to other aspects of life and their way of seeing the world through this

perspective, including a study on how they are promoting new values among their membership and in Guatemalan society.

To discover if the teachings and stimulus received from NPCs generate social mobility among their members

According to Miller & Yamamori a relationship does in fact exist between Pentecostal conversion and economic advance although this is not their goal but a consequence of changed lives (2007: 168-169). In this case the type of teaching and stimulus received from their churches in order to attain economic development will be analyzed.

To study the new Neo-Pentecostal orientation toward the world

Are the NPL (Neo-Pentecostal lay people) interested in getting involved in improving the wellbeing of society especially in the light of the changed eschatological paradigm? Ricardo Mariano points out that the NPCs in Brazil are promoting a series of changes within the Pentecostal communities and the understanding of Brazilian religiosity. He confirms that the effects of their practice also have repercussions in politics, influencing the theological contents and liturgy of other Evangelical denominations (cited by Brasil 2002: 254).

To investigate which kind of social projects the NPCs are involved in

In which ways is the membership enrolled on those programmes? The analysis seeks to discover how they relate their social thought to social programmes to their daily lives in society. It is also important to know if those projects are available for needy people.

To observe how the NPCs treat women and indigenous groups

Within a context where chauvinism prevails and the indigenous people continue to be excluded; do the NPCs promote the person and role of women and indigenous communities? Those issues are crucial to fortify the values of democracy in the country.

To find out to what extent the NPCs contribute to generate social capital

Putnam states that churches have a key role in generating social capital (1993: 89,167). This and the presence of voluntary associations are key factors to the advance of democracy in Latin America. Brasil points out these Evangelical churches could very well be an instrument to strengthen civil associations in the incipient associativism in Brazil in a context where the options available among the poorest are practically nonexistent (2002: 246).

D. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE THESIS

The analysis of the social role and presence of the NPCs has to do with the discussion of social change from the perspective of political culture. Social science theorists give increasingly more importance to change that occurs within the sphere of culture. This focus helps to mark out religious phenomena within the existing structures of society. Change can be seen in daily lives and in the context of community better than in the socio-political structures.

For Martin it is primarily in the sphere of culture that religious changes operate and can be seen (1990: 267-68, 286). Beginning with his studies on Latin American Protestantism, he emphasizes that ‘the contemporary Evangelical [...] has walked out of the extant structures and devised an experimental capsule or cell in the interstices of culture. Here he may reinvent himself in an atmosphere of fraternal support and give tongue to his frustrations and aspirations’ (1990: 286). He underlines that ‘Evangelical religion represents an advanced form of social differentiation and can operate best where hitherto monopolistic systems are disintegrating’, and emphasizes that, ‘[...] Evangelical

Christianity can emerge to compete within the sphere of culture' (1990: 294). He points out that 'Pentecostalism as well other forms of Evangelicalism enable many of the members to achieve power in their lives which can simultaneously infuse them with the possibility of "betterment" and of new goods of every kind, spiritual and material'. (1990: 204).

On the contrary, Jean-Pierre Bastian believes that the current expressions of Protestantism are a kind of palliative to help the poor to survive. He affirms that even though the Pentecostal lay person can raise his standard of living, he does not reach an ethical rationalization which would allow him to structure economic components. He goes on to point out that religious movements like Pentecostalism 'contribute to combat misery, but do not eradicate poverty' (1997: 209-210). Bastian says that the present flowering of religious heterodoxy in Latin America is due to the transplant of the 'popular religion' to be found in rural Catholicism with no priestly oversight (1993: 35). Cox shows that Pentecostalism cannot be interpreted unilaterally. He points out that 'the Pentecostal movement itself is a highly paradoxical one. It is diverse, volatile and mercurial. It will not sit still long enough for someone to paint its portrait, or stop changing long enough for anyone to chart its trajectory' (1996: 183-184).

On the other hand, Ireland's studies of some religious groups in Brazil show that they develop certain kinds of 'political culture'. This political culture consists of beliefs, stories and images that emerge and operate from the grass roots, in every day life, in poor neighbourhoods and in popular religion (1991: 3, 7, 43). These politics allow Brazilian Catholics, Protestant Pentecostals, and spiritists 'to interpret and modify the political-economic realities they cannot control. [...] They set up as much as they can of their religiously inspired kingdoms in the free spaces available to them, and [...] live patterns of citizenship that they themselves construct' (1991: 4).

The researcher observed that the NPCs emerged in an adverse social, economic and political context. They grew in spite of limitations and pressures that the social structures

imposed on the rest of the population. In the Brazilian context Ireland can see ‘signs of a potential to resist the cultural hegemony of the national triumphant security code’ (1991: 217). He points out that political culture in the churches that arises from Pentecostalism is different from the national security code (1991: 215).

David Lehmann says that Neo-Pentecostalism and Pentecostalism represent a profound rupture from Catholicism which he calls the ‘cultural counterpart’. He points out that Pentecostalism crosses frontiers and is capable of planting beliefs and practices in a variety of cultures. He emphasizes that ‘we are thus in the presence of more than a competition for numbers in churches, or even for political power. Rather we are in the presence of a profound process of cultural change [...]’ (1996: 209, 223, 227).

Finally, John Burdick in his study of various religious groups in San Jorge, a community in Brazil, shows that Pentecostalism provides its members with a new identity; new values and pastoral support that help the people face their daily problems better within the existing political structures (1993: 226). Garrard-Burnett affirms that the ‘Protestantism in the context of the armed conflict in Guatemala was a key factor in favour of reconstruction of peoples’ lives and communities that had suffered because of the war. Those people found in the Evangelical churches a refuge, a new sense of control, a place for individuals, and a sense of order in the context of chaos and violence (1989a: 7). This approach of the analysis of political culture allows changes to be observed, which from the point of view of structural changes would not necessarily be apparent. The following analysis will observe how change occurs in the NPCs’ context.

E. KEY TERMS

Some brief definitions will now be given for key terms which will be used in the thesis to guide and clarify the discussion of the themes.

Culture: Geertz says that culture ‘denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic

forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life' (1993:89).

Socio-cultural change: In this present thesis, change will be discussed from the anthropological perspective of socio-cultural change. The Peruvian anthropologist Tito Paredes says that 'This change can be any modification of the ideas, society, technology, economy, and ecology of a people due to factors working from within or without'. Change does not finish where it starts, but it can also modify structures (2003: 73).

Conversion: For this present work the following concept will be adopted: 'Conversion implies transformation, and this is translated into a new form of life linked to ethical principles which the convert understands come with his commitment to "God"[...] and a commitment to the congregation who will substitute in the future the former links' (Cantón 1998: xvii).

Social mobility: This has to do with the opportunity to move from one stratum to another which can be a move upwards or downwards. The major types of social mobility are intra-generational mobility which occurs in a simple generation measured by the occupational status of an individual; and inter-generational mobility refers to social mobility between generations (Haralambos & Holborn 1995: 101).

Values: Here values are understood to be 'ways of being or acting which an individual or a group judge to be ideal, and which make individuals or behaviour, to which these values are attributed, esteemed or desirable' (González-Anleo 1994:237). These are converted into 'criteria' by which society judges the importance of people, forms and socio-cultural objectives (1994: 237). In the present work these values circumscribe to the Christian ethical and moral framework.

Social capital: Robert Putman says that voluntary associations are key entities in the formation of human resources and civic culture of a society. For him 'social capital' refers to the characteristics of a social organization, such as truth, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society (1993:167). This concept will be applied to Neo-

Pentecostal laity whose communities are working for common causes connected through their common faith.

Political culture: According to Ireland the political culture consists of beliefs, stories and images that emerge and operate from the grass roots, in every day life, in poor neighbourhoods and in popular religion (1991: 3, 7, 43). For Martin, it is primarily in the sphere of culture that religious changes operate and can be seen. Here the believer may reinvent himself in an atmosphere of fraternal support and give tongue to his frustrations and aspirations' (1990: 286).

F. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

The analysis of the NPCs becomes important around the world as part of the global Charismatic Movement. Three reasons are emphasized as important for this study.

1. Socio-religious importance

Protestantism in Latin America as a socio-religious movement has tremendous potential for contributing to the development of society. For this reason, some analysts have interpreted the Evangelical emergence and presence within the context of the eruption of new social movements. Marostica says that Protestantism is a new social movement because it possesses its own identity, autonomy and system of beliefs, represents a new form of social organization and has arisen from below (1994: 4-5). For Martin the impact of the theory of differentiation in Third World countries implied the dissolution of all types of monopolies, whether political ideology or religion. He emphasises that today in Asia, Africa and Latin America, development of 'a Christianity based on the Holy Spirit set off a process of personal social reform, trying to restore the dignity of women, to support the integrity of the family and to attack violence and corruption in the state' (1995: 298, 299). Droogers affirms that Martin's comparative analysis between the Methodist and the Pentecostal growth which he presents as an expression of liberal pluralism which pushed

and finished the Catholic monopoly 'resembles Willems' anomic interpretation of Latin American Pentecostal expansion linking it to global processes' (1998: 29).

Droogers points out that the analyses of Pentecostalism from the modernization or Neo Marxist perspectives, give more attention to external factors. According to him, in order to understand comprehensively more attention needs to be given to the internal religious characteristics and their articulation within the external circumstances of globalization (2001: 41). He underscores that Pentecostalism covers a variety of forms, historical features, organizational and social diversity, political issues, as well as a combination of opposite characteristics such as their eschatology (2001: 46-51). For Droogers, the role and action of the Holy Spirit in the Pentecostal community, conversion and its impact in the lives of the believers and their dual vision of the world (God and Satan are at war) make up the internal characteristics which explain their penetration and advance in the world. He summarizes, '[...] these internal religious elements together, as a constellation, make Pentecostalism a religion that fits with the globalizing world' (2001: 54-59).

Jean-Pierre Bastian does not agree with Martin's perspective about Pentecostalism. He questions that the present forms of millennialisms and other minor heterodoxies, form part of a logical Protestant system. The movements which are called Protestant from the 1960s simply adopted 'the attitudes and values of popular religion as a result of the Pentecostal revolution' (1993: 43; 1990: 151). He underlines that what happens in Latin America is a religious mutation in which the social actor simultaneously resorts to the maxim of religious offers which seek to give efficient answers to problems of poverty and exclusion. At the same time the social actor gets used to changing his religious practices according to the stages of his life and the situations which are presented to him (1997: 209-210).

For Bastian original Protestantism allowed the emergence of the subordinate and anomic culture of Pentecostalism. For him, '[...] neither the new Latin American religious

movements nor the Protestant sects have any connections with religious reform and even less with political and social reform. They represent instead strategies of adaptation and resistance, fashioned by the lower strata of Latin American societies, which reinforce the autonomy of the authoritarian and corporatist popular religious culture' (1993: 55). He underscores that, 'the popular and millenarianist Protestant movements seem to be the tools for a project of restoration rather than of religious and social reform' (1993:57).

Droogers affirms that is not possible interpret Pentecostalism only from one perspective. That is why he adopts an eclectic approach to understand [specially] the paradoxes of Pentecostalism in Latin America (1998:25-31). Others scholars are analyzing Pentecostal phenomena from a less pessimistic view point. For example, Vázquez says that one must avoid falling into the trap of understanding the rise and development of Pentecostalism as the product of a social pathology or an anomaly as Lalive D'Épinay and Willems affirmed in their early studies of Protestantism (1998: 242). Wilson points out that although to some observers features of NPCs have seemed to be merely garish imitations of North American charismatic style and right-wing politics, 'members of these groups, often activists with the means and the desire to engage in public life, have strong sense of civic responsibility and support schools, social service programs, and inevitable political activities' (1998: 146).

Freston affirms that the Charismatic movement of the 1960s is often explained in terms of the West developing 'as a reaction to the bureaucratization of church life and the numerical decline of the churches; as a experimental affirmation of Christian spirituality of urban modernity marked by social and geographical mobility' (Freston, 2006). However he also notes that 'other authors have stressed that charismatic Christianity is a global culture characterized not by unilateral diffusion from the West but by parallel developments and complex flows'. He underscores: 'While American influence was undoubtedly great (especially through popular books), the global charismatic movement is not an American 'product' (Freston, 2006). In the light of this affirmation, he comments these phenomena

such as the 'Toronto Blessing' occurred before in Argentina, Brazil, Ghana or Nigeria, but without the capacity to globalize the experience. While pointing out the pros and cons of the Charismatic's or Neo-Charismatic's (Protestant and Catholic) he affirms that 'one can also recognise its sociological limitations (e.g. to reverse secularization in the West, or to prevent the erosion of Catholic allegiance in Latin America) (Freston, 2006). In other words there is an urgency to know from within who the Pentecostals or Neo-Pentecostals are and what social role they play in the context of society in general. Burdick affirms about Brazilian Pentecostalism that it is not necessarily a conservative, pro status quo group that erodes the collective identity or debilitates the impulse for social action because they are a more progressive force than they are credited for (1993: 2-14, 16).

For Martin Pentecostalism is an autonomous movement, a popular manifestation of Latin American Protestantism, capable of combining external influence and radical local adaptation, as well as the very old and the very modern (1990: 282). Bastian on the contrary, says that Pentecostalism does not represent social reform, but rather an adjustment of popular religion (1993: 35, 55). Cleary says that 'Contrary to a common Latin America stereotype, Pentecostalism is not a North American invasion. It did not begin with a pervasive outside missionary effort, nor are major groups sustained by personnel or money from the United States or Europe' (1998: 4). In other words, for him, Pentecostalism is profoundly Protestant and latinoamericanized religion. Garrard Burnett in her studies on religious changes in Guatemalan Protestantism shows the close relationship between the theory of Max Weber over modernization, economic rationality and Protestantism, and the values such as trustworthiness, frugality, honesty and being practical within Pentecostalism. Other Evangelicals at the beginning did not feel that this was a viable movement (1998: 132).

For the NPCs, salvation is not reduced to spiritual aspects or to life after death. The here and now and how to participate in the world are part of their vision and practice. This form of understanding the world has left behind the old dualism of conservative

Evangelicalism. So in sociological literature the idea that Pentecostalism (and Protestantism in general) is necessarily alienated and conservative as a consequence of its doctrine, has been questioned (Freston 1991: 31). The NPCs far from confining their beliefs and practices to the religious field have transferred them to daily life. This is exactly the attitude that attracts many of their adherents, especially those of the middle and upper classes. The Neo-Pentecostal emphasis on material benefits that help to improve life here shows the larger orientation towards the world that this expression of religion is acquiring (Frigerio 1994: 23).). Of course, some authors like Cleary note that the Neo-Pentecostal group in Guatemala ‘have spread across cities and countryside preaching a gospel of health and wealth, often espousing an uncritical support of military and oligarchic politics, and sweeping into their folds disaffected middle class and upper class Catholics by the chapel full’. He underlines that ‘In contrast to the Pentecostals’ asceticism and modesty, the behaviour of some Neo-Pentecostals knew no restraints. They noisily entered politics, preached an ethos of consumerism, and supported or emulated the showmanship of North America’s religious-right figures [...]’ (1998: 9). In the light of those perspectives of the NPCs is important to ask, are they a positive influence among the Evangelicals in Guatemala about involvement in society, social projects and political participation? According to Gifford in Africa these churches have caused changes within the ecclesiastical structures of traditional Christianity (2004).

2. Political importance

The political participation of Evangelicals in Guatemala is part of a whole historical process. However the recent presence of Neo-Pentecostals within politics is relatively new. Unlike the lack of political involvement of most conservative Evangelicals in the past many Neo-Pentecostals have made politics part of their daily activities. Their politics and ideology and their Neo-Pentecostal emphases and social composition among the middle and upper class have stimulated this participation (Rose & Schultze 1992: 417). For

Míguez Bonino Neo-Pentecostalism is changing the old way of seeing politics. He points out that those who in the past ‘cursed’ politics, are now in the front line of the political arena. Because the churches are more independent and autonomous, they represent a political potential among the Evangelical churches (1999: 12).

It is also important to analyse the participation of Neo-Pentecostals in society as a whole, especially since most sociological studies centre their attention on party politics. Protestantism did not just erupt onto the religious scene, but also onto the socio-political stage as well. They are the new social actors coming on the platform with their religious proposals. Manuela Cantón notes that ‘change brought into play through advances in conversions can be felt in the social structure and organization, in the attitude about productive roles, in the system of authority, in community relationships, in family structure, and in the sharing of functions within genders, and in ecological relations’ (among others) (1998: 121-122). Martin says that there is social and political evidence to show that Evangelicals are not inherently apolitical or conservative. On the contrary, Evangelicals are involved in society causing social change at the level of culture (1990: 267, 68).

3. Academic importance

The academic importance of this study is that analyses concerning Guatemalan Neo-Pentecostalism are scarce. Due to the recent beginnings of the NPCs, very little has been written about their history and development. These churches have advanced more in practical issues; only now are they beginning to write about what they do and how they think. Some of the Neo-Pentecostal leaders have written some books and manuals about their beliefs and theological emphases.³ Some studies about these churches present a

³ See Harold Caballeros, De Victoria en Victoria, Conceptos, experiencias y técnicas sobre la guerra espiritual, Miami: Betania, 1999. Sergio Enríquez, Predicas Apostólicas, Guatemala: Editorial Ebenezer, 2000. The LDG church is producing a series of manuals about doctrine, church growth and text books at a secondary level. See materials ‘Fundamentos de la Fe Cristiana I y II’ produced by the Faculty of Leadership of the Christian Fraternity of Guatemala. Other Central American Neo-Pentecostal leaders are beginning to produce literature which shows the experience and vision and how they understand the church and its

partial image of the phenomenon. Analyses from the perspective of the conspiracy theory see this phenomenon as a foreign intervention without their own identity and life⁴, or they are interpreted to be a secondary movement (including the Neo-Pentecostals) looking for acknowledgement and recognition by the State so as to widen their space in the face of dominant Catholicism (Bastian 1990: 240).

Most of the studies have given much attention to Protestantism in general.⁵ For example, the works of Virgilio Zapata (1982) and Garrard-Burnett on Protestantism in Guatemala (1986, 1989 a & b, 1998, 2007) provide a global and deeper overview of their history and social role in society, and at the same time, help to understand the historical background of Neo-Pentecostal churches. The studies of Reina & Schwartz (1974), Benjamin Paul (1987, 1988), Golding & Metz (1991), Garrard-Burnett (1989a and 1989b), Amy Sherman (1997) gives more attention to rural Protestantism from an anthropological, ethnological and neoliberal perspective within indigenous communities. Stoll analyses the growth and impact of Evangelicals in the context of political violence within the indigenous region in the Guatemalan highlands (1993). The studies of Rose and Schultze talk about [Neo-Pentecostalism] NEOP, but then concentrate on aspects of education and media (1992). James Grenfell makes a general study of the political participation of Evangelicals (1995). Dennis Smith (1990) and Douglas Petersen (1996) make specific reference to Central American Pentecostalism.

Paul Freston in more recent works analyses the phenomena of Pentecostalism and Charismatism in Latin America including Guatemala (1997, 1998 a & b). Cantón in her work Bautizados en Fuego (1998) makes a more specific analysis of the Pentecostal churches (as well as other Evangelical churches) in the department of Sacatepequez, and

mission. The Neo-Pentecostal world is in the process of developing in the area of theological formation and the production of Christian literature. Although this thesis refers to some materials a further analysis is needed to determine the orientation of their contents.

⁴ The following documents present the Catholic point of view. La Carta Pastoral sobre los Grupos no Católicos (1989), of Próspero Penados del Barrio the Archbishop of Guatemala. Also Jesús García Ruiz attacks Evangelicals in his article 'Las sectas fundamentalistas en Guatemala (1985).

⁵ The book by Virgilio Zapata on La Historia de la Iglesia Evangélica en Guatemala (1982) includes only a few of these churches in his analysis. Samuel Berberían study of the Movimiento carismático en Latinoamérica (1960-1980), (1983) mentions tangentially that these movements are growing in Guatemala.

some Neo-Pentecostal churches in Guatemala City. Her study concentrates on religious conversion. Gooren in his book Rich among the poor (1999) analyses one of the branches of the LDG church and other religious groups in a marginal area of Guatemala City. Stoll in his article called 'Jesus is Lord of Guatemala' analyses Guatemalan Neo-Pentecostalism (1994). He observes the possibility of Protestantism moving forward the process of social transformation. In his study he looks mainly at the role of NPCs. However, he does not take all NPCs into account. He mainly makes reference to Rios Montt's government and emphasizes the level of political participation. There is a lack of study of the Neo-Pentecostal phenomenon as a movement, as well as the social vision that characterises the ordinary membership of NPCs and their role and possibilities within the socio-political and cultural reality of the country. Studies about the Evangelical churches have concentrated on the leadership and the role of Neo-Pentecostal politicians (NNPs).

G. NEO-PENTECOSTALISM IN GUATEMALA

Who are the Neo-Pentecostals? What is to be understood by Neo-Pentecostalism? How do they define themselves? Where are they to be placed within Guatemalan Protestantism? The following is an attempt to define who they are and to try to differentiate them from the rest of the Evangelical churches.

1. Evangelicals in general

In the Guatemalan context and in the rest of Latin America the term 'Evangelical' is used to refer to Protestant. Whether they derive from the historic, Pentecostal, Neo-Pentecostal or independent churches, they are seen to be Evangelical and as such are differentiated from Catholics. Both refer to a non Catholic sector of the Christian church: 'the Evangelicals' [In this investigation, the term 'Protestant' will be used interchangeably with 'Evangelical'].

Of course, it is difficult to make an explicit definition because there are different expressions of Protestantism in Latin America. Míguez Bonino in his book Rostros del Protestantismo Latinoamericano (1995a) states that even though Protestants present a diversity of faces, they share core beliefs which characterize them and identify them as Evangelicals.⁶ He shows that all of the Latin American Evangelical churches are heirs of the Protestant Reformation of the XVI century, but he also admits that this inheritance has been re-minted in other lands and in other molds (1995a: 6).

Within this wide span of ideas, Cantón identifies four expressions whose roots come from North American Protestantism: historic Protestantism, fundamentalist Protestantism, Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism (1998: 91). Although all of these are called Evangelicals every branch and denomination emphasizes its own ecclesiastical or denominational identity.

Zapata (1982) divides the Evangelical work in two big blocks: 1) The expansion of the missionary pioneers (1887-1922) which included the first missions, Presbyterians, the Central American Mission, the Friends, the Church of the Nazarene and the Methodists. He describes their mission as evangelistic impulse and development of social work. 2) He calls the second block 'the explosion of the evangelistic work' which can be subdivided into three periods: a) the preliminary explosion (1923-1937) which includes the origin of the Pentecostal churches, the National Evangelical Mission, the Church of God of Prophecy, Independent Evangelical Mission, the Church of God Cleveland and the Assemblies of God; b) the second Evangelical explosion (1940-1956) among which the following are the most known, the Emmanuel Foundation, the Foursquare Church, the Baptist Convention, the Lutheran Church, the Calvario Church, 'Misión Mundo Unido', the Galilee Church of

⁶ Due to the limits of this present thesis the nature, roots, history and features of Guatemalan Protestantism cannot be discussed. The following works provide an ample panorama and details of Protestantism in Guatemala and Latin-America. See the following Míguez Bonino Rostros del Protestantismo Latinoamericano (1995a), Pablo Deiros La Historia del Cristianismo en América Latina (1992), Justo Gonzalez in Historia del Cristianismo volumen (1994) I & II, Wilton Nelson Protestantismo en Centroamérica (1982), David Stoll Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth (1990). Virgilio Zapata on Historia de la Iglesia Evangélica en Guatemala (1982), Virginia Garrard-Burnett Historia del Protestantismo en Guatemala (1986).

God and the Evangelical Association ‘Prince of Peace’; c) the churches after the Evangelical explosion (1957-1980). The following churches are included here, the Elim Churches, the Mennonite Church, the Gate to Heaven Church, the Mount of Transfiguration Churches, the Pentecostal Church of God of America, Mount Basan Church, the Episcopal Church of Guatemala, the Adventist Mission, the Guatemalan Christian Fraternity of Guatemala, the Verbo Christian church, the Evangelical Church of Betania, and others. Zapata says that numerical growth in Guatemala occurs through divisions, additions and multiplications.

Everett Wilson stated that in 1993 that the historic churches represented 32 per cent; Pentecostal churches 50 per cent and the Neo-Pentecostals 18 per cent of the total Evangelical population (1998: 152). Practically 70 per cent of the Evangelicals belong to the Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals. SEPAL distributes this 25.4 percent in the following way among the memberships [see table 1.1]. The majority of these churches belong to the Pentecostal churches.

Table 1.1 Percentages of the population of the country according to the assistance to different Evangelical congregations.

Denominations or churches	Percentage of the total of the Evangelical population
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Assemblies of God	5.27%
Minor Church Groups	4.38%
Church of God of the Full Gospel [Cleveland]	4.29%
Independents	1.65%
'Príncipe de Paz'	1.57%
Central American Church	1.42%
'Iglesia de Dios Pentecostés'	1.20%
Elim church	0.93%
Church of the Nazarene	0.90%
'Pentecostés'	0.81%
Baptist	0.66%
Presbyterian	0.58%
'Betania'	0.53%
'MI-EL'	0.39%
'Iglesia de Dios Nueva Jerusalén'	0.25%
'Iglesia de Dios Galilea'	0.23%
The Friends church'	0.21%
'Iglesia de Dios la Profecía'	0.20%
TOTAL	25.47%

Source: Table elaborated from data of *Proyecto Josué Estado de la Iglesia Evangélica en Guatemala –January 2003-Updated Report*. [Servicio Evangelizador para América Latina, SEPAL].

According to the Cid/Gallup survey carried out in 2008 among groups with religious tendencies in Guatemala, 48.6 per cent are Catholics, 32.6 per cent Evangelicals. 2.9 per cent consider themselves to be Protestants, and others represent 3.5 per cent, those who profess no religion 11.8 per cent and those who do not know or did not respond 0.7 per cent.⁷ The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) affirms that 30 per cent of the Guatemalan population are Evangelicals and that they have the highest average growth rate in Latin America.⁸ The churches with the highest visible growth rate are the Assemblies of God, the Church of God, and the mega-churches (SEPAL 2003: 14).

2. Pentecostals

As in the case of Protestantism it is equally hard to define Pentecostalism. There are so many diverse expressions and forms in churches within Guatemala and abroad. Burgess underlines two key theological and ecclesiastical aspects in which they differ from the NPCs. The theological difference has to do with a doctrinal issue, the baptism in the Spirit. Pentecostalism subscribes to this experience as a work of grace that comes after

⁷ In 'Tendencias Religiosas Cuadro 17 Estudio Opinión Pública Guatemala', CID/GALLUP Guatemala, January 2008.

⁸ In 'ABC de los Evangélicos en A. Latina'. BBC Mundo.com Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/spanish/specials/2007/en_nombre_de_la_fe/newsid_6620000/6620237.stm Accessed 08/01/08

conversion, of which the evidence is glosolalia (talking in tongues). For some Pentecostals this baptism should be accompanied by another act of grace, sanctification. Both emphasize the work of the Spirit through gifts in the lives of individuals and the church. The ecclesiastical differentiation alludes specially to denominational affiliation. The Pentecostal describes these denominations as being part of classic Pentecostalism such as the Assemblies of God, the Church of God and others (1988:1-2).⁹

Walter J. Hollenweger although he does not define a single type of Pentecostalism affirms that ,‘the view that the baptism of the Spirit is to be recognized by the “initial sign” of speaking in tongues, became a constituent element in the formal structure of the Pentecostal movement, especially in North America’ (1972: xvii-xx). At the same time he points out that Pentecostalism is seen as ‘a phenomenon typical of the popular classes: it is an oral religion which is expressed in symbols such as singing, dancing, and emotion’ (Cited in Bonino 1999: 61). Anderson & Tang points out that ‘in its simplest sense the term refers to ecstatic forms of Christianity defined in terms of special gifts given by the Holy Spirit. Later they point out that the majority of the Pentecostals would also be considered to be Evangelicals in theology, in other words, they accept a literal view of the bible as the word of God; believe in individual salvation, living a holy life, and to be active in personal evangelism (2005: 2). Some recent studies have revealed a more proactive Pentecostal social role in Latin America (Martin 1990, Petersen 1996; Cleary 1998, 1999; Dempster 1999 and others).

Dayton in his book Raíces Teológicas del Pentecostalismo (1991) (Theological Roots of Pentecostalism), traces the universal elements of the Pentecostal doctrine which characterize the classical Pentecostal. These are salvation, baptism in the Holy Spirit,

⁹ Walter Hollenweger presents in his careful and profound study the development of Pentecostalism which he sees as a movement which started the revival and transformation of Protestant Christianity at the beginning of the twentieth century (see El Pentecostalismo Buenos Aires: La Aurora, 1976). Anderson & Tang (eds) analyze Pentecostalism in Asian and Pentecostal The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia: Regnum Books Oxford, 2005. Douglas Petersen affirms that there is no consensus about the interpretation of the nature of Pentecostalism in North America. He analyses specially the origins and development of social work in Central America (1996).

healing and the second coming of Jesus Christ. He emphasizes that pneumatology and the baptism of the Spirit are the hermeneutical keys to understanding Pentecostal doctrine and experience. Neo-Pentecostal pastors (NPS), while maintaining their Pentecostal inheritance and their connexion with the Protestant Reformation, assume a distinct identity which differentiates them from classical Pentecostalism. A movement of continuity and discontinuity can be observed here between the Pentecostals and the Neo-Pentecostals which will now be described in detail.

3. Neo-Pentecostalism

From the start it must be noted that it is not possible just to talk of Neo-Pentecostalism but rather of Neo-Pentecostal churches.¹⁰ There are different expressions of the Neo-Pentecostal movement within Latin America and beyond. In spite of this a series of characteristics can be observed which mark this new eruption of Christianity in Guatemala and beyond. These churches differ one from another due to their own contexts, theological positions, social and ecclesiastical backgrounds and other aspects. Anderson describes the different types of Pentecostals and Charismatics and because of this the difficulty of defining them both. He assumes the term 'New Pentecostals' to describe globally the churches and movements that emphasize the work of the gifts of the Spirit, on both the phenomenological theological platforms (2004: 9, 13).

Although some similitude can be observed between these churches, there are differences from classical Pentecostalism (the first wave of revival). The Charismatic movement traces its origins to historic churches in the United States in the University of Van Nuys (Los Angeles) in the 1960s. They point out that those who left their churches acquired their own life, they extended rapidly among the historic denominations and later entered the Catholic world in 1967 (the second wave of revival). (Anderson 2004: 147-152). Among the well known preachers are David Wilkerson, Oral Roberts, Pat Robertson,

¹⁰ See the complete study of Paul Freston on Neo-Pentecostalism in 'Charismatic Evangelical in Latin America: Mission and Politics on the Frontiers of Protestant Growth', in Hunt, Hamilton & Walker (eds) (1997).

and Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart who had relationship with Guatemala in the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches. NEOP, according to the pastors, emerged from 1976 onwards (the third wave of revival), and not before as Samuel Berberían points out (1983: 25-47). These churches are associated much more with the ‘new apostolic movement’ which Barrett and Johnson call Neo-Charismatic (2001: 299).

The Neo-Pentecostals have always identified themselves as ‘Christians’. They prefer this name basically for strategic reasons so that they can win the Catholics.¹¹ Oscar Amat & León Pérez note that the same happens in Peru (1997:13). The pastors interviewed, while recognizing their Pentecostal inheritance, preferred to be called from the outset Neo-Pentecostals. For example, the governing elder (P1ICV) of the IVC church of Guatemala affirmed: ‘we do not identify ourselves with the traditional church, but we are also not Charismatics neither are we Pentecostals, we are not fundamentalists, **we are a Neo-Pentecostal group**’ [author’s emphasis]. The senior pastor of FCG points out that Neo-Pentecostalism represents a new move of the Holy Spirit which takes place as all sorts of manifestations of power are spilled out over God’s people (P2FCG).

Even though there is an initial distancing from Evangelicalism, these churches recognize that their background is the Protestant Reformation¹² of the sixteenth century with regard to the doctrine of salvation. One of the senior pastors of NPCs after highlighting the differences with the historic and Pentecostal churches notes: ‘However, I believe that we haven’t taken very much away from the foundation’ (P2FCG). The majority of the NPCs do not make links with denominational churches, which is a characteristic of the third wave of revival, as they are of a more independent nature.

¹¹ The Neo-Pentecostals do not have any relationship with the Catholic Church as an institution. To the question, what relation do you have with the Catholic Church? One of the Neo-Pentecostal leaders answered: ‘we have zero relationship with the Catholic Church... there is no official direct relationship’ (A8ESH).

¹² In their declaration of identity the Neo-Pentecostal Theological Biblical Seminary (SBTNP) declares: ‘SBTNP adheres to the fundamental presuppositions of the Protestant Reformation...’ (The Prospectus). In practice these churches choose some of the doctrines of the Protestant Reformation and emphasize new aspects of present Neo-Pentecostalism.

What are the common features of Neo-Pentecostalism? Some analysts such as Anderson say that Neo-Pentecostalism shares with Pentecostals the emphasis on the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Here continuity with classic Pentecostalism can be observed. In practice Neo-Pentecostals put less emphasis on the baptism of the Spirit (2004:11, 13). Here there is some discontinuity. Others underline that Neo-Pentecostalism is considered to be a movement but not an institution although some of these churches profile as denominations. Silveira Campos from the Brazilian Neo-Pentecostal point of view notes, 'This is a new form of being Pentecostal, principally because of theological, liturgical and organizational changes, and fits well with the term 'Neo-Pentecostalism' (2000: 9).

For his part Ari Pedro Oro characterizes Brazilian Neo-Pentecostalism in the following terms: 'it possesses charismatic leadership, has very little relationship with the rest of the Christian world, does not expect the faithful to hold confessional links, stimulates emotional expressions, proposes spiritual solutions in the social field, uses mass media to communicate, gives a special place to healing and exorcism rituals and is structured on business lines' (cited in Frigerio 1994:11-12). Most of those churches in Brazil were established among poor people. That is why Freston affirms that the elite of the NPCs in Guatemala represent a different a sociological phenomenon (1998b:9). David Maxwell emphasises that in Ghana religious revival and reaching the middle classes came through the African Assemblies of God. This movement grew up among the poor in the urban areas and not among the middle classes (2006: 81). Although their features and practices are similar, Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals are different and go by another name.

From analyses, observations and conversations of the researcher with pastors and members of their churches the following belief motifs of Guatemalan Neo-Pentecostals can be outlined: 1) emphasis on the anointing with the Holy Spirit and the use of the charismas; (The baptism in the Holy Spirit does not receive the importance that it has within traditional Pentecostals); 2) belief in miracles and wonders among which much emphasis is

put on healing and evangelism; 3) salvation as a gift of God's grace which cannot be lost; 4) the gospel of health and wealth; 5) spiritual warfare and 6) a post-millennial type of eschatological perspective.

The following general characteristics were noted: 1) charismatic leadership and vertical type of governance; 2) social composition especially of the middle and high classes, which in the last few years there has also been growth among the lower middle and working classes; 3) new forms of worship; 4) the use of mass media and 5) an entrepreneurial methodology in church organization and mission; 6) participation of the faithful in politics 7) the promotion of the laity and 8) missionary vision.

Guatemalan Neo-Pentecostalism has theological, sociological, liturgical and organizational emphases, which differ clearly from classical Pentecostalism, and connect it to global Neo-Pentecostalism. These characteristics are not applicable to all NPCs. They vary according to the context and social class where they are to be found. Some of the beliefs and characteristics mentioned can also be observed in Pentecostal churches. Some authors say that the NPCs present a model of the Pentecostal church of the future (Wilson 1998: 146). It is also important to distinguish the Guatemalan NPCs from the 'Charismatics'. In the United States and Europe the term Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic¹³ refer to the similar movement (Berberían 1983:13; Hocken 1994:191-213).¹⁴ In both contexts reference is made to Charismatics within the Evangelical world as well as among Catholics. However, it is not possible to apply this double description in Guatemala. The Guatemalan Neo-Pentecostals reject all links to the Catholic Church and so do not like to be called Charismatics. Virgilio Zapata while describing the beginnings of the Guatemalan Neo-Pentecostal movement says the following:

Whenever some groups made up of people from the Catholic Church practice 'these gifts' and are called 'Charismatics', the Protestants who use the same 'gifts' or 'charismas' (at least in Guatemala), prefer not to be called 'Charismatic' in order to be differentiated

¹³See the differences that Vinson Synan (1992) makes about the Charismatism in the United States.

¹⁴ According to Samuel Berberían, the Pentecostal or Charismatic Movement in the United States arose both in the Protestant as well as the Catholic sectors. The first was born in 1960 and the second in 1967. According to some authors the Charismatic Movement in the United States is not static, and has been through substantial changes. See Peter Hocken's article, 'The Charismatic Movement in the United States'.

from the Catholic groups. These groups are relatively new, and their emphasis is similar to the traditional Pentecostals, and they call themselves 'Neo-Pentecostals' (1982:151-152).

Historically Latin American Protestantism broke all ties with the Catholic Church. In Central America this severing was very strongly delineated from both sides. This is only a separation in terms of beliefs and religious practices, as both Protestants and Catholics live together in every other area of the secular day-to-day life. Smith notes that in Guatemala in the 1970s a good number of Charismatics as groups left the Catholic Church (cited in Silva 1996:74). They went to some Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches.¹⁵ Cantón says that 'given the Pentecostal surge that has occurred in Guatemala, these Charismatic Catholics "pentecostalize" on occasions to the point that they end up abandoning Catholicism and convert to some Pentecostal church, which they find more akin to their thinking' (1998: 103). The Charismatic Movement is getting stronger in the Catholic Church as well in the 2000s. Some Charismatics groups combine beliefs and praxis of NPCs with key Catholic beliefs such as devotion to the Virgin Mary. Other groups are giving more importance to bible study, the person of Jesus Christ and the presence and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The Jesuit Bendaña recognizes the Charismatic movement within the Catholic Church, and criticizes some features that he says do not adjust to Catholicism (2001: 218-221). Gifford in his study of Pentecostalism in Ghana prefers to call them Charismatics because he affirms that they are not a part of the traditional Pentecostal denominations (2004: vii, 23). In the present study they are called Neo-Pentecostals because the pastors affirm this and because the word 'Charismatic' is associated with the Catholics in Guatemala. When there is a discussion outside of Guatemalan NEOP both terms will be used in this thesis.

¹⁵ Denis Smith notes that 'By 1976 a group of important Catholic professionals of the Guatemalan society had expressed their inconformity with the Catholic Church and began exploring for other alternatives'(cited in Silva. c, 1996:74). Although Smith does not specify these 'other alternatives' it is possible to identify them with Pentecostals and some Neo-Pentecostal churches.

H. METHODOLOGY

The investigation bases its analysis on the qualitative method due to the nature of the area of work. At the same time this method was combined with quantitative analysis as support due to the extent of the work area.

1. Instruments for the analysis

Firstly, the investigation is based essentially on the qualitative method. The researcher considers that the qualitative method responds better to the type of investigation carried out. According to Bouma & Atkinson (1995: 206), 'Qualitative research can be described as any social science research that produces results that are not obtained by statistical procedures or other methods of quantification'. They then emphasise, 'Some of the data may be quantified, but the analysis is qualitative. It can refer to research about people's lives, their stories, and behaviour and it can also be used to examine organisation, relationships, and social movements' (1995: 206). According to these authors this method permits one to capture the reason for things: 'The essence of this approach is to view events through the perspective of the people who are being studied. What do they think? How do they view the world?' (1995: 206).

In the investigation it will be important to know what people think or feel about their role and presence in society as believers. The researcher concentrates his attention on their religious vision and how this is carried over to their daily lives. According to Bouma and Atkinson, 'Research done in this way produces descriptive data such as people's own spoken or written words or observable behaviour' (1995: 206). They then go on to point out that 'The methods used by qualitative researchers include participant observation, unstructured interviews, and life histories' (1995: 206). In the same line of thought Neuman emphasises that the qualitative researcher does not convert the concepts about social life into quantitative variables, but sees them as being intrinsically qualitative. From that he affirms that the information collected by this method is empirical. In the documents

real events are analysed according to what people say, through observation of specific behaviours, studies written as documents or the examination of visual images (2000: 145).

Neuman also gives greater attention to the qualitative method because it permits one to enter the field of investigation with greater liberty and flexibility (2000: 146). According to Bouma and Atkinson, 'The research design in this kind of investigation remains flexible, and the details of the approach are often modified as the research proceeds' (1995: 210). They emphasise that 'That is because entering an investigation with a specific hypothesis might impose misconceptions on the setting. In this form of investigation, the setting is defined by the participants, and their views cannot be known until the investigation begins' (1995: 210). This methodological perspective allows one to enter the investigation field with freedom and the expectation of finding ideas or concepts that flow from the social actors to the area of study.

In second place, the researcher sees the need to combine the qualitative method with the quantitative because of the magnitude of the population studied. Some of these churches have thousands in their congregations. Later details will be given of the population of these churches. The combination of methods permits one to observe and understand the phenomena without having to approach the entire population in the study. Colin Robson states that 'there is no rule that says that only one method should be used in an investigation' (1993: 290). He notes that all methods have strengths and weaknesses and scholars must look for the best of both of them. For example, one can use studies based on observation, interviews and analysis of documents linked with questionnaires (1993: 305). This is the case in the present investigation. Along with interviews, visits and observations of these churches two surveys were distributed among the members of these churches. Both tools were useful in understanding the social thinking and participation of the NPL in their churches and beyond.

Haralambos & Holborn notes that it 'is too difficult to see quantitative and qualitative methods as mutually exclusive. Increasingly sociologists are combining both

approaches in singles studies' (1995: 856). At the same time, Bouma & Atkinson affirm that some subjects are better investigated using the quantitative method while others prefer the qualitative method. In some it is necessary to use both methods (1995: 208). They point out that the qualitative method can be appropriate when the researcher is trying to understand the nature of a person's experiences: for example, religious conversion, among other elements. According to these authors 'It can help us understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is known and to gain fresh slants on things about which quite a lot is known' (1995: 208). The weight of this investigation falls on the qualitative method.

2. Churches studied

For the present investigation seven NPCs located in Guatemala City were chosen. The churches elected were: Iglesia Cristiana Verbo (Verbo Christian Church ICV), Fraternidad Cristiana de Guatemala (Christian Fraternity of Guatemala FCG), Iglesia el Shaddai (El Shaddai Church ESH), Iglesia Lluvias de Gracia (Rains of Grace Church LDG), Iglesia la Familia de Dios (the Family of God Church IFD), and Iglesia Visión de Fe (Vision of Faith Church IVF) and Casa de Dios (House of God Church).

The researcher chose these churches for the following reasons: 1) because within the Guatemalan Evangelical world they are considered as most representative of the Neo-Pentecostal movement; 2) because of their social composition, especially among the middle and upper classes; 3) those churches were the first churches called Neo-Pentecostal and because they still have their founding pastors. As will be seen later, there are differences in NEOP which arose in the 1970s in the United States.

In the process of the study, the House of God Church was eliminated from the study. The senior pastor did not accept the interview and after a long wait the questionnaire could not be distributed among the laity. Although some members of the pastoral team showed openness to be interviewed and some of them were interviewed, the questionnaire

was not authorized. Although no reason was given, it was understood that there was some resistance, or fear of exposing the congregation to the analysis of the subject of the research.

During Guatemala's armed conflict suspicions were raised about anyone interested, or committed to socio-political problems. This investigation produced some mixed sentiments. On the one hand, the researcher came into the field work with some feeling of doubt for two reasons, the scepticism of authors about NEOP, and not knowing about their missionary tasks in the area of social activities, and on the other hand, he entered with the expectation of understanding what their sole and social presence was. Every visit and interview or event that he went to had stumbling blocks and surprises.

The opportunities to get close to pastors, lay people and their churches opened up for the researcher a new window to observe how these churches are and what are their ecclesiastical and social activities, as well as their origins, development, advances and deficiencies. He was also able to observe that these churches have vibrant liturgy, visionary proactive leadership, and excellent work organization, confraternity in spite of the fact that they are mega-churches, enthusiasm and strong laity serving in the tasks of the church. Seeing the fervour and commitment of thousand of believers in these congregations, stimulates the imagination to think about the potential which could be capitalized in favour of social development. This is vital because these churches are situated in a context which needs profound changes both at the personal and structural levels of society. The analysis shows how these churches advance and their possibilities and deficiencies. [Chapter two details the profile of each of these churches].

3. Interviews

The interviews with pastors and lay people and other observers constitute the principal material of the investigation, along with the surveys made. Although this approach has its limitations, it allowed the researcher to get important information to enable him to

understand the thinking and actions of the pastors and laity with regard to their presence and social role in Guatemalan society. Every conversation opened new windows for the researcher to see the way that they think, their religious experience, their faith beliefs, among others. During the interviews some of the NPL shared how God had touched their lives, how the change had led them into a new more meaningful existence. They testified to the work of God in their lives as part of the new believers' commitment, as well as the main reason why these churches grow. They affirm that they have been saved so as to announce to others the blessings of God.

The researcher also observed the manner that the pastors and laity relate their faith to their day-to-day lives. They do not live isolated from the world but live in the present occupied with their religious affairs and their personal goals. It seems that they are not concentrating so much on the world-to-come and the 'Church's rapture' typical of Pre-millennialist Dispensationalism. They act as if the world belonged to them as they believe that there is nothing that God will not do on their behalf. With God everything even reaching political power, is possible. This is a key attitude which needs to be observed in this thesis.

a. Senior pastors

The interview with the senior pastors was essential to understand the vision, background and their social thought and programmes of these churches. As founders they placed the basis and traced the lines of action for their churches. In the interview the investigation project was presented and permission was asked to carry out the survey [see appendix table 1.1]. The process of doing the interviews was long and sometimes difficult. The theme of the investigation made some people suspicious. The discussion of social issues during the armed conflict that Guatemala endured for thirty-six year polarized the citizens ideologically, including the Evangelicals. One of the associate pastors was concerned about some of the questions of the interview and asked if the researcher was

linked to Liberation Theology. Other pastors recognized with liberty the weakness of the churches with respect to social themes.

The interviews with the pastors were delayed sometimes due to their tight agendas. In some special cases a wait of three months or more took place before getting an interview. Each interview lasted about one hour and in some cases the researcher had to go back because the interview was cancelled due to an unexpected situation. In spite of their tight schedule of work some of the senior pastors gave the researcher more than one interview. After understanding the objective of the research, the majority of the pastors showed an open attitude towards the researcher.

The IVF senior pastor after the interview invited the researcher to talk to the leadership of his church about one of the questions discussed with him in the conversation, the relationship between the Evangelical growth and the lack of social impact at national level in the country. One of the leaders, who was a candidate in presidential elections in the 1990s showed interest and talked with the researcher after the meeting. Later on this Neo-Pentecostal politician was interviewed. In the visits to the churches the researcher was able to pick up leaflets, some articles of faith and records of Sunday sermons, bulletins and discipleship material and some tracts and books written by the pastors. Several sermons were listened to in the church services as well as on television and radio programmes. The churches also were visited at different periods of time during the field research in 2000 to 2003 and 2005. These visits helped the researcher to understand what the NPCs feel about social issues.

b. Associate pastors

Associate pastors of some of the churches were interviewed who had specific areas of responsibility in the church's ministry, or were responsible for some branch of the church. These pastors were included because the NPCs have extended to other cities to broaden the view of the opinions and social practice of these churches. Although the figure and

authority of the founding pastor is very important, these churches develop very strong team ministries where the relationships among them are very close. Twelve associate pastors were interviewed [see appendix table 1.2]. The majority of the pastors are professionals, university graduates or have theological studies. They were much more open to discuss the questions about the investigation and questions about the social reality of the country which the researcher asked them.

c. Interviews with the lay people

Personal interviews with Neo-Pentecostal lay people (NPL) were made. They were interviewed in different stages and periods during the investigation. These interviews were of an open nature so that they could express their ideas freely. The interviews were carried out during a period of an hour. Forty-seven lay people were surveyed of which fourteen were women and thirty-three men. More men were interviewed because the researcher found that men were more available to be surveyed. The women come to church with their husbands and children. It is not common to ask the wife for an interview. It is normal to approach the husband as the leader in the home. Also, women are reticent to give an interview to unknown people for various reasons. Finally, there was the difficulty of finding time to talk to the membership between services because of their tight schedule. Some of these churches celebrate three to five services every Sunday.

The lay people surveyed were chosen from the membership who attends Sunday services and special activities of these churches. Before doing the interview the researcher made sure that they belonged to the church he was visiting and that they had been in the church for at least a year. He was surprised to find that the majority of those interviewed had been in the church for at least five years and some had some responsibilities. They were not chosen only, because they were leaders but because they were lay people. Although the sample was small in comparison to the population of these churches, the

investigation revealed that the lay people from the NPCs have their own way of expressing their ideas about the role and social presence in Guatemalan society.

Among the interviewees were leaders of family groups, worship leaders, deacons and some people who were responsible for some church projects. Their ages fluctuated between nineteen to fifty years of age. They were not chosen because of their age but because they were lay people. The average age of the interviewees was between thirty and forty. Although these churches attract, and have a good group of young people as can be observed later, they also have a numerous population of young couples between the ages of twenty-eight and forty. A good number of the interviewees were among this age bracket.

The Pew Forum study, carried out in ten countries of America, Africa and Asia, affirmed that the average age of members of Pentecostal churches in Guatemala is thirty-six and among Charismatics thirty-seven (Pew Forum on Religion & Public and Life Surveys, 2006a). The opinion poll survey Cid/Gallup with regard to the age of surveyed Evangelicals in 2008 affirmed that 29.5 percent oscillate between zero to thirty years and 29.0 percent oscillate between thirty and more (Cid/ Gallup 2008).

The educational background of these NPL range between secondary education and university graduates [see the whole picture to the appendix Table 1.3]. According to the Pew Forum, Pentecostals and Charismatics have higher grade of education than the general population (Pew Forum 2006b).

Notes were taken during the interview which were transcribed and coded according to the outline of the interview [See interview form in the appendix]. The names of the pastors, the lay people and observers were coded to maintain their anonymity as can be seen in the tables presented. In spite of some difficulties found along the way the pastors and lay people were open to be interviewed and to share their perspective with the researcher. When they knew what that it was about the lay people expressed themselves freely and were very open and cooperative. Although the sample is small in comparison to the size of the churches the result shows a margin of general differences of opinions given.

The researcher usually identified himself as a researcher and an Evangelical Christian. This double identity provided a favourable climate in the interviews and visits to the churches although it was not always necessary. The author came to the analysis of the phenomena under investigation for academic reasons but he also has a pastoral concern, to understand up to what point the NPCs are interested in getting involved with the challenge of being agents of change in Guatemalan society. The field work was carried out using this double identity and concerns.

d. Interviews outside of Neo-Pentecostal churches

Some interviews were also carried out with some external observers of the NPCs within Guatemala and in other countries to get a wider understanding of the phenomenon of Guatemalan Neo-Pentecostalism.

(1) Internal observers (IO)

With the idea of having an external perspective of the NPCs ten well known leaders in the country were interviewed. Nine of them were Evangelical leaders from historical, Pentecostals and independent churches within the Evangelical context. They work in different institutions within and outside of the Evangelical circle. A Jesuit theologian was included in this list to have the opinion of a Catholic observer [see Appendix table 1.4]. The perspective of this group was important in helping to understand how the Neo-Pentecostals are seen from the outside. Among the observers chosen were theologians, historians, pastors, professionals and some politicians who know the Evangelical context of the country. These interviews were carried out in their place of work and lasted for an hour and in some cases two and a half hours. These interviews were recorded and later transcribed.

(2) External observers (EO)

Three Evangelical leaders abroad who know the Neo-Pentecostal phenomenon thoroughly were also interviewed [see Appendix table 1.5]. The interviews were carried out in international events outside of Guatemala where the researcher met them. They were recorded and later transcribed.

4. Questionnaires

The investigation assumed the qualitative methodology which was used with the laity of these churches. At the same time the researcher considered it useful to carry out a survey of opinions in order to have a tool to contrast the opinions of the interviewees. In the research the quota sampling, to survey the NP was chosen because it allowed the researcher to have a wider perspective of the population selected. According to Haralambos & Holborn, 'Quota sampling usually requires the researcher to ask a number of personal question to determine whether the respondent has the characteristics of a quota group on which information is required' (1995: 831-32). The survey was based on the principle objective of the investigation that of measuring the presence and social role of the NPCs. A general survey went to 560 lay people (GSNPL General Survey of Neo-Pentecostal Lay people). The amount of surveys done was due the fact that these are very big churches with thousands of members.

The questionnaire which was based on the primary objective of the study was in the multiple choice format where the lay people could choose their options [see the questionnaire in the appendix]. The age of those participating oscillated between eighteen and seventy-nine. The majority of those surveyed were between the ages of twenty-two and forty. Half of those surveyed were women and the other half men. The survey was given to lay people involved in diverse activities of the church on the day stipulated by the pastors during their different activities. The questionnaires were passed out after they had been read and authorized by the senior pastor.

In one church the survey went to a sample of the general congregation as no other space was offered. The NPS of those churches are very careful about people who come to analyse religious phenomena, especially if the subject is related to some social issues. In spite of the inconvenience found and the lack of experience of the researcher, the results of the survey, in many ways reflect the same tendencies given in the interviews of the lay people. This analysis requires further study to deepen the research into the role and social presence in society, and the development of social programmes which are beginning to emerge among them.

A second survey was carried out with a group of Neo-Pentecostal entrepreneurs and professionals involved in organizations of the State, private companies or owners of their own companies (SNPEP, Survey of Neo-Pentecostal Entrepreneurs and Professionals). The survey went to ten members of each church in order to get to know their thinking and social participation. This group represented a minimum sampling of the entrepreneurs or professionals who began to emerge from within the NPCs. Among the entrepreneurs the experience was different. They showed some resistance to the surveys and restlessness due to the climate of insecurity that prevails in the country.

Generalized fear exists in the population about giving personal information due to the threat of the common practice of kidnapping. In fact during one of interviews one of the pastors was warned that a member of his church had been kidnapped in a supermarket. The interview was cancelled. In spite of the entrepreneurs' tight work schedule they were open and cooperated with the researcher's work. The survey was made at their place of work. In the interviews carried out the researcher observed the impetus and entrepreneurial spirit of the interviewed NPL with regard to their companies. The pastors' help was very important in the whole process of interviews and making surveys.

5. Secondary sources of information

In the investigation the following sources were used to collect information about the thoughts and social role of these churches: A series of visits were made to the churches and some of their educative and service institutions. There was participation in services, congresses, discipleship meetings, and home cell groups in 2000, 2003 and 2005 when the interviews and surveys were carried out.

Neuman states that this information through observation permits the researcher to enter into contact with the subjects of the investigation, capture their reality and develop from his own perspective their vision of the world (2000: 370-371). The field observation by listening to people and analysis of the materials are important factors to understand what they are as a church and what they plan to do. Listening to, and understanding from the inside about the development of the work of the NPL, helped in the task of capturing their perception about social issues and how they feel they ought to participate in society.

Written documentation was collected about doctrinal statements, evangelism and discipleship manuals, magazines, bulletins, pamphlets on special events, periodicals that threw light on the pastors, their churches and their service projects. Documentation on these churches is scarce as they are in the process of developing and do not have documents and files that register discussion on the social theme which is the concern of this investigation. Some radio and television programmes were listened to, the web sites of these churches were accessed, messages of those pastors were listened to, and about eight books written by four of the pastors were read in order to understand the orientation of their messages to the public outside the church.

The researcher supported his research in a broader context of literature to understand the Neo-Pentecostalism. Neo-Pentecostalism is not only a parochial matter, but also a global phenomenon. In order to deepen the understanding of the NPCs, the investigation included the bibliographic analysis of the Neo-Pentecostal phenomena inside and outside of Latin America. The researcher, during his work trips in different years, also

visited some Mega-Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Chile, South Africa, Panama and Korea, and Canada. This background has been useful in understanding and having a wider framework regarding what is occurring in the bosom of the NPCs in Guatemala in relation to global Charismatism.

The visits to these churches provided the researcher with a global perspective about Neo-Pentecostalism, while at the same time they helped him to distinguish the distinctive characteristics of these Guatemalan churches. He was interested in observing the chorus of beliefs which are to be found in these churches in spite of contextual, cultural, political, racial or geographic differences. Among these can be found the centrality of the work of the Holy Spirit to whom they attribute the revival in today's world. Round these core beliefs can be found aspects related to leadership, mission, and the way to administer the church, among others. In other words, this phenomenon surges in the context of disillusion with modernity and the search for alternative answers in the context of post-modernity. Some examples of this will be given later.

I. GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

The first chapter has to do with the introduction of the subject under study, planting the hypothesis, and the matters relating to methodology.

Chapter two presents a profile of the NPCs based on interviews from the pastors and members. This fact is essential as it permits opinions to be given by the pastors and lay people, not only as informants, but also as agents of their history and how their churches are inserted into Guatemalan society. Karla Poewe points out the need to make adjustments with respect to the approach of the researcher to the subjects studied in order to understand them better where they are (1994:169).

Chapter three analyses specifically what the NPL think about their role and social presence in society. Social programmes are also analyzed as they are an integral part of their evangelistic mission.

Chapter four presents the Neo-Pentecostal pastors' thoughts about their understanding of the social role and presence of their membership. In the Neo-Pentecostal context the word of the pastor plays a key role in the formation of the faithful. He is not only the pastor but he also brings the voice of God which many often accept to the letter.

Chapter five discusses the social role and presence of the LNP in the context of society in general. It shows how they reflect and involve themselves in daily life in social concerns in the different spheres of life. The researcher found new forms of thinking and participating in some social issues that threw new light on the nature of the laity in these churches.

Finally, the conclusions discuss the objectives accomplished and discoveries most relevant from the study and plant some considerations for future investigations. An analysis of the profile of the NPCs within the general Protestant context and in the light of the socio-political context of Guatemala since 1950 will now be carried out.

CHAPTER II

THE NEO-PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN GUATEMALA

This Chapter aims to set the scene describing the country, some of its contemporary historical background including the period of the civil war and the restoration of democracy. A short resume of the Evangelical missionary advances will be given as well as how the Neo-Pentecostal churches emerged. Finally, there will be a description of Neo-Pentecostalism and a description of the churches under review.

A. EVANGELICALS AND THE GUATEMALAN CONTEXT

In order to place the NPCs within the Guatemalan social, religious and political context, the most significant features of Protestantism starting from the 1950s will be outlined. This decade not only marked the beginning of an incipient democratic system but also the growth and expansion of Evangelicals in the country. Special attention will be given to those aspects which are related to the presence and social role of the NPCs.

1. A global perspective of the Guatemalan context

Guatemala City was headquarters of the Captaincy General of the Central American region during Colonial times. The republic borders in the North with Mexico and Belize and in the South with El Salvador and Honduras. The territory measures 1,089 square kilometres. According to estimations of the National Institute of Statistics the estimated population in June 2006 was 13,018,759, based on data of the national population census carried out in 2002.¹⁶ According to this census the population is composed of 5,740.357 [51.1%] women and 5,496.839 men [48.9%] (INE 2002).

¹⁶‘Tres millones de habitantes en Guatemala preocupan a expertos’ sent by CERIGUA 14.06.06 Available at <http://www.cerigua.org/portal/index.php?name=News&file=article&sid=5320&theme=Printer> Accessed 01.02.08.

Guatemala is a multiethnic multilingual country whose official language is Spanish. Along with Bolivia and Peru it has a large indigenous population. Forty three per cent of Guatemalans identify themselves with one or other of the twenty-three ethnic groups who speak a similar number of different local languages (United Nations 2002: 283). According to indigenous sources 50 to 60 per cent of the population has an indigenous background. Flavio Rojas in his book Indios de Guatemala (Guatemalan Indians) underscores the fact that this large indigenous presence makes Guatemala an ‘indigenous’ land (1995: 7).

Guatemala is also known to be a Christian country. Sixty-five per cent of the total population are Catholics while 30 per cent are Evangelicals. At the same time the majority take part in practices of other religions such as that of the Mayans (‘Religious Composition’ World Bank 2004a). [More details of indigenous groups will be analysed in Chapter V]. These figures reflect in some way the global Christianity growth tendency in the world. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica 2006, the largest religious groups in the World are: Christian 2.173 bn (33.2%), Muslim 1.335 bn (20.4%) and Hindu in only 116 countries at 0.871bn (13.3%).¹⁷ The figures for religion in Guatemala by Johnstone & Mandryk, show that in 2000 there were 97.52 percent of Christian (Catholics and Protestants). Among the Protestants, Evangelicals made up 26.0% percent; Charismatics 20.3 percent; and Pentecostals 17:9 percent (2001).

On the economic front, the Gross Internal Product in 2006 was 35, 339 millions of dollars. The most common products are coffee, sugar, bananas, fruit, vegetables, meat, petroleum and cardamom (‘Guatemala en cifras’ World Bank 2004b). Tourism and family remittances which come mainly from the United States contribute to the entrance of currency to the country. The public debt in 2005 reached the sum of 4,500 millions of dollars (Ministerio de Economía 2006). The minimal salary in Quetzals is equivalent to \$162 per month.

¹⁷ Cited by John H. Williams, ‘Demography of religions: A review’ 2007 May in Agnosticism and Atheism’s rapid growth Available at <http://www.adam.com.au/bstett/ReligStatistics114.htm> Accessed 01.12.08

The visible unemployment rate in 2006 was 16.30 per cent while the open unemployment figure reached 3.10. In 2006 the percentage of poverty was 57 per cent and extreme poverty 22 per cent of the total population. The volume of family remittances from the United States reached the sum of 3,610 millions of dollars (Ministerio de Economía 2006). The data for the Active Economic Population in 2005 revealed the presence of 3,239 million men and 1,433 million women. In urban areas 1,958 millions are economically active while in the rural areas the rate is 2,499 millions. Some of the data mentioned reveals a series of contrasts and contradictions which have been present since colonial times. This places Guatemala as one of the countries with more social inequality in Latin America (World Bank 'Parte 1: magnitud y causas de la pobreza' 2003: 13) and hope for a better future must be on their agenda.

2. Evangelicals in Guatemalan society

Protestantism arrived officially to Guatemala with the Liberal Revolution of 1882. John Clark Hill, a Presbyterian missionary, arrived by express invitation of president Justo Rufinos Barrios. The Liberals in Latin America considered Protestantism as a means to counter balance the Catholic Church's influence and power, and as a vehicle for progress because of their ideals and values with regard to economic development.¹⁸ The presence of Protestantism was important in the breaking up of religious hegemony of the Catholic Church. The 'liberal ideology had been converted into a symbol of confidence in the value of foreign investment and in the emulation of foreign models, in strident anti-clericalism and in the negation of the institutions and Hispanic customs which the liberals considered to be contrary to modern progress' (Garrard-Burnett 1990: 14). According to some authors the Protestant missionaries arrived with the idea of 'evangelizing in order to civilize' influences by their characteristic worldview (Samandú 1990: 77-79).

¹⁸ Pablo Burgess gives the details of the Liberal Reform in his book Justo Rufino Barrios: Una Biografía (1871). Publicación Especial No.17 de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala (1971). The historian Casimiro Rubio focuses on similar data to that of Pablo Burgess. He even cites some data that Burgess reveals about those times (Rubio 1935).

Protestant analysts affirm that although they brought with them ideological and cultural baggage in no period were they a launching-pad for North American imperialism (Emilio Núñez 1978: 35; David Suazo 1988: 7-8). At the beginning of the twentieth century several historical denominations arrived and took root in Guatemalan soil and modified the religious panorama such as the Presbyterian Church, the Central American Mission, the Friends, the Church of the Nazarene, the Methodist Church, and the Quakers. Later other denominations arrived in Guatemala such as Pentecostal churches including the Church of God, the Quadrangular church, Calvario church, and other churches linked to Faith Missions, the Baptists as well as independent churches. Later the Pentecostal national churches and the Neo-Pentecostal churches would arrive. All these compose today the Evangelical community in Guatemala as well as rest of Latin America.

Protestantism in Guatemala established their pioneer stage between 1872 and 1925. In the fifth population census of 1950 there were 78,208 Evangelicals. This number represents 2.8 per cent of the population (Suazo 1999: 92). In 1960 Protestantism represented 4 per cent of the population, in the 1970s they represented 8 per cent and after the earthquake of 1976 the rate grew from 14 per cent to 20 per cent (Lujan 1998: 381-82). The protestant historian Virgilio Zapata states that Protestant explosion happened in three periods, the first between 1923 and 1937, the second period was between 1940 and 1956, and the third between 1957 and 1980 during which the first Neo-Pentecostal churches emerged (1982: 115-159). The great evangelistic campaigns of the 1950s in Guatemala with T.L. Osborn in 1953, the Billy Graham Crusade in 1958 and Evangelism in Depth in 1962, resulted in great numerical growth. Zapata registers that the Evangelism in Depth campaign which lasted a year, resulted in 20,000 new proselytes in all of the country (1982:174-175).

Other evangelists such as Luis Palau (Argentinean) and Yiyi Ávila (Puerto Rican) contributed to Evangelical expansion through evangelistic campaigns up till the mid 1980s. However, the biggest growth happened after the 1960s. All of the churches and especially

the Pentecostals grew amazingly in Guatemala and beyond. For example, the Assemblies of God in Central America in 1951 grew from a total of 7,284 members and churchgoers to 729,620 in 1990 (Petersen 1996: 62-63).

a. Evangelicals in the Revolutionary Era (1944-1954)

The revolution of 1944 marked the transition between governments of a more dictatorial and authoritarian nature towards an incipient democracy. After a temporary government under the Revolutionary Junta, Dr Juan José Arévalo assumed the presidency in 1945. His government is considered in Guatemalan history, to be one of the governments that brought most benefits to the Guatemalan people. He introduced a series of programmes which favoured the population. For example, he established the Work Code and Social Security, allowed for the reorganization of the trade unions and other improvements. His programme was of an urban, social, and cultural-educative character (Lujan 1998: 258-259).

Arévalo passed the government onto Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán who governed from 1951 to 1954. Arbenz started an ambitious government programme with the construction of key national projects especially the Agrarian Reform approved by the Decree no. 900 (Lujan 1998: 207-209). Arbenz sought to break with foreign dependence and existing monopolies. This agrarian reform expropriated large quantity of plantations which were delivered to the peasants and indigenous communities. Arbenz's government fell from power accused of having a communist orientation and introducing socialism to Guatemala. He was overthrown by Colonel Castillo Armas who was later assassinated in 1958. The counter revolution was one of the factors leading up to the beginning of Guatemala's fratricidal war which started in 1960 and lasted for thirty six years.

(1) How did the Catholic Church react within the political context?

During Arbenz's government (1951-1954) the Catholic Church acquired a front line protagonist position because of the fight against the communist threat which was attributed

to the government of Arbenz. The Catholic bishops were profoundly anti-communist. The Guatemalan Archbishop Mario Rossell and Arellano considered the fight against communism as a crusade which he maintained until Arbenz was overthrown. The publication of the pastoral letter, 'On the advances of communism in Guatemala,' and their support of groups, which rose up to protect from communism, were key elements in this campaign (Bendaña 2001:9-10). Bruce Calder points out that this crusade was carried out with the support and leadership of the political elite (1970: 156, 179-180).

Two years later the Catholic Church was compensated for their fight against the communist threat. The Archbishop's office notes that "...the constitution of 1956 recognized the Church as a legal entity with right to own property. Permission was given for the teaching of religion to be incorporated into the educational system and the Catholic University was created. The door was opened for the admittance of missionaries and religious congregations..."(Informe Arzobispado 1998:13). At that time, the Catholic Church recovered a good part of their power and political and religious space.

(2) What was happening to the Evangelicals during these governments?

Two attitudes can be found even though it is not possible to be totally clear. There appears to have been a certain amount of ambiguity with regard to the revolutionary process. Grenfell points out that the Evangelical churches suffered profound internal divisions with respect to how to answer Arbenz, and after 1951 many North American missionaries hardened their attitude towards the president who they were convinced was a communist at heart (1995: 18). In general terms the Evangelicals maintained a certain amount of silence in the public arena with regard to government business.

It is important to point out though that all the Evangelical denominations through their membership, actively participated in the key programmes of Arévalo and Arbenz. Alonso, a Jesuit philosopher, affirms that the Protestant churches collaborated with the revolutionary authorities in two key areas, education and the democratizing process. He

underlines that the Arevaló's literacy campaign was led by a Protestant leader (1998:154). According to Garrard-Burnett 'The literacy Campaign thus cut across all linguistic and denominational lines. More importantly, it represented the first joint effort ever undertaken by the Guatemalan government and the Protestant missions to improve the lot of the national population, despite decades of political collusion' (1989b: 136). The promotion of education, participation in some government dependencies and the leadership of some key people supporting the agrarian reform, were the contributions that the Evangelicals made during these revolutionary governments (Garrard-Burnett 1998: 64-78). This period of the history of Protestantism needs to be rescued as more importance is given to the analysis of the governments of Ríos Montt and Serrano Elías than to the presence of the laity.

b. Evangelicals in the armed conflict (1960-1985)

The fact that the Revolution was aborted in 1954 became the hotbed of the armed conflict in Guatemala. After the assassination of Colonel Castillo Armas in 1957, Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes was elected in 1958. After Ydígoras a series of military juntas governed the country till 1986 with the election of Vinicio Cerezo as the second civilian president during this epoch. A group of people in the army who did not agree with the liberationists who had come to power in 1954, and did not support the use of mercenaries training to invade Cuba, rebelled against the army and started the guerrilla movement in 1960.

Lieutenants Marco Antonio Yon Sosa and Luis Turcios were at the head of the first guerrilla fronts in 1964 and 1965 during the government of Ydígoras Fuentes (Lujan 1998: 305). Two decades later several guerrilla fronts were organized which joined other groups and became known as the 'Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca' (URNG the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit). Their objective was to reach political power to change social political and economic structures and establish a socialist style of government. The Guatemalan civil war produced approximately 200,000 deaths, 40,000 orphans and from half to one million and a half displaced people (Informe Arzobispado

1998 & 1999). The indigenous people suffered the worst consequences. This armed conflict finished on the 26th December in 1996.

There were also similar guerrilla uprisings in El Salvador and Nicaragua in different periods. This ideological-political conflict produced divisions and polarizations in all of society. In the context of the Cold War the socialist state of Cuba was established in 1959 reinforcing the anti-communist sentiments of that time. Evangelicals and Catholics were involved in this phenomenon.

(1) The reaction of the Catholic Church

Alonzo and Bendaña affirm that during the governments of Arévalo and Arbenz the Catholic Church maintained a steely anti-communist stance in defence of 'Christian values' (1998: 155-6,162; 1996: 122, 126, 182). Cantón notes that the reactionary leadership of Cardinal Mario Casariego influenced their conservative posture (1998: 79). However at the institutional level, the Catholic hierarchy turned around with regard to their ideological and anti-communist position after the Vatican II.

The Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM) in 1968 delineated the new Catholic posture with regard to injustice and poverty. Dussel affirms that CELAM assigned priests the task of 'promoting holistic human development' (1981:193). In some of the sectors of the church the option for the poor became a sort of North Pole in their theological debate and action. Liberation Theology opted for the poor and social justice.¹⁹ Gustavo Gutiérrez, the so called father of Liberation Theology, underlines that what motivated the Catholic Christians to participate in the liberation of their oppressed people

¹⁹ Dussel named this theology 'Latin American Theology' and traces its birth in the context of European theology where the Latin American Catholic theologians were trained, the influence of Medellín's conference of CELAM and the political relationship (1981: 244-7). This theology was called after Liberation Theology. Gustavo Gutiérrez in his book Teología de la Liberación perspectivas (1977) traces the lines of thought which were followed by Catholic laypeople and theologians in Latin America. Jon Sobrino in his book Cristología desde América Latina (1977) influenced the thinking and praxis of priests and laypeople in Central America. From the Protestant perspective, ISAL (Iglesia y Sociedad en América Latina) linked to the ecumenical world promoted Revolution Theology and later the Theology of Liberation from their standpoint of option for the poor. Emilio Núñez in his book Teología de la Liberación (1986) and Samuel Escobar in his work La Fe Evangélica y las Teologías de la Liberación (1987) outline and analyses the origins and development of the Liberation Theology among Catholic and Evangelical theologians from the Evangelical perspective.

and their exploited classes had to do with being convinced of the radical incompatibility of the demands of the Gospel with an unjust and alienated society (1977: 189).

Liberation Theology was the front line of the left-wing of Catholic Church at that time and would embody this awakening commitment of the church from which groups were formed which assumed a political posture either openly or clandestinely against the status quo and the military governments of those times. In Guatemala some priests, catechists, monks, nuns and national and foreign missionaries, raised their voices against the injustices of the military governments in power. For example, some priests formed the 'Confederation of Diocesan Priests of Guatemala (CODESGUA), and beginning in 1969 they issued frequent pronouncements on regional and national conditions and events' (Dussel 1981: 205).²⁰

From the perspective of the laity some catechists and 'delegates of the word' fought alongside the priests in the rural areas in favour of the communities in the crossfire between the army and the guerrillas. Their social commitment in favour of the poor and social justice cost many of them their lives. Some religious orders like the Mariknoll were expelled from the country, many lay people were murdered and their communities were burned by the army. The murder of Monsignor Gerardi in Guatemala after signing the Peace Treaty in 1996 represents a sample of the bloody encounters between the guerrilla and the armies of those times.

Other sectors of Catholic's hierarchy and leaders showed a more conservative attitude in this conflict. The Jesuit historian Bendaña affirms that only a minority were committed to the revolutionary ideals, as there exist several tendencies within the Catholic conglomerate such as: popular Catholicism 60 per cent; traditional Catholicism 25 per cent; reformed Catholicism 10 per cent and progressive Catholicism representing 5 per

²⁰ Bendaña affirms that among the objectives was the promotion of social justice, but in the end they were more concerned with claiming their identity, voice and the rights of the Guatemalan clergy before the Catholic hierarchy. The Confederation finished up several years later (2001: 193-4).

cent (2001: 97-99). It is therefore true to say that it is not possible to speak about a Catholic church with a universal ideological posture.

(2) The Evangelical church

Alonso affirms that Protestantism assumed a double posture. One part harmonized with the reformist projects of the October revolution and continued to be in favour of democracy and social justice. The other part which was new on the scene and represented the majority, had become more conservative in terms of making new members, identification with the right-wing ideology and as a vehicle to guard 'Christian values' identifying themselves with the North American ideologies (1998: 155-157, 162). Most Evangelicals took a conservative attitude during the armed conflict. Some analysts characterize conservatism in the following manner. The Argentinean theologian Miguez Bonino affirms that the presence of theological fundamentalism, rejection of liberal culture, a radical dualism in the following areas: church/world, body/soul, private conduct/public conduct, and faith/politics, was a negative influence which diminished the importance of all human action to transform society (1995b: 29-38).

The Salvadorian Emilio Núñez affirms that many of the North American missionaries who came to Latin America between 1900 and 1940 were pre-millennialists in their eschatological perspectives, pietists in their Christian perspectives and separatists with regard to church bodies and towards society in general (1996: 263). The historian Jurgen Prien in his analyses of historic churches in Brazil and in other countries points out two interesting data, the gradual loss of social practice of these Protestant churches after the Second World War, and the accommodation of these churches to middle class conservative characteristics (1985: 885-6).

Alonso shows that while the Catholic Church since Vatican II looks for connexions and dialogue with society and its problems, Protestantism did the opposite. They closed in on themselves and progressively took less account of social interests from the outset

(Alonso 1998:194,186). Finally, Stoll affirms that from the 1970s the political tendencies within Latin American Protestantism underwent changes. Sectors that had been apolitical aligned themselves to the North American religious right-wing, the liberals became less liberal, the revolutionaries lost the greater part of their support, and a new current of Evangelicals who were theologically but not politically conservative came onto the stage (1990: 3).

Later studies show that Evangelical theological conservatism accompanied by very little political participation did not necessarily signify a rejection of the 'world' and the present life (Núñez 1978, Stoll 1990, Martin 1990, Mariz 1994, among others). Garrard-Burnett notes that this fundamentalism had a discourse and posture different from liberal Protestantism, but they did not necessarily stop being interested in the good of the people (1998: 32). Latin American Evangelicals followed the logic of North American evangelicalism for religious reasons (Stoll 1982: 7). During the civil war the majority of Evangelicals kept themselves distant from politics, showing an anti-communist posture in favour of defending the 'Christian faith', and assumed a culture of silence for fear of being kidnapped or murdered. In spite of this conservative position some churches continued to project themselves in the community through programmes of social aid.

A small group of Evangelicals however did have a political posture different to anti-communist conservatism. According to Alonso, Presbyterian, Methodist, Quaker churches and others, made an effort to build bridges for dialogue with Guatemalan society and its problems through health, education and recreational projects. Some got involved in the frontlines of the armed conflict. Some indigenous Evangelical leaders joined the guerrillas in the 1960s (Alonso 1998: 197-199). Later on some churches were involved in acts of insurgency and counter-insurgency taking with them thousands of believers (Molina 1983: 11). During the armed conflict many lay people and indigenous pastors were murdered. Many people from the rural areas found refuge in Evangelical churches enabling them to survive an attack from the army or the guerrilla. In spite of these

difficulties some churches and Evangelical entities, as will be seen later, showed interest and participated in different spaces in favour of the Guatemalan population and problems.

It was during this period that General Ríos Montt became the first Evangelical president in Guatemalan history. From his political background and Neo-Pentecostal beliefs he assumed the government with an ideological conservative posture. The General was one of the leading elders of Verbo church (ICV) when he was called to preside over the Military Junta government in stead of General García. His messianic sense, his authoritarianism and leadership in the offensive against the guerrilla, have been discussed and criticized by different authors from distinct angles. The following acts summarise the political activities of Ríos Montt: 1) a moralizing campaign against theft, in favour of the truth, and against the abuse of the governmental bureaucrats; 2) the creation of the Patrols for civil defence; 3) the establishment of the areas of development; 4) the ‘guns’ and ‘beans’, and ‘work’, ‘roof and tortillas’ programmes; 5) the instalment of the ‘tribunales de fuero especial’(army courts) (Lujan 1998: 350-51).

The majority of these programmes and strategies driven by Ríos Montt’s government and the army were used to counterattack and squash the guerrillas, and to inaugurate, according to the General, a new nation based on morality and order. Garrard-Burnett states that the idea of the new Guatemala did not only mean ‘change or improvement to the institutions, but also to transform and redeem the hearts of men’ (1998: 110). Some analysts affirm that many new believers entered the Evangelical church during Ríos Montt’s government. They became Evangelicals to save their lives from the oppression of the epoch (Cantón 1998:101). Of course, Protestant authors affirm that the Evangelical explosion occurred much earlier. The Centenary celebration in 1982 was the culmination of a process which started during the 1960s (Suazo 1999: 93-96). Garrard-Burnett ‘demonstrates that evangelical growth, rather than being primarily a result of the military exploitation of fundamentalist religion in the 1980s, had assumed substantial

proportions earlier, following the overthrow of the Arbenz government' (Cited by Wilson, 1998: 150)

c. Evangelicals in Guatemala's Democracy (1986-2006)

From the government of Vinicio Cerezo (1986-1989) the country began to tread a pathway towards democracy supported by the different national bodies within the context of the armed conflict. The peace process began in a decade which produced economic losses to Guatemala's economy. During this period the Evangelical churches continued to expand in cities and in the rural areas. In 2003 the Evangelical population reached about 25 per cent of the population and in 2008 there are some 22,000 churches in all the country.

(1) The work among indigenous people

From Colonial times indigenous peoples were badly treated, exploited and considered as second class citizens. Their fight for survival and betterment has been a constant battle during Guatemala's history.²¹ The sociologist Poitevin affirms that the Catholic Church until a few years ago did not give much attention to the rural indigenous people. (1989: 125). Within this context, Garrard-Burnett points out that the missionaries from the historic churches anticipating Weber's equation on Protestantism, individualism and capitalism, argued that the assimilation of the indigenous groups into society would better their lives as individuals and strengthen the country as a whole (1990: 29-30). So, during the first half of the twentieth century historic church missionaries, worked for the conversion to the Evangelical faith.

Bible translation was one of the strategies used to take the gospel and progress to these communities. The Central American Mission in Guatemala translated four of the six bibles translated into Mayan languages. 'This task brought the good news of the gospel of

²¹ Garrard-Burnett notes that the liberals from the time of Justo Rufino Barrios sought by all means to assimilate indigenous people into society widely. The liberals considered their existence as an anachronism in a developing state, they sought to free their lands for coffee plantations and mould the indigenous population into a working class whose man power would be available for agricultures enterprises (1990: 29-30).

salvation to the indigenous towns and they formed strong and mature churches which allowed them to manage their own affairs in their own languages and according to their culture' (Sywulka 1999: 153). The anthropologist Tito Paredes affirms that bible translation is a key factor in conserving the autochthonous languages of Peru in spite of the fact that some believe that it is a waste of time and money in learning a language and translating as these languages could soon disappear (2000: 115). The anthropologist Elmer S. Miller attributes the revitalization of the Toba culture in the Argentinean Chaco to the appropriation of the biblical message in their own language (cited by Mitchell 1994: 116). The translation of the bible into some indigenous languages encouraged them to learn how to read and the corresponding literacy increased their self-worth.

Only after Vatican II did the Catholic hierarchy, priests and catechists concern themselves with the indigenous people and their communities. Catholic action turned its attention in favour of the indigenous people in the rural areas. The catechists were concerned about the conversion of indigenous families, their formation and integration into the community of new believers, and their religious practice. The indigenous family groups constituted the local catholic action (Murga Armas 2006: 7, 39).

Bendaña notes that during the years of the second Vatican Council there were a lot of human resources and projects in favour of the indigenous communities. According to his perspective the training processes were key factors for helping to create awareness of poverty in the indigenous communities especially those that were of a Mayan origin. He points out that the 'priority interest of many missionaries was to detect, train and promote community leaders, within their own communities' (2001: 58-9).

Of course, authors and indigenous leaders affirm that the Catholic and Protestant evangelization was an imposition which brought them many ills. Solares, in his book Estado y Nación las demandas de los grupos étnicos en Guatemala, presents Mayan professionals and indigenous Evangelical leaders, expressing their complaint for the bad treatment, devaluation, and oppression which they have suffered for centuries. They also

express their demands for respect, to be recognized and included in the way that corresponds in the social, economic, political, cultural and religious life of the country (Solares 1993).²² The Evangelical pastor Vitalino Similox of the kaqchikel ethnic group underscores that only after many years the missionaries have realized that they were ‘working with the indigenous people instead of for them’ (Solares 1993:120-21). From the Mayan perspective, Blanca Estela Alvarado de Saloj points out the virtues of Mayan religion and that there are very great differences with Christianity (in Solares 1993: 142). Both cases focus on the negative criticism of the presence and inroads of Christianity.

The analysis of sociologist Luis E. Samandú shows two sides of the issue.²³ He observes ‘apart from seeking the objective of evangelizing the indigenous people, the strategies in themselves have offered benefits to the indigenous believers, some more than others, such as the case of the training of the indigenous people and bible translation’. Later he adds, ‘but at the same time these benefits were accompanied by negative effects for the communities, such as local fragmentation [...] absorption into western culture of the leaders and the visceral negation of indigenous worldview and culture’ (1990:106). Other analysts such as Garrard-Burnett (1989a) and Montes de Oca (1979) express some of the reasons why Evangelical indigenous peoples reject certain traditions and beliefs as well as popular Catholicism.

Bible translation and the formation of churches among the indigenous people are seen as a contribution to their communities (Tomás Gutiérrez 1997: 85-104). In spite of paternalism of the westernized Protestants and the rejection of certain Mayan traditions,

²² Israel Ortiz, in his article ‘Dignidad e Identidad Indígena: una crítica evangélica sobre los 500 años’, analyzes the indigenous people’s critical situation since the conquest of America, pp.157-185 in Boletín Teológico Revista de la Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana Año 24, No. 47/48 December 1992.

²³ Luis E. Samandú shows that Evangelical churches in the first half of the twentieth century used the following strategies aimed at weakening the resistance of the indigenous world: 1) The translation of the New Testament into autochthonous languages; 2) the training of indigenous leaders as evangelizing agents to the people of their own ethnic groups; and 3) a frontal attack on the indigenous customs and traditions. Samandú says that the third strategy included the following components to introduce the Christian faith. Eradicate all practices which involved another concept about the nature of God different to the Christian view and introduce other forms of Protestant worship. In second place, substitute practices, situations, persons, places, and symbols of the day to day life of the indigenous people and replace them with beliefs and Evangelical and especially Pentecostal practices. And, in third place, they were tolerant with some practices which did not signify a direct danger to the Evangelical perspective and worldview (1990: 82-105).

the indigenous people were received and accepted into their Evangelical communities. They were recognized as brothers in Christ. The researcher has observed during the last ten years how indigenous families have been accepted in the Evangelical churches, while at the same time expressing a persistent paternalistic attitude towards them. The inclusion of the indigenous people in the community of faith has been a constant source of giving them self value.

The studies of Benjamin Paul (1987), Andrés Fajardo (1987), Sheldon Annis (1987), Goldin & Metz (1991) and Anne Hallum (1993) carried out in different indigenous communities in Guatemala show the contribution of the Protestantism among those communities. They affirm that their belonging to faith communities and the adoption of certain Protestant ethic values were important elements in their promotion as persons and in their search for economic development. Suazo underlines that 'it was Protestantism which up to a certain point rescued the indigenous peasants from being totally marginalized' (1988: 9). [In Chapters four and five the attitude of the NPCs towards the indigenous communities will be analyzed].

(2) Concern and social reflection

The earthquake of 1976 awakened the Evangelical interest for the social concern. Suddenly they found themselves involved in service projects to help the members of their families and neighbours who had been affected and needed to rebuild including in some cases their own church buildings. Approximately 20,000 people died, and 100,000 families were left homeless and several towns were totally destroyed in the East of Guatemala. Many local churches with the support of Foreign Service agencies worked shoulder to shoulder to rebuild church buildings, houses and villages. The earthquake 'shook the church out of its lethargy as far as working for benefit of others [...] a new vision for service came into the church' (Suazo 1999:103). The earthquake functioned as a catalyst in this respect. It awoke social concern in several churches that launched for the first time programmes of social aid

for their members and the affected communities. Róger Araica affirms that a similar phenomenon occurred in Nicaraguan Evangelical churches (1999: 205).

SEPAL (Servicio Evangelizador para América Latina), gives examples of the Evangelical growth and social concern with the following data. At the end of 1983 the Evangelical population represented a million and half, there were 7,500 churches, they had three hundred radio programmes, five radio broadcasting stations, a hundred and two schools and education institutions, forty-seven bible institutes or bible schools, five theological seminaries and fifty service entities (SEPAL 1983: 10, 11, 125-136).

A small group of Guatemalan Evangelicals related mostly to the historical Churches and para-church organization, started to reflect about social responsibility and the political participation of Evangelicals. The NPCs were in emerging and consolidating. In 1984 the National Commission for Social Responsibility was set up.²⁴ This commission was born within the context of general suspicion and rejection of everything that was not evangelism. Also, the analysis about the social task emerged in the theological context of pre-millennialism which characterized the majority of Evangelicals, and the generalized fear generated by the violence of the armed conflict. The reflections were more related to social responsibility and political participation of Evangelicals. The discussions and social projects were launched at micro-ethical levels. It could be said that the earthquake, the centenary celebration of the Evangelical Church and the arrival of Ríos Montt to the presidency of the country in 1982, awakened in the Evangelicals the need to get involved in some social programmes as well as in the political arena.

²⁴ The commission was integrated by leaders of some para-ecclesiastical entities and some pastors (Minutes of the Structure for the National Commission for Social Responsibility Guatemala, 8th of February 1984) The theme of social action of the church had been treated earlier by Miguel Suazo in the Central American Congress organized by the Central American Mission In 'Creciendo en Cristo' CONCA, Guatemala 3-9 December 1972. The general purpose of the Commission was to 'stimulate the leadership of the Guatemalan Evangelical church to reflect about social responsibility as individuals and as a group, providing opportunities for dialogue and discussion' (Comisión Nacional sobre Responsabilidad social, 1984). This commission organized several consultations in 1985, 1986 and 1988. On the other hand the first Consultation of the Guatemalan church took place from 18-20 of October, in San Rafael Hortencias, Mixco – Guatemala' coordinated by the Chapter of the Latin American Theological Fraternity. After the peace treaty was signed with the Guerrilla and the army in 1996, some entities such as the Permanent Evangelical Forum, World Vision of Guatemala, the Mennonite and Presbyterian, CIEDEG and other Christian institutions, pushed for some consultations and projects in favour of the culture of peace in the country²⁴. Unfortunately the commission on social responsibility disintegrated and as a result there were no more consultations.

(3) Political participation

The presence of General Ríos Montt as President in 1982 opened the door for Evangelicals to become involved in party politics. From this moment, some Neo-Pentecostal and Evangelicals emerged dedicated to the task of reaching political power. They left behind them the marginalization or self-marginalization from the political platform. In the emergence of incipient democracy in the country, the Neo-Pentecostals Ríos Montt and Jorge Serrano Elías founded their own parties and launched their presidential candidacy in 1985, 1990 and 2003 elections. [The discussion of those Neo-Pentecostal politicians will be amplified ahead].

In this context, not only did the Evangelical parties emerge, but also some organizations which stimulated social and political reflection among Evangelicals such as the Civic Guatemalan Organization (OCG). Cajas, a member of one of the middle class churches linked to the Central American Mission coordinated this entity. He participated in different political parties and wrote a series of articles on social and political themes.²⁵ Vitalino Similox former General Secretary of the Guatemalan Conference of Evangelical Churches (CIEDEG), participated 1999 as a candidate for the vice presidency of the Alianza Nueva Nación party (ANN). In the interior of Guatemala various Evangelicals linked to historic and Pentecostal churches were launched as candidates in municipal elections. In spite of theological conservatism they got involved in politics. Grenfell (1995), Samson (2002) and Freston (2004a) analyze the details of this stage and give more attention to Ríos Montt and Serrano's presidencies. Evangelical euphoria for politics can be observed in other Latin American countries, especially Brazil, Peru, Nicaragua and El Salvador (Mondragón 1990, Stoll 1990, Freston 2001, among others). [Later information on lay people in politics will be discussed]

²⁵The political and social thinking of Cajas can be traced in the following works: La tarea Política de los Evangélicos: Ideas para una nueva Guatemala (1985); 'Evangélicos y Política' (1980.), Proyección Social de la Evangelización (n.d); John Carrete was another Evangelical who discussed political matters and interpreted the armed conflict within the ideological perspective of the religious right-wing of the US. He transferred the socio-political conflict into the 'spiritual warfare' plane. In Guatemala Un milagro en marcha (n.d).

(4) Participation in the civic society

Evangelicals also have participated in some happenings of civic society. For example, the Evangelical Alliance together with other religious groups participated in a dialogue with the Guatemalan guerrillas in Quito Ecuador, in 1995. Later they took part in the meetings of the Assembly of the Civic Society. One of their representatives, Manuel Conde Orellana a member of an independent church (later on he moved on to a branch of Rains of Grace [LDG]) became the president's private secretary during the presidency of Serrano Elías. He presided over the peace delegation from central government who initiated the dialogue and signed the peace declaration between the guerrillas and the army. This was signed on December 29th 1996.

In the context of the civil war some Evangelical institutions showed social concern for the Guatemalan peace process. The Permanent Evangelical Forum (FEP), the Latin American Council of Evangelical Churches (CLAI), The Latin American Theological Fraternity (FTL), the Centro Evangélico de Estudios Pastorales en América Central (CEDPCA), the CIEDEG, and some Christian agencies of service like World Vision, coordinated some activities in favour of the peace agreement and expressed a more open opinion about some social issues related with country's problems.

From 1986 onwards some Evangelicals occupied some of the government ministries in the presidency of Cerezo's government. At the same time a small group of Evangelical lay people begin to participate in local committees or as municipal council members serving in the communities. However the majority of Evangelicals were occupied in evangelism which they felt would bring change to society. [Chapter five amplifies this participation].

(5) The emergence of Neo-Pentecostal churches

The NPCs were born in the context of the earthquake of 1976, the civil war and world economic pressure of the 1980s. They grew within a context of violence, destruction, death

and an economic crisis. The emergence of NPCs and buildings modified the urban aspect of Guatemala City. They emerged within a situation where no project seemed to be viable, not even the religious one. Within this critical situation these churches sprung up in homes, in cinemas, in tents without making a lot of noise. After few years they emerged with more impetus and grew rapidly in terms of numbers especially in Guatemala City centre. A similar phenomenon can be observed in the capital cities of Costa Rica, Puerto Rico as well as other Latin American countries.

Many Guatemalans found a perspective of hope in these churches in a moment of crisis and uncertainty. In spite of the countries' problems these churches were able to establish their own human and financial resources. Far from staying at the margin pressured by the complex Guatemalan context, these churches erupted in the midst of this reality which they challenged and appeared as new religious actors. In the midst of signs of fear, pain, uncertainty death and despair, these churches were an oasis of peace for many Guatemalans.

In a context of ideological, political and social confrontation, they found in these churches a message of life and hope, prosperity, access to charismatic gifts, healing, renewed worship, and a more open vision towards the world. José Miguel and Stella De Angulo point out that the Neo-Pentecostal movement within the Bolivian working class emerged among people with a profound thirst for God in a chaotic de-structured society with very little opportunities' (1995: 46). These authors point out that in spite of certain reductionisms, Neo-Pentecostals play an important role in the spiritual and social development among their members (1995: 52-54).

The NPCs en Guatemala attracts special members of the middle and upper-classes. Garrard-Burnett affirms that people went to the NPCs for two basic reasons, a search for personal, social and spiritual improvement, as well as being attracted by the emphasis on punctuality, frugality, efficiency and a concern for law and order. These qualities are not often seen in the Guatemalan traditional ethos, and in many ways they are opposite to the

vision that the national elite have of their world (1998: 129). In other words, they did not just come because of religious reasons but also through the socio-economic and culture attraction of these churches.

Growth of these churches was not necessarily the product of immigrants arriving to the city as Willems said (1967: 13), but rather the establishment of the urban population. Of course the pastors of Pentecostal and NPCs churches affirm that growth has been reached essentially through a special Christian revival of divine origin in the country. Droogers from an anthropological point of view affirms that 'Pentecostalism should not only be explained by external factors, reducing it to a reflection of societal trends or of religious competition. The internal process should be studied in detail and in context' (1998: 27-28).

The growth of the NPCs is part of the process of expansion of the Evangelical church in Guatemala. Neo-Pentecostals emerged as a part of an Evangelical revival which affected all of the country towards the end of the 1960s, and they are the churches which are growing more rapidly in the 2000s in all of the country. According to an analysis of SEPAL these are the churches which show a faster growth rate in the Guatemalan urban areas (2003:14).

(6) Hoping for social impact at the national level

Evangelical advances in social issues are not the agenda of all churches. Most of the denominations and independent churches need to know, understand and commit themselves to this part of the church's mission. Evangelical social programmes are few in comparison to the number of churches. Current social programmes emphasize social aid and personal and family ethics. Revival which these churches experience is essentially in the spiritual sphere.

Bullón says that Evangelical revival should impact both the spiritual as well as the social spheres (1998: 103-104). The spiritual impact of Evangelical revival needs to be

seen at the levels of social, economic and political structures. This is imperative in a country with some of the highest indices of poverty, violence, inequality, impunity and corruption and human development in Latin America. It can be stated that the Evangelical numerical growth does not bring, ipso facto, social impact at micro or at macro levels of society. Certain questions need to be asked about Evangelical revival and social impact. The present thesis analyses how the Neo-Pentecostals think in relation to their role and social presence in Guatemalan society.

3. Conclusions

According to the material presented, Evangelicals changed the religious scene in Guatemala. Their numerical growth altered the socio-cultural physiognomy of society and contributed to religious plurality in the country. They have acted in two directions with regard to their role and presence in society. On the one hand some of them show openness and participate in some national socio-political activities, but most of them show a more conservative posture about social issues and political participation. In spite of this ambiguity, several churches and believers are involved in social tasks in the light of their religious proposal.²⁶ Núñez underlines that it is necessary to see the contribution of the Guatemalan Evangelicals not just from the point of view of social work but ‘the spiritual and moral influence which Protestantism has exercised for the good of many Guatemalans’ needs to be taken into account also (Núñez 1978: 33-34).

This investigation is interested in analyzing up to what point the social transformation is part of the agenda of the Neo-Pentecostal churches. It is fundamental to observe how they think and participate in the heart of Guatemalan society in general. What sort of presence do they have in society? Do they get involved in solving the social and political problems? Is there a diffusion of moral and ethical values from the Evangelical perspective which could provoke changes to Guatemalan society? The following chapters

²⁶ Bryan Roberts ‘analysis of the Evangelicals in the 1960s does not take into account both aspects of their social presence Guatemalan society’. In El Protestantismo en dos Barrios de Guatemala, (1967).

will analyse these possibilities in the light of the social, political, economic, cultural and religious reality in Guatemala. The following is a presentation of the profile of these churches from their perspective in dialogue with contemporary studies on the issues.

B. THE CONTRIBUTORS TO THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEO-PENTECOSTALS

Although most of the NPCs rose up independently of other churches, most of them have some links with the Pentecostal and historical churches and para-ecclesiastical entities. Certain continuity and discontinuity with Pentecostal style churches with relation to theological, liturgical, missional characteristics and social composition of the membership will be specially observed.

1. Local Churches

Two Pentecostal churches were important in the way that the NPCs emerged at the end of the 1970s until the mid 1980s. Unlike the Assemblies of God and the Church of God these churches grew independently.

a. The Calvary Church

Some studies show the 'Calvario' church was the generating nucleus in the formation of some leaders of Neo-Pentecostal Guatemalan churches. This church was established half way through the twentieth century in Guatemala. According to Zapata this church originally started within the Spanish American Inland Mission whose bases were in the United States and Canada (1982: 151). They started their work in Guatemala in 1947 under the coordination of the missionary Norman Parrish. Alongside other helpers he established ten churches in three departments of the country. Two years later they had thirty churches and a membership of between 3,000 and 4,000. After the visit of a Pentecostal preacher, Margarita Erdman in 1963, this church experienced a charismatic revival (IO2). This

meant that emphasis on baptism of the Holy Spirit, prophecy, speaking in tongues and liberation from evil spirits, began to be noticed even within the Pentecostal world already established.

The Calvario Church profiles as a Neo-Pentecostal type of church. With other NPCs, they promote the new apostolic focus which forms part of the five ministries according to what the bible registers in Ephesians 5. These five ministries are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. According to those who know the history of the Calvary Church, some priests and nuns came to this church to learn about charismatic manifestation of the Spirit (IO1). Pastors like Otoniel Ríos Paredes of the Elim Mission and Manuel Melgar of the 'Puerta del Cielo' church, Gamaliel Duarte of the 'Jesucristo es el Señor' church, Jorge H. López of FCG and others, were strongly influenced by this church (IO1). These leaders later established their own churches, with their own theological emphases and mission practice.

b. The Elim Church

Another church which contributed to the emergence of the Neo-Pentecostal Movement was the Elim church founded by pastor Otoniel Ríos Paredes (recognized by his church as one of the first apostles in Guatemala) after his experience of Spirit Baptism in 1964. This is one of the first Pentecostal types of churches which emerged with great strength in the capital, in the rest of the country and in some of the other Central American countries. According to the historian Virgilio Zapata, in 1980 this church had sixty-nine churches and fifty new congregations in formation in distinct parts of the country with approximately 20,000 members (1982: 160-161).

This church was the first mega-church which had 9,000 people meeting together in the 1980s in their auditorium during different services on Sundays. Members of this church formed the Maranatha church which was placed among middle class families. Vladimiro Vásquez founder of Visión de Fe [IVF] - one of the churches to be studied] came out of this church. The former President J. Serrano Elías was a member of this church where he

was recognized as a prophet before he went to the El Shaddai [ESH] church. The Elim church as an expression of Pentecostal churches indirectly, was a factor which contributed also to the beginnings of the NPCs in the country.²⁷

2. The Para-ecclesiastical groups

These churches also emerged under the influence of para-ecclesiastical entities. The Full Gospel Business Men's Association used its influence to produce a model for these churches in the country. The evangelistic strategy through use of hotels and restaurants forged a model in the heart of the NPCs. Walter Hollenweger affirms that this business men's organization decided to evangelize the world in a non-traditional way influencing the churches, and propagating the ideas of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and divine healing among non Pentecostal churches (1976: 36-38).

This modality of evangelism attracted both Protestants as well as Catholics. Charles E. Hummel concludes that in the United States this Fraternity was '[...] an important influence in the emergence of the Charismatic renovation in the principal Protestant churches and the Roman Catholic Churches at that times' (cited in Núñez 2001:14). This Fraternity was established in Guatemala in 1975 and at the beginning of the 1990s had fifty-six chapters in Guatemala (Cantón 1998: 95).

In Guatemala some Catholic people who have participated in this Fraternity have later joined some Pentecostal and NPCs. Some analysts affirm that the emergence of the Catholic Charismatic renovation movement was another contributor to the process. However others assert that the process happened the other way round and that a good number of Catholics emigrated to the NPCs (Smith in Silva 1996: 74). Perhaps it is possible to affirm the same of AGLOW a fraternity of Christian women that promotes activities for women in well known hotels. This fraternity which originated in North

²⁷ This church because of its characteristics and doctrines identifies itself as a Pentecostal type of church even though they show certain distinctive features which differentiate them from the classic Pentecostal churches such as the Church of God of the Full Gospel and the Assemblies of God. Some scholars would call the Elim churches Neo-Pentecostal and according to the profile described in this study they do fit better with them. However, their leaders would not accept that ecclesiastical definition.

America encouraged bible study groups and intercession among middle class women. Their leaders are linked to Neo-Pentecostal and independent Pentecostal churches. Both groups have contributed indirectly to the emergence of Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic churches among the middle and high classes.

3. Growth within Protestantism

The Neo-Pentecostals emerged in the context of Guatemalan Protestantism. They started in lands fertilized by a hundred years of Protestant history and presence in the country. A number of the members came from Pentecostal and historic churches. The LDG church was born from five churches that belonged to the central synod of the Presbyterian Church. At the same time, NEOP was born fundamentally as a result of a local revival and from the initiative, vision and leadership of the founding pastors and in this way NPCs became indigenous. The local character of Guatemalan Pentecostalism is a key factor in its growth and expansion.²⁸ At the same time Neo-Pentecostals acquired autonomy and their own life as a new aspect of Protestantism.

Even though NEOP was born in a context of Pentecostal and Presbyterian churches it has its own character. These churches influence both the Charismatic Catholics as well as other Evangelical churches. Some would even dare to suggest that some sort of process of pentecostalization is occurring within the heart of the Evangelical churches. Evangelical and Charismatic churches have adopted liturgical forms, evangelistic strategies, a 'spiritual warfare' worldview, use of mass media, among others. Canton calls this process the 'pentecostalization' of their political culture which includes the ways the converts interpret their sociological problems, war or economic crisis from a religious and ideological vision (1998:4). So without taking away from the influence of the NPCs on the Evangelical world, it is important to affirm that they reflect in their profile key characteristics of the

²⁸ Virginia Garrard-Burnett, 'Commentary chapter five', garrad@mail.utexas.edu 19-03-06. Freston points out that Pentecostalism growth fast in whole Latin America (1998a: 335-358). The indigenization of the Evangelical church started when the national leaders assumed the leadership of the Historic churches in the 1960s. Even though Protestantism came from outside it took root in Guatemala and the rest of Latin America.

Pentecostal world, and the developments created by one hundred years of Protestant history.

4. Exogenous factors

The advance of Guatemalan NEOP was helped by an exchange with other Neo-Pentecostals abroad. They emerged under the influence and cooperation of churches, evangelists and para-ecclesiastic ministries from the United States and Latin-American countries. The Verbo [ICV] churches were born as a direct fruit of work of the missionaries of Gospel Outreach from the United States. The first church they established was made up of a few North American and some Guatemalan families. Several years later the leadership, organization, development, and expansion of these churches was assumed by the Guatemalans. Churches around the ICV Ministry always maintain some type of exchange of ideas, resources and personnel with the North American churches.

The Shaddai Church [ESH] has very close ties with many churches within and outside of the United States. They have a close relationship with Oral Robert University in Tulsa, Oklahoma as well as with other churches linked to the church growth movement. The 'Lluvias de Gracia' [LDG] church has had links about cell group ministry with the Elim church of El Salvador and later with other churches. The rest of the churches also have their own links especially with North American, Argentinean, Brazilian and Colombian churches and their leaders.

Guatemalan NEOP is part of the global Charismatic Movement. Peter Wagner calls the emergence of these churches 'the third wave' of revival by the Holy Spirit (Wagner in Amat & Leon 1997:10). The first wave is attributed to Pentecostal renovation at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is identified as the origin of Pentecostalism which started with the revival in Azusa Street. The second wave is associated with the

Charismatic revivals within the historic Protestant and Catholic churches.²⁹ The third wave is represented by the Neo-Charismatics starting with a revival which began in the 1980s among churches which did not have direct affiliation either with classical Pentecostals or the Charismatics in the nonpentecostal mainline Catholic and Protestant churches in the Western world. This wave is represented especially by independent/postdenominational Pentecostal/charismatic bodies of any race; and independent charismatic or neocharismatic individuals (Barrett et al., 2001: 299-300).

Among their most common characteristics can be found the following, healings, liberations, releases from prison, miracles, physical as well as spiritual restoration of sight and hearing, exorcisms, conversions (Barrett et al., 2001: 299). Amatt & Leon affirm that the third wave in Peru was characterized by the influence over Evangelical denominations, Pentecostals and non Pentecostals, independent churches and Charismatic type of denominations, and church support ministries (1997: 11).

The NPCs under study reflect several of the described characteristics but they also differ in emphases in issues such as prosperity, social position, and their involvement in politics. Perhaps the element which is universal among Neo-Pentecostals is their belief in the 'new apostolic movement' which emphasis five ministries and the evangelism with power which accompanies them.

Some Neo-Pentecostal pastors affirm also their connexion with the church in the first century and the role of the Holy Spirit and the charismas. In other words, they claim that Pentecost is part of their theology although from a different angle. These features show that the NPCs are a movement around the world. The studies of Cox (1996), Poewe (1994), Cotton (1995), Gifford (1998) Freston (1997 and 1998 a & b), Dempster, Petersen & Klaus (1991; 1999), Coleman (2000), Martin (2002), Anderson (2004) among others, show that the Pentecostal and charismatic phenomena are global in character. In other

²⁹ Samuel Berberían analyzes this movement in detail within the Protestant and Catholic churches. In his work he does not make a differentiation between Neo-Pentecostals who came from North America and those under study (1983). He applies the same name for both. So he points out that the NPCs are movements with a past (IO1).

words, Pentecostalism including the NPCs is not parochial, but has crossed geographic, ethnic, linguistic, ideological and denominational frontiers. It is part of global Charismatic Christianity.

C. THE PROFILE OF THE NEO-PENTECOSTALS

The urban characteristics of Guatemala City changed dramatically from 1970. Migration provoked accelerated growth and disorder of the city. Alongside the population growth the basic necessities, problems, and challenges that needed to be faced increased. Side by side with the growth of the city Evangelical church buildings emerged which changed the appearance of different zones of Guatemala City. The new buildings of the mega-NPCs add a new element to urban life. Thousands of people agglomerate to enter these new ‘meccas’ of Guatemalan and Central American Protestantism. On Sundays and days of special events traffic slows down and getting around becomes difficult. This is especially true as some of these churches celebrate five devotional services in a weekend.

The silence and solemnity of the Catholic Churches gives way to the movement and loud rejoicing of the NPCs. A series of offices with their respective personnel, cafeterias, bookshops, gardens and large car parks, reveal the life and dynamic which characterizes these churches. People are continually coming in and going out, seeking to be attended, as well as the continual activity of the church members who come in and go out to serve in the different ministries. At the entrance hall of the offices of these churches it is possible to observe suppliers who are bringing in furniture and other items, and teams of men and women who have come to receive instructions or information about their activities. While the researcher waits his turn for an interview, the door bell and the telephones do not stop ringing. It is hard to have an interview with these pastors who are always occupied somewhere else or on a mission out of the country.

Amongst all the chattering, the members share encouraging phrases like ‘God bless you brother!’, ‘Blessings!’, or ‘In victory brother!’ These phrases are accompanied with a

strong brotherly hug. This hubbub gets stronger in some churches which have a school alongside the church building. In the hallways of these churches a lot of movement is generated around their mission objectives and due to the different activities which they hold each week. Above all the mobilization of people and equipment is even greater during the celebration of an international congress.

This new religious movement inside and outside of the NPCs is seen by some scholars as a break with old monopolies. Andrew Chestnut in his analysis of new religious groups within religious pluralism, following Peter Berger and Rodney Stark, observes in these groups the emergence of a new religious economy (2003: 6). These groups show that religion which once was imposed as the product of a monopoly now can be offered and sold to the consumers. They also observe that participation in religious activity is bigger in spiritual economies which are not regulated than in the monopolized ones.

Pierre Bourdieu defines this field as ‘the space where they produce, reproduce and distribute goods which are symbolic of salvation’ (Cited in Cantón 1998: xi). These signs of religious changes in Guatemala are not only occurring in the Evangelical churches, but also in other groups including the church belonging to the Catholic Renewal as well as the Mormons. The essential components of NPC will be described in order to understand their nature and presence in the Guatemalan society. Later there will be a detailed analysis of the aspects related to the social vision of the leadership, their social projects and the thinking and social participation of Neo-Pentecostal lay people.

1. The Verbo Christian Church

The Verbo church [ICV] was founded at the time of the 1976 earthquake. It was established through the initiative of the missionaries of Gospel Outreach from Eureka, California. According to one of the founders, they arrived in Guatemala full of the North American ‘hippie style’ communal type of living of the 1960, and with a government style whose authority rested on the governing elder. These ‘Christian communes’ belonged to a

contra-cultural movement against materialism and the violence of the Vietnam war. Converted young people from these communes soon enlisted in the task of planting churches outside their own country (P1ICV). Stoll underscores that Reverend Jim Durkin played an important role in the change of mentality, life-style and the sending out of new converts from these 'hippie communes' (1990:182-184). This background explains in part the interest in mixing evangelism with social aid at the beginning of the church.

The IVC senior pastor points out that their vision wanted to extend missionary outreach to Latin America, and according to local sources, the earthquake was the sign that God used to show them that they should come to the country and use social aid as a vehicle to establish an evangelistic mission (P1ICV). After arriving and listening to the needs they decided to help with the construction of houses. With help through donations from the United States and collaboration from some Guatemalans, they built ninety houses in the village of Cerro Alto in the Municipality of San Juan Sacatepéquez situated some thirty-two kilometres from Guatemala City. Later on they built 1,300 houses in a marginalized zone of the city which called Carolingia. These houses were given to poor families who had lost their houses in the earthquake. The IVC began to gain special notoriety in Guatemala with the arrival of Ríos Montt as President in 1982. Francisco Bianchi and Manolo Benfeldt, elders of the church, were members of his cabinet, and Alvaro Contreras functioned as the president's private secretary.

The first Gospel Outreach missionaries met together with some Guatemalan people to pray and study the bible in a small farm called Dos Alicias situated on the outskirts of Guatemala City. The name 'Verbo' was suggested by one of the first Guatemalan professionals converted to the new faith. At the beginning they spent their time building houses and simultaneously the congregation was being formally consolidated as a local church. Later they moved to Zone 9 of the city where they met under a huge tent. Their vision was welcomed by middle and high class families who worked to establish churches which extended all over the capital city as well as in the countryside.

The ICV church did not become a mega-church, but rather opted for developing medium sized congregations no more than one thousand members under the auspices of the Verbo ministry organization. They have thirty-five churches in Guatemala and fifty in other countries. The majority of the leaders and governing elders of these churches in South America, the United States and Canada are Guatemalans (P1ICV). Although these churches maintain links of cooperation with the Gospel Outreach of the USA, they are churches rooted in Guatemala soil, are in the hands of Guatemalan leadership, have their own identity, finance the expansion of the churches and the sending of missionaries outside of Guatemala themselves.

The Verbo churches assumed the formation of schools (primary, secondary and university level) as a vehicle to extend their objectives of evangelism and social vision from their Neo-Pentecostal perspective. As a national church they run an orphanage called Casa Bernabé. In his visits to these churches the researcher observed the strong work discipline, good organization, the presence of the laity in the entrepreneurial vision, and the maximization of the physical space both for liturgical as well as educative purposes. The ICV in Guatemala has become a sort of ‘denomination’ of churches with a vision, autonomy and national leadership, which has in some ways more power and influence than Gospel Outreach from the USA.

2. The Christian Fraternity of Guatemala

The Christian Fraternity of Guatemala [FCG] started with a small group of families in 1978. The founding pastor came out of the Calvario Central church with the vision to start a new ministry. Accompanied by five families he started the church in the Guatemalan Fiesta Hotel in January 1979. Later he moved it to the Camino Real Hotel and afterwards to the installations of the Cinema Reforma until they were able to get their own property. Alongside their general meetings they started family groups.

The pastor and his church consider themselves to be a fraternal community where Christian love is expressed, where space is given to the manifestations of the power of God, and which functions according to the order established in the bible (P2FCG). The FCG started with local resources. They say that they have never received economic resources from outside of the country. Their founder affirms that ‘from the beginning, a congregation was established with national leadership, with their own financial support and with as aspiration to make the church a model for Latin America’ (Lopez 1999: 4). The emphasis of this church is to be a church for the family.

Some of the pastors of this church admit that this idea is a fundamental part of the success in terms of numerical growth. It is possible to observe hundreds of families arriving together to share in the Sunday worship services. It is quite difficult to talk to those who come in and go out of the services. Because of this some authors question they are relational communities. The pastors affirm that this need is met in the house groups.

A senior FCG pastor of was a very active member in the El Calvario church where he experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit and served in different ministries (P2FCG). He says that this doctrine is part of the Pentecostal heritage, but with some modifications. After a period of using different installations of various hotels they set up house in their own property at the end of 1989. Accelerated numerical church growth made them one of the first mega-churches in the country. They grew from twenty people in 1979 to 12,000 members by the middle of 1999. In February 1991 they inaugurated an auditorium with capacity for 3,500 people and two buildings with four floors which house the bilingual school founded in 1987 and the Sunday school.³⁰ They celebrate three services on Sunday and in the week they encourage the coffee groups (cell groups for growth). They also have on their installations a medical clinic, and diagnostic laboratory as a service for clinical analyses which are at the disposition of all of the members as well as the general public.

³⁰ In ‘Historia de la iglesia Fraternidad Cristiana de Guatemala’, in Revista 20 Años Desde 1978 Proclamando a Jesús para transformar la nación. p. 12.

They have developed some evangelistic and compassionate ministries to support children and people who are in prison.

The FCG is building at this moment the new auditorium to hold 12,000. According to their founder this project shows that the Latin Americans are capable of developing mega-projects portraying a different image of successful Evangelicals. Other local Evangelical leaders criticize this type of mega-project due to the great quantity of economic resources which are used up and the lack of a greater social projection towards the members and the people who live in the vicinity (Callejas 2002).

3. The El Shaddai church

The ESH church was also born as a result of a local effort and without external economic resources. In 1982 a small group started to meet in the home of Enrique and Asunción Arimany parents of the senior pastor's wife, Cecilia Caballeros. The church was established in 1983 by the pastors Harold and Cecilia Caballeros. A lawyer by profession, Harold Caballeros was converted as a born again person at the end of the 1970s through his wife Cecilia. She had her religious conversion at the age of eleven in a service for healing and miracles conducted by Katherine Kuhlman.³¹ This fact shows that the founders maintain from an early date their links with the Pentecostal type of churches. In a similar way to the beginning of the FCG, the ESH used several different localities before buying a property in the Zone 14, which is one of Guatemala City's residential areas. Pastor Caballeros in his book De Victoria en Victoria: Conceptos, experiencias y técnicas sobre la guerra espiritual, (1999) relates how he got the present location for the church, the spiritual conflicts which were fought and the way in which they were able to build the present church.

The ESH also experienced accelerated growth in less than two decades. At the present moment they have twenty-five churches in Guatemala with fifty affiliated churches

³¹ 'Biografía Harold Caballeros' in Aleluya News, Special Edition Congreso Mundial Avivamiento 2000, Guatemala. p. 30.

in other countries with a total population of 15,000 members. The church founded the Corporation for Radio diffusion Estéreo Visión which has twenty one booster stations around all the country. It also runs various local ministries including the founding of the Bilingual Christian School in two exclusive zones of Guatemala City and one in a middle class area. They also have various schools in the interior of the country. They also run the 'Manos de Amor' FMA (Hands of Love) Foundation which has become the social outreach of the church. The membership is composed of people from the middle and higher classes of society.

This church has tried to make links with other churches through some of their projects. An example of this was the prayer campaign for the country called 'Jesus is the Lord of Guatemala'. This campaign, as will be amplified later, planned to gather together 50,000 prayer warriors. In the same way, ESH maintains relations with other foreign churches and entities like the Counsel of International Church Growth Directors in Seoul, Korea. ESH has had direct contact also with people who have been active in the country's political scene. The former President Serrano Elías was a member of this church before his period as president until he left Guatemala.

Pastor Caballeros is one of the well known Neo-Pentecostal pastors because of his ministry as a local and international preacher and the books he has written. At the time of the investigation he has written the following books El Poder Transformador del Avivamiento (1998), De Victoria en Victoria: Conceptos, experiencias y técnicas sobre la guerra espiritual (1999), Dios te invita a Soñar (2002a) and El poder transformador del evangelio de Jesucristo (2002b). At the same time his messages are transmitted three times a day through the twenty-one booster channels of Stereo Vision. His books and his preaching shed light on his theology, his worldview and the way that he understands the life and mission of his church.

4. The Rains of Grace

The Rains of Grace mission [LDG] emerged out of the heart of historic Protestantism. The founding members belonged to the national Presbyterian Church. LDG was the result of the fusion of five churches that left the Presbyterian Central Church. These churches experienced a Holy Spirit revival under the leadership of the senior pastor and his church. The baptism of the Spirit, healing and prophecy were the elements which created discord. The church board was accused of heresy according to the norms of the Westminster Confession and so the senior pastor and the rest of the leadership were asked to leave the National Presbyterian Church. In contrast to the rest of the NPCs, this mission was founded with five churches and their thirty six established leaders

In November 1984 they founded the LDG (Guillén 1997: 3-5).³² The senior pastor affirms that from the beginning they decided to be a part of the Evangelical church: ‘We wanted to be fully identified with the Evangelical community and with their governing bodies. We never pretended to have a new revelation or a novel doctrine because we wanted from the outset to be identified fully with the Evangelical churches’ (Madrid n.da.:100). At least four members of the pastoral team studied at the Faculty of Theology of Mariano Galvez University.

Under the leadership of the senior pastor this mission grew much faster than the other Neo-Pentecostals. At the present time they have 130 churches in all the country and various churches in other countries with a population of 30.000 members. According to the pastors, LDG conserves the doctrine of salvation from its Presbyterian heritage,³³ although the key doctrine for them is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They also changed their form of government. They did not follow the typical model of the consistory. The pastor is the maximum authority of the church. With regard to the sociological composition, the majority of the members belong to the working classes and to poor families. The LDG

³² The senior pastor underlines that before the Presbyterian leaders had taken away from him the installations of his church in Central America in zone 7 of Guatemala City, they had already decided to start the LDG on the 3 of November 1984.

³³ According to the senior pastor they conserve the Calvinist heritage with regard to soteriology (P4LDG).

church has a similar social composition as the NPCs 'Rey de Reyes' and 'Ebenezer' located at zones 4 and 5 of Guatemala City. They have recently started a church aimed specifically at the high classes in a residential zone of the capital city.

This church is characterized by their special emphasis on numerical growth. The key to their expansion is the promotion of cell groups. In 1991 they had forty groups; by 1995 they had multiplied these to 400. By the year 2000 their plan was to be able to have 1000 family groups. In 2004 they moved to their new church building with capacity for 10,000 people. Starting from 1995 they celebrate an annual evangelistic campaign where the presence of the family groups can be appreciated. In 2001 the churches of LDG alone filled the national Mateo Flores Football Stadium with 48,000 persons (Madrid n.da.). Also, they founded a school and consider that this contributes to the formation of better people. This church exemplifies the impact of the NPCs within the mainline churches.

A similar experience occurred in the Jotabeche church of the Pentecostal Methodist denomination in Santiago, Chile. This church was born within the Methodist church in 1909 and became one of the first mega-churches in Latin America. In his visits to this church the researcher observed the presence of a multitude of people, approximately 15,000 believers who were worshipping with contagious enthusiasm and studied keenly the sermon given by bishop Vásquez. On that occasion in a matter of a few moments the benches were turned around and hundreds of teachers appeared to coordinate the small discussion groups of between ten to twelve people each.

5. The Family of God church

Another of the NPCs which emerged in this period is the Family of God church [IFD]. They started the work on June 1990 as part of the Christian Motivation Ministry in 1984. This ministry was started by its founder pastor who before his conversion had been a motivator for success and a member of the Freemasons. After an existential religious crisis

he converted to the Evangelical faith in 1983.³⁴ A year after his conversion he established the Christian Motivation Ministry whose theme was to 'reconcile Guatemala with God'. He decided later to establish the IFD as part of the global ministry. They started activities in the Camino Real Hotel in 1985.

The senior pastor's testimony and preaching on television as well as on the radio, has been a key element for recruiting new members for the church. These media communication systems are pillars of the advance of this church (Iglesia Familia de Dios 1993: no. 47 p.8). From this moment on they experienced a process of growth and expansion. The church which started out with 400 people in 1990 has at the present moment a membership of 10,000 belonging to the middle and working classes. The pastor treats members and visitors warmly. He is known for using the phrases 'beloved brother' or 'beautiful brother' in his time of welcoming.

The biblical formation of the leadership of this church shows a mixture of influences and theological backgrounds. In spite of the charismatic Pentecostal experience of senior pastor, he studied at the Central American Theological Seminary of the Central American Mission. The co-pastor studied theology at the Mariano Gálvez University founded by Evangelicals linked to historical churches. In the beginning their seminary used as their basic teaching materials the biblical materials of the Faculty of Theological Studies (FLET).

In 1991 the church acquired a plot of land that they rented and later they rented the property of the radio station Radio Exclusiva. In 1992 they founded the Neo-Pentecostal Biblical Theological Seminary in which they have various levels of theological education. In 1993 the church received a donation of land covering an area of nine and a half blocks valued at three million quetzals (Boletín Quincenal November 14th 1993: 4). In this place called 'the holy land' they have built a mega-church building with other installations. In

³⁴ According to his personal testimony, the founder pastor practiced transcendental meditation, yoga, had been a Catholic, a motivator, a Rosicrucian, a mystic, a metaphysicist, an occultist, parapsychologist, and a Freemason. In 'Vida Pastoral Luis Fernando Solares Alma, mente y cuerpo', in *Aleluya News*, Año 2, Numero 6, Guatemala, pp.12-13.

1994 they bought Channel 27 from the government which they are calling the 'Channel of Hope'. This has programmes twenty hours a day and covers the whole of the country.³⁵ According to the pastors the diffusion of the message of the gospel contributes to keeping the society peaceful and reconciled. The economic support for this channel comes from national funds which are obtained through the television marathons which they have every year to celebrate their anniversary.³⁶ This marathon has been questioned because of the emphasis on exchanging spiritual and material blessings as a way of raising funds.

6. The Vision of Faith Church

The Vision of Faith Church [IVF] is the smallest church of the group. It emerged at the same time along side the other NPCs. It is situated in Zone 13 of Guatemala City and has a small group of affiliated churches within and outside of the country. It was founded by the present pastor who is a graduate in Political Economics with a Presbyterian and Pentecostal background. After having a charismatic experience in 1973 he became a member of the Elim church. This Pentecostal style church was the biggest one in Guatemala City up to that point in time and from it several NPCs have emerged. According to pastor Vázquez it was in this church that he developed and became a leader. However, years later, he had to abandon the church because of some conflicts with the leadership. In 1986 he founded the IVF with twenty families a church that openly had Neo-Pentecostal signs (P6IVF). According to the pastor the distinctive of his church is the pastoral attention that they were able to give to both the church members and people from outside who looked for it (P6IVF).

Afterwards they initiated cell groups following the G12 (model of the twelve) stimulated by the Colombian pastor César Castellanos. This plan for growth consists in having cell groups each with twelve people who follow the model of the disciples of Jesus. The aim of these groups is to multiply so that eventually the twelve group members will

³⁵ In the Leaflet of the Multivisión Red Continental de televisión Cristiana vía Satélite, Ministerio de Motivación Cristiana, Guatemala.

³⁶ Every year they have a television marathon in which they raise an average of five million quetzals among the viewers (equivalent to \$ 600.000).

each become leaders. The others churches also follow this model but from distinct perspectives. The group's philosophy is geared around numerical growth.

They do not want to establish a denomination, but rather to stimulate the emergence of churches that can finance themselves and be responsible for their organization and development (P6IVF). They have some established churches in Guatemala City and others in the United States and El Salvador. Although they do not particularly emphasize education they have started a school on the outskirts of the capital city to meet the needs of the children of the families of the church. The majority of the members belong to the middle class and working class.

D. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF NEO-PENTECOSTALISM

In spite of the fact that it is hard to define NEOP within and outside Guatemala, there are certain factors which differentiate them from Pentecostalism and other Evangelical churches. The new features show some discontinuity with classical Pentecostalism. The NPCs believe for example, that salvation cannot be lost, and they do not give as much emphasis to the baptism of the Spirit, and they are more postmillennial eschatologically. Even though these characteristics are not necessarily repeated in all the churches, they form a common profile. Taking into account that there are differences in each case, these features can also be traced in other NPCs in the rest of Latin America, Africa or Asia. According to Donald Miller what generally characterized these churches is a strong emphasis of the work of the Holy Spirit and in the direct spiritual experience of the Christian.³⁷ The theological, sociological and organizational features of these churches will now be discussed.

³⁷ Donald E Miller 'Emergent Patterns of Congregational Life and Leadership in The Developing World: Personal Reflections, from a Research Odyssey', [Pulpit & Pew Research on Pastoral Leadership](http://www.pulpitandpew.duke.edu). Available at www.pulpitandpew.duke.edu. Accessed 17.01.06

1. Sociological composition

One of the differences of Guatemalan NEOP with the rest of the Central American churches of the region is their social composition. In general terms these churches are to be found within the middle and high-classes. Of the churches analyzed the ESH, ICV and FCG have a more middle and high class population. Professionals, university students, business men (generally with a middle sized company), military personnel, some politicians who have recently been converted and wealthy families can be found among the members.³⁸

Also a middle and higher middle class population can be observed in some NPCs and other churches in the capital cities of the Central American isthmus and the Caribbean: For example, the ‘Amor Viviente’ church in Honduras, ‘Oasis de Esperanza’, ‘Centro Cristiano’, ‘Ciudad de Dios’, ‘Vida Abundante’ in Costa Rica, the ‘Iglesias de la Amistad’ and ‘Castillo del Rey’ in México City and Monterrey, the ‘Iglesia Fuente de Agua Viva’ Carolina, in Puerto Rico, are all to be found in residential zones.

Other churches are to be found in middle class or working class areas. Although there are more upper and middle class members in the NPCs, this is not exclusively so. There are other churches linked to historic missions or independent churches that also have a middle class population.³⁹ More details about this will be discussed fully in Chapter five where some testimonies of the NPL will be shared illustrating the possibility of improving economic and social mobility.

The LDG church has a population of working class people and poor families. The IFD church is composed of members from the middle and working classes and the poor. The IVF church has middle and working class people in its membership. The LDG membership comes from the popular zones of the city. Their population according to the

³⁸ For example the Arimany family belongs to and actively participates in the ESH church.

³⁹ The Lutheran churches ‘Cristo Rey’, ‘Centro Bíblico el Camino’ and the Presbyterian Church ‘el Divino Salvador’, are examples of this type of church. Some active members of ‘Centro Bíblico el Camino’ have participated as government functionaries during the last decade. This church was founded by some people related with the Central American Mission.

data received from the survey carried out with the lay people, has a lower level of education and a lower economic income per capita. These churches are more like the Brazilian Neo-Pentecostals who are to be found basically among the working classes. The 'Iglesia Universal del Reino de Dios' led by bishop Macedo is a faithful representative of this movement (Freston 1998a, 1998b).

2. Worship as a life experience

The worship in these churches shows a drastic change in relation to the traditional framework for services in the historic and Pentecostal church traditions. Worship is not only a time of preparation for the sermon, it is the very life of these churches and it is mixed with a series of charismatic experiences within the established pattern of the service. In a way it is the fundamental crux of the service which acts as a vehicle for the members to experiment the presence of God. In this context the members have a religious experience which stimulates changes in their state of mind, thinking patterns and commitment to the word of God.

Sepúlveda says that the personal and shared experience with the Spirit, or the completely unmediated experience of God is what makes a profound change in the life of a person possible (In B.Gutierrez 1995: 79, 82). For some authors this experience in many cases meets the spiritual, psychological and physical needs (Cleary in Dempster *et. al.* 1999:131-150; Sepulveda in Cook 1994a: 68-74).⁴⁰ It is an experience of the sacred which is accessible for all of the members without any mediation. Pablo Deiros, a Baptist pastor whose church became Neo-Pentecostal affirms the following with respect to this,

[...] new guidelines for conduct are being manifested in the desire for growth, authenticity and amplitude of the personal experience. The human being of today wants to experience life and God in a direct way, and not indirectly or in a secondary way through the mediation of human or institutional interpreters or standard means... It seems that in

⁴⁰Edward L. Cleary notes in this respect: 'The Pentecostals centre their lives on the experience of the Holy Spirit'. Underlines, that this experience provides for them a profound communion with God which brings them hope among other things. (in Dempster *et. al.* 1999:131-150). Juan Sepúlveda notes that the growth of Pentecostalism has as its foundation the experience of God. See the reasons which he gives in Cook (ed.) 1994: 68-74.

the future, human spiritual and emotional needs will receive more attention than reason and the scientific method (Cited by In Sik Hong 2001: 34-35).⁴¹

Worship in the context of the NPCs permits the believers to centre on the person of God without the need of mediators. It is a personal encounter with God and his presence in order to be blessed and empowered through the Holy Spirit.⁴² This experience in the NPCs becomes a profound existential and subjective experience between the worshipper and God. What is observed is the potential of the Neo-Pentecostal liturgy as an empowering factor. As an ideological factor it could channel the human potential of these churches to get involved in a more integral way within and outside of their communities.

The stage design, the light and choreographed dances form a part of the Neo-Pentecostal worship which attracts a lot of young people who are looking for a very personal experience within the framework of post-modernity. This current of ideas in the academic field as well as in popular experience appears to be a reaction to modernity. The belief on the natural goodness of man, human progression, science as an unlimited resource of knowledge and global utopias has been seriously questioned (Cavalcanti 2002: 176-77). It seems that the NPCs who do not reject modernity are providing experience over doctrine which is attractive to the post-modern generation. In Sik Hong emphasises that in spite of the limitations and negative implication for 'the Neo-Charismatic model responds, in some measure, to the demands of the post modern challenge (2001: 42, 129). From a similar angle, Miller & Yamamori suggest that the NPCs are in better condition to reach the new generations in the new post-modern world because they have found that the Pentecostal experience is transformative (2007: 217-8). The theme needs to be treated

⁴¹This author and others analyze and criticize openly both forms of religiosity in the context of post-modernity. See the book *Ética y Religiosidad en tiempos posmodernos*. In Sik Hong *et al.* Buenos Aires: Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana No. 12: Ediciones Kairos (2001).

⁴²According to Dinorah Méndez in the context of Evangelical worship, every thing revolves around the fact that God is the central truth. In her doctoral thesis she analyzes in detail the significance, content and implications of worship in the context of the local church. See chapter three in 'Analysis of the Theological Content in the Hymnody used by Evangelicals in Mexico in Relation to the Mexican Religious Content' PhD thesis Oxford Centre for Mission Studies/University of Wales. Paul Zahl *et. al.* (eds.) Discuss the value of hymnology and worship in Evangelical churches and the new forms of worship of the charismatic world *Exploring the Worship Spectrum* 6 Views Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004. D. A Carson provides an extensive panorama of the different expressions of worship of Protestantism In *Adoration and Action* Grand Rapids: Book House, 1993.

apart as it is not the object of this present thesis.⁴³ Won Suk Ma points out that ‘Postmodernism is particularly appealing to Pentecostals because it provided legitimacy for their intuitive reading of Scripture’ (1999: 63). Then, he underlines,

At the same time, the spiritual challenge also exists within the Pentecostal movement itself. Developing a spirituality rooted in God’s word found in Scripture and nurtured by the Holy Spirit is greatly needed if Pentecostals are going to successfully negotiate effective ministry in a Post-modern world. Such biblically-based spirituality will empower Pentecostal to address the issues of the institutionalization of Pentecostalism, the engagement of Pentecostal social concern, the inclusion of women in Pentecostal ministry, the continued vibrancy of the church’s global mission, the necessity of racial reconciliation, and the renewal of the vision held by early Pentecostal pioneers for a healthy ecumenical relationship with other Christian’ (1999: 63-64).

Won Suk Ma’s requirement for the Pentecostals is also important for the NPCs. The emphasis on subjectivity of the Christian experience rescues a fundamental part of the Christian life, but it also brings with it the danger of putting experience before the rationality of the faith and the scriptures.

Those churches divide their liturgy in two sections times for ‘praise and worship’. The first includes space for joyful songs, rejoicing and jubilation. Those present are free to lift their hands in the air, kneel down on the floor, cry and even dance. The second stage songs are sung which induce the worshiper to have a more subjective experience of their faith. In these churches the time of praise and worship lasts an hour as does also the sermon. In some cases the pastors finish their sermon with a time for prayer and asking the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of the faithful for those who go forward to the altar to ask for help for diverse personal motives. What the researcher was able to observe was that the worship experience became a key element of the service. Many who had been touched by the God’s presence were filled of joy and committed themselves to love and serve God.

Of course, the liturgy is not uniform in these churches. In the working class churches the service is more spontaneous with regard worship and expression of the charismas. Although there is an order of service the faithful jump and dance in their seats or even do it in front of the altar. There is always speaking in tongues and prophecy in

⁴³ Campell emphasises that it is difficult to see how religion with its clear commitment to absolute truths could be postmodern. On the other hand it is obvious that many contemporary religions or at least spiritual movements really manifest the characteristics marks of postmodernism (2006: 317).

these times of worship and prayer before the sermon. The researcher observed this kind of liturgy especially in the LDG church and the 'Rey de Reyes' church. In some churches they carry out prayer walks directed against the hosts of evil spirits within the service. Men and women go up front encouraged by the leader who exhorts them to get rid of the demons and declare victory over them. They believe that for this battle it is fundamental to have knowledge and be conscience of spiritual warfare which goes beyond personal exorcism as will be shown later.

In the middle and high class churches the service is more directed and refined. They plan the liturgy to fit into a timetable and certain established parameters. Although they place great importance on the time of worship and give space to dancing in the spirit, they have more control over their audience. An observer affirms that churches like the FCG 'have a selective liturgy style more like the Baptists; more programmed' (IO1). He underlines that in these churches 'an instructed and controlled behaviour' can be observed (IO1). In other words, the participants should not leave the established model. The IFD church has a choir like some Presbyterians or Baptists churches have, but with new songs and accompanied by modern instruments. According to Freston, 'In Brazil, the multiplication of pan-Protestant representative entities has increased transit between historical and Pentecostal-Charismatic tendencies. Tele-evangelism has popularized models of preaching and worship beyond denominational boundaries' which underlines, 'Ambition for power leads to alliances which overlook denominational polemics' (1997: 197). On both cases the Neo-Pentecostal liturgy brings with it signs of renewed worship. The NPCs make the service a true 'fiesta' (party) and a time to worship God in a very deep way. Many Evangelical churches changed their style of worship shaped by the NPCs experience.

A key component within and outside of the liturgy are the prophetic messages. This has to do with the declaration of a biblical promise or the giving of a prophetic message publicly during the service by a pastor, an evangelist, prophet or a member of the

congregation. These declarations revolve around the following ideas: God will bring a revival, God will prosper the nation, or that God will keep a promise written in the bible. In these churches it is assumed that the prophecy is a word which comes from God which needs to be believed and obeyed. Of course, the NPCs prophetic declarations are different from the message of the Old Testament's prophets. The latter included into their message the good news and denounced evil and injustice in Israel. The Neo-Pentecostal prophets give more attention to good news and put their emphasis on the eschatological events, but in general do not denounce the structural problems of society.

The prophecy is used to encourage people or as a means to legitimate some personal vision. For example, one prophecy led one church to start their programme of social action; some Neo-Pentecostal politicians (NPPs) use prophecy to support their candidacies as was the case of Serrano Elías. Other Evangelical leaders criticize the use and abuse of the gift of prophecy among those churches. In general these prophecies have to do with good news. The researcher never heard a specific prophecy which exhorted the Evangelical people or the nation to do something about injustice, lack of solidarity or against the countries' corruption. Ahead will be discussed the place of spiritual warfare among those churches.

The musicians⁴⁴ and music play an essential role in the liturgy in the Neo-Pentecostal services. The role of worship leaders⁴⁵ is just as important as that of the preacher or evangelist. They are the people who lead the worship and guide the congregations into a worship experience. In some churches the faithful are attracted much more to the worship experience than to the sermons. According to the researcher's

⁴⁴ The musicians and their compositions need to have a specialized study. Singers such as Marcos Witt (Mexico), Juan Carlos Alvarado (Guatemala), Danilo Montero (Costa Rica), Adrián Romero (Mexico) and Jaci Velázquez (Hispanic from the USA), base their lyrics on an ideology and theology which that transmits to the public. See the interview with Danilo Montero in "Conexión con Dios" in *Aleluya News*, Año 2 Numero 12, Guatemala.

⁴⁵ It needs to be observed that the worship leaders have a strong influence and pressure on the members. The Neo-Pentecostal worship, through the songs, rhythm and dances exercises a power influence especially over the young people. At the same time, it needs to be pointed out that this power through leadership could in some cases be used to manipulate the emotions and wills of the members. In a measure they are exposed to ideas, beliefs or conduct which does not necessarily correspond to biblical criteria on Christian experience.

observations worship does not diminish the preaching time as sermons go on for at least another hour or more afterwards. These sermons follow thematic order about diverse subjects. The researcher observed that most of the members of those churches were eager to hear the pastor's sermon. Generally everyone stays until the end of the service.

3. The entrepreneurial style of church management

One of the particular characteristics of NEOP is the way that they administer the church and its projects. The model of administration of these churches comes from an entrepreneurial perspective. Even in the churches from a working class background the concept is the same. This is an element which accompanies their theology and the background of their leaders. Some of the founders were professionals connected to the secular world before their religious conversion. They were lay people submerged in the private business sector or the governmental bureaucracy. This was the case of the pastor of IFG who was a success motivator and IVF who worked as manager of a local bank, or the case of the pastor of the ICV church of the seventh zone who led his own business at the same time as pastoring his church.

The managerial element does respond to the magnitude of the growth of these churches and their projects. These churches have grown numerically, in volunteers and paid staff, educational projects, management and control of the mass media, the promotion of congresses for training and revivals, bible institutes, services offering help and a network of relations. To carry out their mission they have taken advantage of the administrative organization of work, mass media and contemporary technology. Some pastors acknowledge that the middle class schools of NPCs function essentially like private enterprises (Gálvez 2000: 5). They even affirm that the element of 'competence' is part of their philosophy in developing and promoting their projects (A8ESH). All the services that they offer are costly and on occasions expensive.

According to critics of NPCs this commercial aspect, consciously or subconsciously is linked to premises of the neo-liberal market economy (IO1). Other authors underscore that these criteria respond more to the leaders' vision. Miller notes that the success of these pastors is their visionary capacity which rests on their strong dependence of the Spirit and the expectancy of what they will receive from God according to the scriptures. As a result they often build a strong organizational structure around themselves.⁴⁶ Broadly speaking these forms of church administration are different to the more empirical model of the administration of church affairs common among traditional Evangelicals.

Another feature of the enterprise vision of these churches has to do with the way they carry out their pastoral work towards their congregation. As leaders they function as managers and as a result they do not have such a close relationship with their parishioners. They distribute the church's administrative tasks and delegate the pastoral aspect to the other leaders. Freston says that this same situation is observable in Brazil. Neo-Pentecostal leaders illustrate the tendency towards a connection between the religion of the middle class and the modern managerial approach. These not only absorb the business world but also professionals in this field become transformed into religious leaders (1998b:12-13). Some of the pastors of these churches told the researcher that the work of the pastor is channelled through the cell groups. These lay people are the ones who look after the members of the church, and they pastor each other.

4. Churches which attract young people

A good percent of the population of these churches is composed of relatively young people. This characteristic is more visible among those who worship at the 'Iglesia Casa de Dios', which was not included in the investigations for reasons which have been alluded to. The NPCs under study have many young couples between the ages of twenty-eight and

⁴⁶Donald E Miller Available at <http://www.pulpitandpew.duke.edu> pp. 9-10.

thirty-eight. The concern to reach young people is a key issue to prevent them from leaving the church. Stoll notes that in the population of the interior of the country in the 1980s, the new generations of young people and adolescents went very little to the Evangelical or Catholic churches; they did not want to imitate the faith of their parents (Stoll 1990: 319). This conduct varies in the context of the NPCs in the urban area.

These churches have been successful in attracting young people and they have involved them in the ecclesiastical activities. This phenomenon, up to a point, goes hand in hand with the age of the Guatemalan population: 48.30 per cent of the population are less than fifteen years old, 39.14 percent are between fifteen and fifty-nine and only 7.06 per cent are over sixty year old (United Nations 2000:144). The same phenomenon of young people being attracted to NEOP can also be observed in Brazil especially through the music, sports, among others activities which attract youth culture (Freston 1997:193-195).

The fact that young people are attracted to the NPCs is very significant in a country where some of the youth join gangs of thugs known as the 'Maras'. As can be seen later some of these churches are even reaching out to members of these gangs. In other words they are offering an answer to a sociological problem inside and outside of the Guatemalan urban areas. The use of musical concerts, theatrical presentations, retreats, cells for young people and the worship styles give the young people the possibility to know and accept the Neo-Pentecostal Christian faith.

Mass media stations such as 'Stereo Visión', 'Radio Viva' and other transmitters attract this population especially through the music. Concerts such as 'Explosión Juvenil' of the FCG annually unite thousands of young people for whom they provide music and some training. Some critics of the Neo-Pentecostal media presentations argue that the programmes do not contribute to Christian formation. For example, Fernando Montero (2002) commenting on some Costa Rican broadcasting stations notes that they mainly entertain young people, but they do not provide the best pastoral care. Rose & Schultz

(1992) from a partial point of view of those stations, note that they only reproduce the life styles of the North American world.

The radio programmes which the researcher listened to, dedicate more time to musical items. In some cases advice is given on general issues concerning the Christian faith, but they do not have programmes which stimulate analysis and reflexion on sociological themes which affect young people from a biblical perspective. In spite of these critics the researcher observed that the programmes of these stations have in their power the possibility of directing lots of young people and shaping their thought and behaviour in the future.

5. Charismatic leadership

This is another visible feature of the NPCs. This style of leadership has rejected the traditional form on how to select pastors and govern the church. They are not elected by a consistory of general assembly of a local church. With the exception of the LDG and ICV churches the pastors started their churches on their own. They believe that God designs leaders whose authority and vision should be respected and followed by the congregation. The governing elder (recognized as ‘apostle’ in some cases) is the first among the other elders and he has the final word in the way that the local church is managed.

According to some of the associate pastors the founding pastor is the person to whom God gave the fundamental vision (P1ICV). Generally this leader possesses a charismatic personality which leads them sometimes to assume strong type of leadership. Gálvez says that the NPCs exercise episcopal government with a body of elders as advisors. In this model they follow a vertical line which starts with the principal pastor and reaches to the cell group leader (2000: 5-6).⁴⁷ Not all of these pastors agree with regard to the apostolic recognition which some of these pastors claim for themselves.

⁴⁷ According to Gálvez this model is inspired in Church growth model of the Yoido church of pastor Cho (2000: 5-6).

The NPCs do not choose either their pastor or their elders as these churches started with their founders. With the exception of IVC church the senior pastors nominate the members of the board and other leaders. According to them they follow, up to a certain point, a theocratic concept which they say is governed by the Spirit. In other words, the elders are not elected by the assembly but designated by the pastor. The pastor has maximum authority. The board of elders provides feed back and supports the decisions or projects presented by the senior pastor (P4LDG). Choosing of the teams follows the same procedure. These are called and invited by the pastor according to their gifts and proved experience. In other words function is what defines designation (A8ESH). In some cases the principle leadership stays within the members of the family of the founding pastor.

That form of leadership is criticized by internal and external observers. One of the people interviewed said that he admired the vision of these pastors, but he does not agree with the way they assert their authority. He affirmed that ‘he does not approve of the way that the church is being led as nothing moves unless it is authorized by the pastor’ (IO6). [In Chapter three the discussion about charismatic leadership will be amplified].

6. Children of the mass media culture

The Neo-Pentecostals were born in the audio visual post-modern culture. In this sense they are sons of the spirit of the age. This emphasis has its genesis with the North American ‘electronic church’ of the 1980s. They spread a message which brought with it cultural baggage of the North American life-style which attracts many Latinos to the world of lights, fashions, economic abundance seduced vast sectors of the non Christian population as well as the Evangelicals themselves.

The televangelists Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart gave a great push to these programmes not only in Guatemala but also in all Latin-America. Later in the 1990s Pat Robertson promoted the ‘Proyecto Luz’ via satellite in Guatemala, El Salvador and

Nicaragua (Rose & Schultze 1992: 415-451).⁴⁸ This project was fiercely criticized for the ideological inclination in favour of the Nicaraguan counter-revolution.

The IFD church has a radio station 'Radio Exclusiva' and owns television Channel 27. Rigoberto Galvez, the manager of this channel wrote a book Teología de la Comunicación (2001) in which he presents an analysis of the media and provides guidelines about how to use them. The ESH circulates the vision and messages of pastor Caballeros through 'Stereo Visión' and their twenty one booster channels in FM in all the country. 'Radio Viva' [a private station], 'Rhema Stereo' of the 'Iglesia Ebenezer', Radio Exclusiva of IFG church and others, have a big influence among NPL and other evangelicals.⁴⁹ These radio stations play religious music, preaching, family counselling, teachings and some cultural programmes.

Channel 27 introduced the daily programme 'Good day' which offers information, orientation and help in health, education and other issues. Although these stations have their own programmes some of them do depend on imported material especially from the United States. In spite of criticism from some analysts of these mass media, the researcher observed that several programmes were well accepted by both Evangelicals and Catholics. These people call the stations or testify in some programmes about some benefit they have received. The Catholic audience has also used the same strategy as the Evangelicals with regard to radio broadcasting. They acquired several radio frequencies to reach their faithful and to counterbalance the Protestant advance.⁵⁰

Some of the Neo-Pentecostal media has been criticized for the so called television marathons because of their emphasis in raising money. They ask viewers to make financial pacts or deals with God which are supposed to enable them to get out of the debt of

⁴⁸ Susan Rose & Quintin Schultze in their analysis of mass media in Guatemala show the influence received from the United States (1992: 415-451).

⁴⁹ The field of Evangelical radio diffusion had been around for several decades, the Neo-Pentecostal thrust exceeded them in number and volume. In a measure they erupted and captured an audience which had been only in the hands of a few stations such as the 'Radio Cultural' of the Central American Mission (CAM International), 'Radio Vea' of the Elim church and 'Unión Radio' of the Adventist church, and 'Alianza Stereo' of the Guatemalan Evangelical Alliance Church and some others.

⁵⁰ Some stations such as 'Radio María' and 'Kyrios' were installed just next to the evangelical frequencies and broadcast similar programmes.

poverty. Costa Rican pastors questioned Channel 23 'Enlace', and petitioned for the Evangelical Alliance (FAEC) to adopt a firm stance in asking the channel to change its attitude so that its message can be congruent with the 'biblical principle that salvation, health, miracles, the gift of the spirit, the provision and blessing of God, amongst other blessings, are the product of God's grace'.⁵¹

7. Independent churches

The majority of these churches are independent in terms of their beginnings, organization, financing and human resources. This range is a key factor which places these churches within the third wave of revival as was stated already. Churches were established as a result of a particular vision that their founder had. The majority of churches were established through their own initiative and with local resources. So in these churches there is a marked emphasis on giving tithes and special offerings for projects. In general terms the links they have with churches within and outside of Guatemala are more of a ministerial character than economic. In the Evangelical context, the NPCs developed their ministry by themselves. Only the ICV church developed from the missionary effort of the World Alliance of California in the United States. Later the Guatemalan ICV churches almost became a denomination during the three decade period.

These churches started in an independent manner from the traditional Evangelical scene. According to Zapata these churches started with an interdenominational character (1982:168), while Berberían points out their independent character (1983: 38). In the beginnings they called themselves 'Christians' more than Evangelicals for strategic reasons. As was indicated before, they preferred to call themselves Christian churches so as to get closer to the Catholic groups. At the beginning they did not form a part of the Guatemalan Evangelical Alliance. Some years later most of the churches in this study became affiliated to the Alliance although they have their own Apostolic Council. These

⁵¹ 'Pastores piden a Canal 23 Enlace que cambie de actitud', in new sent by 'ALC' (Agencia Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Comunicaciones) director@alcnnoticias.net, sent the 20th February 2003.

churches have generally gained the acceptance as part of the Guatemalan Evangelical community. Wynarczyk, Seman and Majo affirm that Argentinean NEOP in contrast to Brazil and Uruguay is more connected to the Evangelical world (1995: 9-10). With a few exceptions the same would be true for the NPCs in Central America.

Neo-Pentecostals tend to seek a certain type of unity with the rest of the Evangelical churches around some congresses, evangelistic campaigns or prayer chains to all the churches. However inside these churches there does not seem to be much proximity between them. Every church manages its own agenda of work and class position. In other words, the researcher did not observe any exchanges between the middle and high class ESH church and the middle and working class LDG church. Each church has distinct emphases, projections and populations. This sense of independence helps them to project their vision and their expansion projects. At the same time, it exposes them to a feeling of being isolated and individualistic in a context where in some churches divisiveness forms part of the way of mission. These churches do not have any relationship with the Catholic Church at institutional level.

8. Militant laity

Another characteristic of these churches is the strong lay presence in the diverse work groups. Even though they do not keep a register of the members,⁵² and experience a constant transition of members,⁵³ they have a very strong lay participation. The model of commitment is shown by their pastors who started out their leadership as lay people. Some of them abandoned their profession or business and dedicated themselves full-time to the church.

⁵² The Senior Pastor of ICV affirms that in his church they do not have a list of all the people who visit the church. They only have a list of the people who give money (PIICV).

⁵³ There exists a rotating population between these churches. According to an observer, members of these churches change congregations according to how they feel that 'God is moving' (IO1). A good number of members from other Evangelical churches moved on to those churches from the beginning of their foundation.

The majority did not attend any seminary before assuming their pastorate. They acquired their biblical training on their own,⁵⁴ while others took formal theological training after they had established their ministries.⁵⁵ In fact, the Neo-Pentecostals imitated the classic Pentecostal model which pushed lay pastors into the field of mission before they had had any formal biblical preparation.⁵⁶ There is here some continuity with Pentecostal traditions about how the pastors are called and involved in fulltime ministry. The difference is that the majority of the Neo-Pentecostal pastors are professionals with university training or are people with a business background. In the last few years the majority of these churches have introduced training programmes to prepare their leaders.

Although the person who stands out in these churches is the founding pastor, the development and advance of the churches' mission and projects rests with the laity. These churches move and grow because a large number of lay people are involved in a diversity of ministries. The church functions with an army of volunteers enthusiastically inspired by the vision of the pastor or the elders. It is interesting to see the laity assume jobs such as assistant, members of prayer teams, intercession and liberation, prison visitation, visiting hospitals, and evangelistic activities and small groups which carry out some team evangelistic tasks in which included social help such as providing clothes, food, and some medical services.

Perhaps the largest mobilization can be observed among the coordinators of cell groups. These churches assume the declaration of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century about the 'priesthood of all believers'. In his visits to the NPCs and other churches outside of Guatemala, the researcher observed the fervour with which these lay

⁵⁴ The founding pastor of IVF notes that through an autodidactic process they understood the fundamentals of Christian doctrine and theology (P6IVF).

⁵⁵ This is the case of some of the Neo-Pentecostal pastors who did Masters and Doctors degrees in North American universities such as Oral Roberts University of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

⁵⁶ Generally, the Pentecostals sent out their pastors without formal theological education. They were sent because they had had a call and because they showed evidence of having a charismatic experience. Today many Pentecostal churches have their own seminaries and provide solid biblical training for their pastors and lay leaders.

people assume the church's vision as well as the jobs assigned to them within and outside of the church precincts.

In these churches women have more liberty to be leaders. Some of them lead women groups, children's ministries, worship groups, family groups and other existing projects. A woman informant said that the role of the woman has been important in founding these churches. Many of them are founding members and participate in the financial support and diffusion of these churches. The pastors' wives and other ladies are recognized as pastors and exercise open leadership in different areas of the work although under the authority of the senior pastor. According to Garrard-Burnett in Austin Texas there are two churches which were started by Guatemalans affiliated to the 'Iglesia Príncipe de Paz' and Elim churches that are led by two female pastors.⁵⁷ [The role of the lay people in these churches will be amplified in Chapter five].

E. THEOLOGICAL EMPHASES

Neo-Pentecostal beliefs are the result of a mixture of doctrines from the Pentecostal world, some doctrines from the Protestant Reformation and their own emphasis. Neo-Pentecostals are closer to the Pentecostal doctrines than to that of the historic churches. Wynarczyk shows that at the theological level NEOP sits better on Pentecostal roots and on Pentecostal topics but he emphasizes that some of them gravitate towards the new Neo-Pentecostal character (Wynarczyk *et.al.* 1995:9). Here both continuity with, and breaking away from Pentecostal traditions can be seen. Samuel Berberían affirms that 'the behaviour and theological teaching of Neo-Pentecostalism has strong Calvinist inclinations and very little Arminianism' (1983: 19). It is also evident that NEOP introduces new contents and forms which distinguish them from classic Pentecostalism. With the theological differences in mind Guatemalan NEOP is known as 'more refined Pentecostalism' (IO2). An analysis of

⁵⁷ Virginia Garrard-Burnett, 'Commentary Chapter five', Garrad@mail.utexas.edu 19-03-07.

the most common Neo-Pentecostal beliefs will follow taking into account that these are not exclusively theirs.

1. Prosperity Theology

Those who study NEOP consider that this doctrine is the key of their growth. It attracts above all middle and high class people. Of course this is now also a common belief among poor and working classes NPCs churches. The Neo-Pentecostals affirm that God wants spiritual and material prosperity for his children. Their favourite text is a message from St. John: 'I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well' (3 John 1:2 NIV). The researcher observed this text sculptured in a bronze framework in one of the main entrances of the church of pastor Cho in the Yoido Church in Korea. This shows the emphasis that the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches give to the theme of material prosperity as well as the influence that the NPCs have received from other churches outside of Latin-America.

They believe that God desires both spiritual prosperity as well as material prosperity for his children. NEOP brings with it a proposal of how Christians can confront poverty and how to be successful. They do not just believe that God blesses and prospers, but rather assume a positive attitude towards the blessings of God and an attitude of rejection of poverty which according to them is not part of the purposes of God.

Prosperity is a sign of God's blessing and believers must claim it. The senior pastor of FCG makes the following comments about the experience of his church: 'There are many people who have been totally healed [...] other families have experienced financial recovery as they apply these biblical principles which determine economic abundance' (cited in 'Fraternidad Cristiana de Guatemala' 1999a: 4). According to this Neo-Pentecostal pastor's testimony church members who arrived to church in debt, with nothing more than the clothes on their backs, got over their crisis and live in the prosperity of God. In the context of these churches it is a contradiction to be a Christian and to be

poor. They believe that Christians are called to be prosperous in every sense of the word. This is not just about getting by with the basic elements needed for living but it implies living comfortably.

What do the Neo-Pentecostals mean by prosperity? The Neo-Pentecostal church emphasizes both the spiritual as well as physical and financial wellbeing of its members. There is not just one criterion to define this belief among them. However it is possible to observe that 'prosperity theology' considers that salvation in Christ includes spiritual and material blessings. According to Bianchi this prosperity goes beyond economic wealth. They say that, 'to speak of the prosperity of a nation, we do not only take into account the economic aspects but also we must analyze various aspects in relation to the environment within which social activities are developed: such as security, confidence, credibility, justice, identity, hope, liberty' (Aleluya News Año 3 No. 16: 28).

Frequently Neo-Pentecostal preachers exhort their faithful: 'Remember, you are a child of the King' and 'believe the Word of God and claim the promises'. These declarations imply having access to the uncountable riches of God. These are material and not spiritual riches. They consider that riches are a clear manifestation of his blessing to his children. A pastor said, 'if God has chosen us, he does not want to make us poor but rich' (Muñoz in Aleluya News Año 2 No.5: 36). The Christian needs to recognize their status with God and ask the promises of scripture. According to the Neo-Pentecostals if a believer does not prosper it could be that he does not have enough faith or maybe he is living in sin.

Among the more common doctrines within their beliefs about material prosperity is the law of 'sowing and reaping'. This teaching states that if God is given the corresponding tithes and offerings, He will give one hundred percent returns to those who are disposed to give. The fundamental idea is that in the measure that Christians give to God, they will be prospered. This emphasis does not only come from the NPCs but also from Pentecostal pastors. The pastors of the Pentecostal Church 'Prince of Peace' said that 'the tithing law is

like insurance and it must be obeyed, there is no option' (in Aleluya News Year 2 no. 5: 36). The place of the tithes and offerings becomes vital in the Neo-Pentecostal context for the Christians to experience prosperity. These emphases and praxis about material blessings have been questioned by different authors (Góngora 1996, Ocaña, 2002 and others).

The majority of the pastors and laity interviewed affirmed that prosperity also came through work and saving and thus it does not come only as a blessing from God. Believers should assume responsibility of having a positive attitude and working if they want to achieve material wellbeing. In some way they are similar in approach to the Weber's Protestant ethics, but from a different angle and praxis. [In Chapter four this analysis will be amplified].

In short although these churches try to affirm that prosperity has to do with every area of the Christian life, the practice of seeking material prosperity dominates their discourse. Also their interpretation of the blessing of God remains trapped in the altar of material things.

2. Spiritual warfare

Spiritual warfare is the key to Neo-Pentecostal theology. It is the practical and ideological axle of their activities (Wynarczyk 1995b: 113).⁵⁸ Sik Hong adds that that it is the starting point for all their other teachings on, healing, liberation and prosperity (2001: 42). This is not just a part of their theology or religious experience, but it is a fundamental part of their worldview and how they understand the spiritual struggle with the kingdom of darkness. Among the churches analyzed the ESH assume spiritual warfare as the principle hub of their theology and praxis. Pastor Caballeros in his book De Victoria en Victoria considers that this is the fundamental tool for the church's mission and for the believers to be able to

⁵⁸ Harold Caballeros in his book Victoria en Victoria traces the theology and methodology of spiritual warfare from the conflict which there is between the Kingdom of God and darkness for human destiny. (1999).

acquire spiritual and material blessings (1999: 11-14). He underlines that there is no other way to for the believer and the mission of the church to win apart from this battle.

This spiritual warfare goes beyond exorcism which is practiced by the classic Pentecostals at the personal level. NEOP confers this fight to a cosmic dimension and it acquires several levels of battles, hierarchies and spiritual mapping. This implies that spiritual warfare takes on a socio-political dimension in its scope and meaning. Wynarczyk underlines that this war ‘Proposes a metaphysical perception of social, economic and natural occurrences’ (1995b: 115).

In other words, this is not a war in a metaphoric sense, but rather it has to do with the exorcism of spirits which are entrenched in people, structures and territories. Peter Wagner, one of the founders of this movement describes three levels of spiritual warfare: 1) at ground level which needs to be carried out side by side with evangelism; 2) a level in occultism which affects especially the emotions and 3) the strategic level of warfare (Wagner in Sik Hong 2001:38-39). Wynarczyk affirms that this last one has to do with territorial spirits, spiritual mapping and the transference of spirits and genealogical transmission (1995b: 117-18).

In the 1990s the ESH church promoted a project ‘Jesus Lord of Guatemala’ as a campaign to clean out the territorial demons. According to them those spiritual forces were affecting the spiritual, social, economic and political life of the country. This exorcism is an open battle which fights against these spirits through different means. For example, they believe that poverty is generated through the presence of evil spirits and as a result families and communities need to be exorcized. For Neo-Pentecostals this is not an allegory but a real battle with the devil’s army. They are sure that this ‘spiritual warfare’ strategy is the way that God will get rid of the demons that have tied up economic prosperity and in doing so the country will be changed.

For some Neo-Pentecostal pastors the role of the Christian leaders is to guide the faithful into open warfare against evil through spiritual warfare. This was why Caballeros

promoted in Guatemala the campaign 'Jesus Lord of Guatemala' project, by trying to recruit 50,000 intercessors within the Evangelical churches. In his call to the pastors he underscored the nature of the spiritual struggle, 'God wants to open the heavens over Guatemala. The social, physical, material situations are no more than a reflection of the spiritual situation' ('Llamados a Redimir nuestra nacion', n.d: 1).

According to Caballeros and other pastors, God wants a life of health and prosperity for his children but Satan is preventing these from reaching the believer. There is open resistance and opposition which need to be defeated. Because of this there is the need for spiritual warfare which needs to be conducted at various levels (1999: 12, 22). Cantón affirms that this campaign was proposed by Serrano Elías to help him to get rid of the demons of corruption, drug trading or guerrilla subversive actions (1998: 4).

In their exorcism practices they resort to a series of representations which in some cases appear grotesque to those who study the Neo-Pentecostal phenomena. For example, some pastors anoint cities or territories sprinkling oil over them from a small aircraft. Others fight against demons figuratively in mountains or cities. These forms of expression seem to go hand-in-hand with the emerging of certain emphases of the old traditional religions which turned to certain rites to please or appease the angry gods. Thus the prayer warfare, anointing of territories and exorcism are within the Neo-Pentecostal world, keys to breaking up the spiritual hosts of evil and establish the Kingdom of God. However, in practice the overemphasis on demonic spirits, diminishes human responsibility and minimizes structural problems of the socio political context. Stoll notes that 'Social exorcism could be the language of top-down reform, or else just a rationalization for not treating structural problems while giving elite believers an ideology of empowerment' (cited by Freston 1997: 193).

Spiritual warfare assumes as well an ideological tint. Many of the Neo-Pentecostal pastors associate the territorial demons with the presence and influence of the Afro-indigenous religions and the ideological leftist postures or the ideas of secular humanism.

On other hand, the emphasis of NPCs on the evil forces as responsible for the poverty, undermine in some way the human responsibility about the social structure of society.

3. Apostolic Christianity

The presence of miracles and prodigious signs is part of Neo-Pentecostal theology. This emphasis according to Peter Wagner has to do with the power manifested in ‘The New Apostolic Reformation’. For him the ‘Apostolic connotes a strong focus on outreach plus a recognition of present-day apostolic ministries’ (2000:14-18).⁵⁹ The signs and wonders refer to the manifestations of the Spirit.

This emphasis is aligned to the ‘new apostolic movement’ to which the majority of the Guatemalan NPCs belong.⁶⁰ The Neo-Pentecostal movement believes that they have the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit which is manifested in healing, liberation of spirits, spiritual warfare, prophecy, being slain in the Spirit, spiritual mapping, prophetic acts, fervent intercession, among others (Wagner 2000:14-18). In contrast with the Pentecostals, they do not place much emphasis on the baptism of the Spirit and speaking in tongues, but rather in the anointing of the Spirit for diverse manifestations.

The move of the Spirit is not only a distinctive but also an essential part of the Neo-Pentecostal movement. Sik Hong shows that the same feature exist in Argentinean NEOP. He says ‘It is possible to observe in the centre of the Charismatic Movement the conviction that all of the signs, gifts and spiritual manifestations of the New Testament are prevailing in the contemporary church’ (2001:37). This apostolic reformation refers to a return to the first years of the church. In the centre is the restoration of the five ministries named by St. Paul in the Ephesian epistle ‘he gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be

⁵⁹ Peter Wagner gives this movement a new name, ‘the new apostolic reformation’. The characteristics are the following: a new name, a new authority structure, a new way of training leaders, a new ministry focus, a new worship style, new prayer forms, new finances, a new transcultural vision and a new orientation of power. (2000:14-18).

⁶⁰ In October 2000 the World Congress for Revival was held in Guatemala City. The central theme was the apostolic ministry. At the end of the congress, in a concentration in the National Mateo Flores football stadium the most important pastors of the Neo-Pentecostal movement were acknowledged to be apostles.

evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people [...]'(Ephesians 4:11 NIV).

For Neo-Pentecostals the apostolic ministry and the manifestations of the Spirit should be the mark of all Christians in the twenty-first century. Kay in his book Apostolic Networks in Britain: New ways of being church (2007) analyses in detail the demands of the network of Charismatic churches in England with respect to the apostolic restoration and other gifts experienced by Christians in the first century.

Rony Chaves pastor of the 'Centro Cristiano' church in San Jose, Costa Rica not only promotes Wagner's teachings, but also the idea that these movements prepare the way for the coming of the Kingdom of God. He said 'We must unite as never before. Only as the 'apostolic network' is linked up can we bring in the Government of God with power in these last days'.⁶¹ This posture shows an eschatological paradigm change. The Kingdom of God is interpreted as a present reality which some pastors equate with economic liberalism, based on the assumption of the point of view of the theology of power and North American reconstruccionism. In other words, it has to do with the idea of applying Old Testament biblical principals literally to the different situations of the social activity including the taking political power. Other pastors and analysts of the Neo-Pentecostal phenomena question the anointing practices and the pretension of representing the first century church. For, example, Núñez criticises specifically the apostolic authority which this apostolic reform pretends to establish (2001:28). Neo-Pentecostal pastors also are criticized for not giving due importance to the work of the Holy Spirit in the history of Protestantism from the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century until now. This might indicate that the

⁶¹In his messages the theme of the apostolic reform has a central position. See the movements he leads in his website 'Apóstol Rony Chaves' Available at <http://www.ronychaves.org/srch2/index.aspx> Accessed 12.01.08. Some critics such as pastor Miguel Rosell and Pablo Caballero refute the ideas of the apostolic reform which Rony Chaves proposes. See documents in 'Rony Chavez' available at http://www.salvacioneterna.com/rony_chaves.htm Accessed 12.01.08

Neo-Pentecostals give the impression that the Holy Spirit was absent from the church and the world during several centuries of church history.

4. A new eschatological orientation

One of the distinctive features of NEOP is the new orientation towards the present world, in other words, post-millennialism, a doctrine which teaches that the Kingdom of God is a real presence in the world. If Pentecostals were criticized because of their preoccupation with heavenly things and an abandonment of earthly things (pre-millennialism orientation), the Neo-Pentecostals are criticized because they have installed themselves in this present world (post-millennialism). This way of thinking shows a significant eschatological change in the way that they assume day-to-day activities. This does not imply a conscious change at the doctrinal level among its membership, but rather an adoption of an orientation which is more open to the things of this present world.

Of course, this eschatological orientation is not only the property of the Neo-Pentecostals. From another hermeneutical perspective, since their arrival in Latin America, some historic denominations have been occupied with social aspects because of their post-millennial eschatological position. In the 1970s some Protestant and Catholic theologians became identified with Liberation Theology basing their reflexions and praxis on a postmillennial type of eschatology from similar angles.

Neo-Pentecostal eschatology appears to leave pre-millennialism typical of classic Pentecostalism and other Evangelical churches. This new orientation underlines an unusual interest in earthly things of this world. NEOP believes that the gospel and the movement of the Spirit are realities for today's world, which push them to get involved in distinct platforms of human activities here and now in this life and so it can be said that this new orientation gives more importance to the micro level of life. The eschatological, ideological and political posture of the Theology of Liberation, on the other hand, pushed

them to promote structural changes in the economic and political structures of Latin America. These changes did not become a reality in the continent.

Of course, the new eschatological emphasis, especially among the NPL from the working and poorer classes, runs alongside old dispensationalism (an eschatological position which affirms the rapture of the church before the great tribulation and later the installing of the millennial reign of Christ). Kay affirms that the Pentecostals adopted Darby's and the Plymouth Brethren dispensationalist system later encapsulated in the Scofield reference Bible (2007: 29). Of course today some Pentecostal theologians claim that their churches are not alienated from the present world and point out that they are interested and involved in social issues.⁶²

Up to a certain point, the message about the second coming of Jesus does not have much emphasis among Neo-Pentecostals churches. Some of the Neo-Pentecostals emphasize that they do not believe that they need to discuss the timing of the second coming, but rather emphasis must be on this present life keeping in mind that one day Jesus will come back. In fact they seem to be very comfortable and happy living in this present world. The emphasis on the prosperous life, the formation of political parties, seeking political power to govern their nation, the construction of large church buildings, among others things, occupies their mission agendas individually and as a church. These are the immediate objectives which motivate them day-by-day in the mission tasks. Positive faith by spoken lip confession to get objects or privileges, claiming material possessions for the children of the King, recognizing that in Christ they are rich, show that

⁶² Studies by Pentecostal writers, theologians and pastors show that even they assume dispensacionalism in their theology, in history and practice they are more open to the present world. Today there are a series of works which point to a waking up of the Pentecostals to look for an eschatological posture identified with the here and now in the Kingdom of God. See works by Dempster, Murray W., Klaus B.D., and D. Petersen (Eds) Called & Empowered Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective Massachussts: Hendrickson Publisher, 1991; The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel. Oxford: Regnum, 1999; Villafañe, Eldin 1996: El Espíritu Liberador Hacia una ética social pentecostal hispanoamericana, Buenos Aires: Nueva Creación; Miller & Yamamori Global Pentecostalism The New Face of Christian Social Engagement. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007; Petersen, Douglas A Pentecostal Theology o Social Concern in Central America Ph.D thesis Oxford Centre of Mission Studies, (1995); and Petersen D. Not by Might nor by Power a Pentecostal Theology of Social Concern in Latin America (1996).

the Neo-Pentecostals have exchanged hope for the future for a vision of the present kingdom. Generally, the NPCs focus their vision on prosperity from an essentially individualistic perspective. The use of the personal pronoun “mine” predominates over the “our” of community.

Overcoming the dichotomy of church and world becomes part of this eschatological change. It seems that the old dichotomy between the sacred and the secular gives way to a more open participation in the world. Their interest in education projects, managing the mass media for social communication, building of mega-church buildings, exemplifies this involvement with the ‘world’. This new worldview can explain in part why NEOP is attractive to the middle and high class families of these churches. Small or middle sized business men, professionals, army personnel or politicians, show more interest in things down here than those in heaven. Harold Caballeros while talking about the revival expected in Guatemala emphasized: ‘We long for a movement of God and his manifestation, but it is true to say that our eyes are on the restoration of our Guatemalan society as well as all of Latin American society’ (Aleluya News special edition 2000: 32). Of course, for now this interest and involvement is on a more individual level and includes personal success.

Their eschatological focus clearly assumes the building of the Kingdom here and now in connection with the goals of the church and especially the Neo-Pentecostal politicians are more open to the possibility of getting involved in the issues of Guatemalan society. Unfortunately the example of some politicians within and outside of the NEOP, have left a negative balance in the country revealing their desire for power and political ambition. This taking on board of the present world also exposes the Neo-Pentecostals to ideological, political and economic forces of the ruling economic system. As will be noted later Neo-Pentecostal pastors and politicians will even assume that market economy is the best system because they think that it is closest to biblical criteria.

F. THE INFLUENCES ON NEO-PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

The Guatemalan Neo-Pentecostals are part of the global Neo-Pentecostal movement. They are linked through different means to the development and expansion of Neo-Charismatic Christianity around the globe. Although the Neo-Pentecostals emerged within the Guatemalan context, they are connected to similar churches all over the world. So they assume some doctrines, experience and/or evangelistic models from outside. These influences shape not only Neo-Pentecostal thinking and religious practices, but also diverse aspects of the life of other Evangelical churches.

1. The influence of the evangelists

The revivals of the Holy Spirit in Guatemala were the result mainly of North American evangelists. T. L. Osborn developed one of the first campaigns of healing and miracles in 1953. Ten years later the 'Calvario' church had experiences a charismatic renewal during the visit of the missionary Margarita Erdman. In the 1970s there was a successive visit of Puerto Ricans such as Yiye Ávila which stimulated Pentecostal growth. The presence of the Argentinean, Luis Palau stimulated the celebration of evangelistic crusades among all sectors of evangelicals. In the 1980s the ministries of Jimmy Swaggart and 700 Club of Pat Roberston gave a strong direction to mass media communication and the large healing campaigns in the football stadiums.

In the last decade the presence of Benny Hinn, Morris Cerulo [President of World Evangelisation], the Argentinean evangelists Alberto Motessi and Claudio Freidzon have all been part of a Neo-Pentecostal interchange with regard to evangelization and teachings of theology of Prosperity. Other North American evangelists and prophets like Cindy Jacobs, George Otis, Harold Etmon, Marlyn Kickey and Joshua Cho Hee Seo from Korea and others, have participated in different Neo-Pentecostal International Congress in Guatemala.

2. Theological influences

Church growth theology is a strategy which has been central in Neo-Pentecostal numerical expansion. Authors such as Dr. Paul Yonggi Cho and Peter Wagner have influenced these churches as well as the Evangelical church at large. Pastor Cho's books about prayer were distributed in the 'Jesus is Lord of Guatemala' campaign which the ESH church promoted. They printed fifty thousand copies which were distributed among the Guatemalan pastors and laity in 1990. The ESH senior pastor is a member of the Council of Directors of Church Growth International.

Wagner and Cho visited the country with other Pentecostal pastor from Latin-America. The churches of LDG started family groups following the experience of the Salvadorian Elim Church and later adopted the Korean model (Guillén 1997:9). The IVF and other churches adopted the growth model of the 'ladder to success' of the Colombian pastor Cesar Castellanos. This pastor adopted Castellano's G12 as his strategy for numerical growth (P6IVF).

According to Pastor Vladimiro Vásquez, the G12 is the most powerful tool for the training of leaders known as 'the ladder to success'. This model includes the following stages: win a new believer, consolidate and look after the new Christian (including going to the encounters) and disciple the new Christian for life and mission. Finally, the stage comes when these recruited new Christians are sent out to disciple others through means of the groups of twelve.⁶³ All the NPCs have adopted this model with their own modifications. [In Chapter three more details will given about these groups].

Another strong doctrine among the Neo-Pentecostals has to do with prophecy and prophetic words. Prophecy is a usual practice in the Pentecostal world. However in the Neo-Pentecostal context it acquires a different meaning. They refer to 'Prophetic word' which has to do with the declaration of texts or promises from the bible. In this way they

⁶³ Summary of the explication given by pastor Vladimiro Vásquez of the 'Visión de Fe' church which is an adaptation of the 'Model of the twelve' strategy for growth. See info@visiondefe.com Accessed el 11-01-2006.

evoke words or petitions which release the power of God in Heaven in favour of God's creatures, for health, finances or any other particular situations; as a whole they interpret the bible literally. Cindy Jacobs, President of the National Embassy of Prayer in the State of Texas has influenced the NPCs with her emphasis on prophecy and prayer. Another key Neo-Pentecostal doctrine is spiritual warfare. As it was mentioned authors like Peter Wagner and other like Charles Kraft and Ed Murphy have marked the missionary practice of these churches.

These churches though have also received strong influence in the area of finances. Experts like the Argentinean Andrés Panasiuk have given conferences on 'Financial Concepts' in churches and congresses under the auspices of these churches (P2FCG). His book Como llego al Fin de Mes [How I can get to the end of month] (2000) trying to help families on how they have to manage themselves about financial matters. Perhaps someone with more influence over the Neo-Pentecostals in terms of prosperity theology could be the ideas of Kenneth Copeland. His essential position is his emphasis on the will of God that everyone should be prosperous (1999: 10-11). These and other beliefs have been important factors in the formation of the thinking and beliefs of the pastors who promote 'prosperity' theology. Many NPL interviewed affirmed that those financial topics have been useful to them in improving their economical situation. Pastors and laity of these churches have also openly assumed the emphasis and criteria of market economy because they believe that this coincides with the Neo-Pentecostal beliefs.

These churches have adopted the ideas of certain authors to strengthen their leadership and the church in general. For example, the LDG churches, 'Iglesia Familiar Bethania' and the FCG churches, have adopted some books of the pastor and writer John Maxwell to train their people. On the other hand, LDG adopted Rick Warren's book 'The Purpose Driven Church' as well as other authors. These examples show that the Neo-Pentecostals have grown using other authors who come from within as well as without the

Neo-Pentecostal world, and these authors have been an influence in some way on the concept of their theology and the way they do mission.

3. Ties with the mass media

The communication media has been the natural way to export ideas, forms, strategies, beliefs and preaching styles among the NPCs. Television Channels 27 and 23 maintain and receive assessment and productions from The National Religious Broadcasters (NRB), the USA Hispanic National Religious Broadcasters, the Iberia-American Confederation of Christian Communications (COICOM), and with ENLACE which broadcast in channel 23 from San José, Costa Rica. These stations transmit all the Neo-Pentecostal beliefs. Denis Smith's analysis about the mass media in Central America shows that the Evangelical churches have been influenced by foreign broadcasting (In Rose & Schultze 1992: 289-305).

The Aleluya News magazine plays a very important role at the national level. This magazine created and produced by Guatemalan businessmen shares news, events and doctrines of the Neo-Pentecostal world. It emerged as a form of support and to provide orientation for some of the pastors of the mega-churches in Guatemala City. Up to a certain point it becomes the indirect voice of NPCs.

The worship concerts among other things have imported Hebrew music and dance which has penetrated the churches with great strength. In some churches there even exists a sort of Hebrew iconography in the buildings of these churches. Replicas of the star of David, candelabras, the table of proposition and the ark of the covenant can be observed in the altars or outside the NPCs.⁶⁴ In his visit to the 'Fuente de Agua Viva' church of the city of Carolina in Puerto Rico in 1999 the researcher observed that in one of the entrances replicas of Jewish symbols were placed and at the other door they exhibit replicas of dinosaurs from the Jurassic Park. At the side of the church building (which seats five

⁶⁴ To celebrate 50 years of the foundation of the Jewish State, a park was built in their honour in the installations of the IFD church.

thousand people) the apostle Rodolfo Font started the construction of 'Torre de Oración'. This building with ten levels was constructed with the idea of serving as a place for prayer, a museum of the Bible and as the headquarters of the radio and television studios of the church's Channel, NCN.

That combination of symbols in the church's installations and the construction of the prayer tower show the religious and entrepreneurial vision of the Neo-Pentecostal pastors. The Hebrew symbols can also be seen in Pentecostal churches who even sometimes present the flag of Israel along side the Guatemalan and the Christian flags in the pulpit. The NPCs along with most Evangelicals appreciate and admire the Jewish nation as the people of God. The lyrics and music of the Neo-Pentecostal singers and composers influence the theology, praxis and mission. Singers such as Marcos Witt and Adrián Romero from Mexico and Danilo Montero from Costa Rica among others exporters the rhythm, theological emphases and ideological influences of the moment.

Mass media communication influence the way of understanding life, how to worship God and how to have a charismatic Holy Spirit experience, among other things. At the same time the media exposes listeners or viewers to certain ideologies and cultural emphases of Evangelical conservatism. The researcher observed that the emphasis of many of the songs has an individual rather than a community character. Moreover the content of the songs stimulated a vertical relationship of the believer with God, but taught very little about the horizontal relationship of the believer with his neighbour. These songs which are known through radio and television are a powerful tool to encourage the NPL as individuals, but at the same time they promote individualism which affects the sense of solidarity.

4. Political influence

Like the rest of Central America, Guatemalan politicians have received visits and influence from people linked to the political right-wing of the United States. This help came during

the period when Ríos Montt was President in 1982 (Rose & Schultze 1992: 438). Evangelists identified with the North American conservative Evangelicalism such as Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell supported his government and promoted the programme of help for the country called 'International Love Lift' (Grenfell 1995: 60). Bill Bright the President of Campus Crusade for Christ International raised funds among the churches in the United States to give economic support to the government of Ríos Montt to help to reconstruct Guatemala which had been devastated by the armed conflict with the guerrilla.⁶⁵ Some analysts point out that this help had as its objective stopping the influence of the guerrilla groups which at that moment were opposed to the government and its economic policies. According to Stoll projects like FUNDAPI who aimed to help refugees, supported Ríos Montt's government and created opportunities for evangelism (1990:192).

The indirect influence which Evangelical politicians received came to them from the ideals of 'reconstructionism' (the application of the Old Testament laws on how to govern a nation) via evangelists, missionaries and North American consultants in political material. Guatemalan congressmen received workshops on democracy and legislative matters, above all during the presidency of Ríos Montt as President (1982-3) and when he was the president of the Congress of the Republic (1999-2003).

Freston (2001) analyzes in detail the development of the ideas of Guatemalan Evangelical politicians, especially the governments of Ríos Montt and Serrano Elías. He underlines that Francisco Bianchi a member of the elite Guatemalan families and member of the ICV church follows closely the religious right-wing of the United States and he openly identifies himself with the values of market economy (in Freston 2004a:132-134). The book La Liberación del Planeta Tierra (1987) of Gary North is a reference book for Neo-Pentecostal politicians. It has to do with the application of the Old Testament laws to some moral behaviour and how to rule a nation.

⁶⁵ Copy of the letter sent by Bill Bright to churches in the USA, Campus Crusade for Christ International Arrowhead Spring, San Bernardino, California 92414, USA, April 21, 1983.

CONCLUSIONS

The NPCs emerged within Guatemalan Protestantism from Historic denominations and the Pentecostals founded both by foreign missionaries as well as national leaders and lay people that had made their bases in Guatemala from 1872 onwards. These Protestants arrived with the blessing of the liberal governments who saw Protestantism as an ally to break the religious and political power of the Catholic Church and to introduce new ideas about progress. Their presence has been an important factor in the development of religious pluralism in the country. Today they represent more than a quarter of all the Guatemalan population.

During a century of presence in Guatemala Protestantism has presented a double attitude towards social and political problems, both presence and a desire to keep apart at the same time. From the beginning of the twentieth century they have contributed to education, health and family welfare. During the revolution of the 1944 and the government of Arbenz Protestants participated openly in both governments. However in later decades they retracted in the context of the armed conflict. Within this context a small group of Protestants as well as some Catholics participated openly in favour of justice and the rights of the working classes. Some got involved in social aid projects and the guerrilla warfare. The 1976 earthquake encouraged some Evangelicals to get involved in social aid. Later the Neo-Pentecostals arrived with the presidency of Ríos Montt, and they got involved in party politics.

The NPCs are rooted and established in urban areas and have their own identity and praxis up and down the country. In spite of the fact that they have not been around a long time the members of these churches are immersed in society as new social actors. From their particular Neo-Pentecostal theology they assume the world as their parish and they have come up with new religious ideas within and outside of Guatemala. These churches also consider that they are the carriers of a message which brings spiritual life and economic freedom to people, their families and society. They place particular importance

on evangelism, themes such as spiritual warfare, prosperity theology among others. Also some lay people are involved in political parties trying to get political power. According to their perspective they believe that they are contributing to the spiritual and social development of the country. They are new social actors from the religious perspective within and outside of Guatemala.

With that in mind some questions need to be asked. Do they stimulate in any way their members to go up on the social scale? What are the concrete effects of their participation and role in the social, political and religious context of Guatemala? Is the laity involved in civil society serving in favour of the community? Are they prepared to contribute to the country from the platform of ethics and Christian values? Or, on the contrary will they just follow the premises of market economy?

The Neo-Pentecostals affirm that the Guatemalans have to make some mental changes. According to them the fact that there is backwardness and poverty has to do with lack of faith and some cultural vices. They claim that this is especially so in the way that they see and think about the world. It is important to ask up to what point these churches do provide distinct values and support to their membership to improve their social and economical life. Can it be that these Neo-Pentecostal communities and their group of family support could become a social asset for the country?

The Neo-Pentecostals confront social problems through spiritual warfare. In face of this posture it is important to ask. In what ways can they move their ideas about spiritual warfare to the socio-political scene? Do they in fact dodge human responsibility attributing all the evil that the country suffers to demons? Up to what point do they take seriously the structural problems which generate poverty, violence, inequality, and other scourges of society?

The eschatological interpretation of their faith and the world leaves behind the old pre-millennial dispensationalist paradigm of some Evangelical churches. Most of NPS show greater interest in the present world and motivate their people to become involved in

the here and now. These pastors feel that Christians must be present in the world to preach the gospel and to influence society. Observing the thinking and social participation of the laity of these churches will be useful to validate or not the effect of the teaching of these pastors and their churches as far as their participation in society for the benefit of all.

Guatemalan Neo-Pentecostals are rooted in Guatemalan soil and have their own dynamics and resources. Taking into account this upsurge of mission to the interior of the country as well as abroad, up to what point are they prepared to confront the social problems of the country, and how do they contribute to social change? Up to what point does their numerical growth impact that life of the country? Chapter three will portray the vision that the NPCs have with respect to their presence in society and describe their projects in favour of the needy and Guatemala's socio-economic development.

CHAPTER III

NEO-PENTECOSTAL SOCIAL MINISTRIES

The present chapter continues the analysis of the profile of the NPCs concentrating on the ideas they have with respect to their perceived roles in society and the social programmes they develop. A panoramic view will be presented of the social vision which can be deduced from Neo-Pentecostal thinking in the Guatemalan context. In later chapters there will be a more detailed analysis of these aspects of the thinking and social role of the Neo-Pentecostal leaders and laity.

A. NEO-PENTECOSTAL PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY

How do the NPL perceive their social role and presence in society? Do they take on the world and its challenges or do they retract from them? Guatemalan NPL is very active in their world. Rather than passing their dreams and hopes to the future they face their present world and live out their lives with enthusiasm. In dialogue interviews the researcher did not hear complaints neither did he perceive any signs of desperation about the critical situation of the country. Their identification in Christ, their belief in the promises and power of the bible, and their belief that God is in control of everything, among others, is the foundation of this confidence.

For them the world could be chaotic but God is not. In one case, a pastor exhorted his members not to emigrate to the United States. He told them ‘the God who blesses there [USA] is also here in Guatemala’ (P3EHS). They face life’s challenges with an optimistic vision, and a good number of them serve in the local church’s projects. A portrait of how they see themselves will be presented.

1. Citizens of the World

The Neo-Pentecostals are occupied in the present world of the Kingdom. They have got involved in different aspects of the human activities as citizens of society. The ICV church

leaders say that Christians should be present in whole of society. For them the 'Kingdom of God should be manifested in everything we do and in all aspects of human culture' (P1ICV). Because of this they affirm that they have had influence in politics, education, and in the instruction in the world of commerce.

They consider that churches should equip their members for the work of ministry and so that they can have influence in the 'world' (the society) not just in the life of the church (P1ICV). This acceptance of the 'here' and 'now' shows an open attitude, especially of the lay people of the middle and higher classes, to get involved in the social, economic and political life of society around them.

Even though their projects have more to do with their own need some are beginning to get involved in service projects for others. One example of this can be seen in the experience of an entrepreneur, the manager the of the Banco de los Trabajadores, who with other Christian professionals founded a bank whose objectives favour their partners and through which missionary projects of local churches were financed though the tenth part of the entity. One of the founding partners expressed that they now have enough initial capital and soon will be able to start operating for the public.

The FCG founding pastor says that his church was established as 'a new congregation which could break all of traditional plans, a church which would leave for ever the mentality that the Christian should be poor, ignorant and without any influence in society' (P2FCG). This Pastor says that he encourages his members to be prosperous people who function as salt and light in the world. The Minister for Public Health was a member of this church in the year that interviews were carried out (P2FCG). It is possible to say that the Evangelicals have passed from a certain self-exclusion to a wide open relationship with society. According the ESH senior pastor the Evangelical revival has to bring with it social impact. This implies that both individuals and churches get involved in their worlds to seek for spiritual and social transformation (Caballeros 2002b: vi). So it seems natural for the Neo-Pentecostals to become immersed in the world of politics, the

economy, and social and cultural issues. Though a less open or specific mentality can also been found in the other pastors of these churches. They believe that they are here to ‘transform the world’ through their Neo-Pentecostal beliefs and practice although the whys and wherefores of this participation have more to do with religious purposes as well as personal promotion.

2. Education for development

Although the Neo-Pentecostals were not the first to found schools, they give education a very important place in their mission. They believe that these educative institutions (at primary, secondary and university levels) are a means of sharing the gospel and contributing to the development of the country. Among other goals they have the idea of ‘Forming generations who value and love justice and truth’.⁶⁶ Their educational objectives affirm that they do not only offer education, but also the training or formation of leaders. According to the leaders of the ESH and the FCG they say that they have the best Christian bilingual schools. They believe that they offer the best preparation in English (P2FCG).

These schools also seek to integrate secular knowledge with Christian values. The personnel of LDG School prepare some of their own textbooks. The LDG series ‘More than Conquerors’ used in their schools seek to integrate knowledge and human science with Christian morals and ethics (P2FCV). That school started in 2001 with educational encounters at an inter-institutional level. These meetings join together different educators who represent the best known schools from both the Christian as well as the secular world, including lecturers from the San Carlos University, Guatemala. The FCG School also tries to integrate Christian moral values during the devotional time that they offer to all classes and a diploma in bible studies which the students receive when they graduate.

The ESH schools use some English text books because of their accreditation process [for example they use Scott Foresman’s book for science]. All schools whether

⁶⁶ In Prospectus of the ICV Christian School

they are Evangelical or not have to follow the content which the Ministry of Education requires of them. Religious education is optional and by constitutional decree it has to be taught by the laity. In the presidency of Alvaro Arzú (1994-1998), The Welfare Secretary of the Presidency tried to introduce a pamphlet to promote values. The Catholic Church opposed this as they associated it with Neo-Pentecostal teaching.

The NPCs have also reached the context of the universities, Mariano Galvez was the first Evangelical university started by people linked with historic churches in 1965. The creation of the ICV Universidad Panamericana plans to encourage teaching from a Christian perspective in different fields of scientific knowledge. According to the University's authorities, the ethical element and academic excellence represent the fundamental philosophical pillars (L6ICV). In 2005 the San Pablo University was founded by the ESH church. It was established with the idea of offering an education for development from the perspective Christian values.

3. Enganging in politics

They wish to transform society from their particular focus and vision which is open to the world. The first stage is through political involvement. The ICV senior pastor affirms that: 'As a church we have an obligation to teach people biblical principles and biblical directives for a citizen to represent the Kingdom of God in Politics, and in the governance of the country [...]' (P1ICV). Cleary says that among the pragmatic Pentecostal believers in Brazil, the discussions are about social commitment which motivates some people to get involved in politics (1999:141). A good number of NPPs participate in the party politics as well as the civil society.

These NPPs continue to pursue the idea of bringing needed changes from the top, from the sphere of political power. The bad experiences with Ríos Montt and Serrano Elías have not deterred the dreams of NPPs and they continue to seek opportunities to reach political power. The presence of those NPPs in the high spheres of government woke up in

the Evangelicals to the realization that they were numerous and the possibilities that they could have for political participation. Freston notes that Guatemala has been one of the best known examples of Protestant political involvement in the Third World (2004a: 132).

After Ríos Montt presidency, Serrano Elías member of the ESH church founded the Movimiento de Acción Solidaria (MAS) with whom he won the 1991 elections. This election result shows that the Evangelical vote is important in Guatemala. Cantón says that the election of Serrano Elías in January 1991 occurred thanks to the Evangelical push (1998: 6). At the end of the 1980s the effervescence of the NNPs for politics led them to found political parties and several of them put their names forward as presidential candidates.

This project of carrying out changes to benefit society from above is an essential part in the aspirations and propaganda of NPPs. The 'Frente Republicano Guatemalteco' party founded by Ríos Montt won the 1994 legislative elections and the Presidential elections of 1999. A similar Evangelical political experience can be observed in other countries of Latin America as well. Freston says that although many Evangelicals are involved in politics in Brazil the key actors tend to be mainly Baptists and Pentecostals. In the 2002 elections twelve Evangelical congressmen and two senators were elected (2004:147). In other words the Guatemalan Neo-Pentecostals have taken party politics as a normal part of what they are and what they do every day. For example, Francisco Bianchi who was the governing elder of the ICV church was the founding member and presidential candidate of the ARDE political party.

The vice-presidential candidate of the same party, Manolo Bendfelt is a member of the ESH church. Efraín Recinos leader of the 'Guardianes del Vecindario' movement (a civil middle class organization whose aim is to protest against the abductions and violence

which result from the abduction industry and the drug trade) is a member of the FCG church. He was candidate to be the mayor of Guatemala City at this same time.⁶⁷

Political participation comes as a result of previous experiences and as a part of the teaching of the churches. Several government functionaries belong to these churches. For the Neo-Pentecostals, party or civic political life is just a part of daily business. The recent decision of Pastor Harold Caballeros to form a political party and look for the presidency in 2007 is evidence that the Neo-Pentecostals are reaching out for political power. The shadows of Ríos Montt and Serrano Elías have not been an obstacle to them for presenting their ideas and political projects.⁶⁸ The NPL say that they are still waiting for the true politician in the future. [This discussion will be amplified in Chapter five].

The Neo-Pentecostals also are starting to have a more open participation in the civic sphere of society. Some members of these churches direct civic organizations in some of the government ministries. Some churches like Verbo have begun to make some public declarations about social issues. For example in 1996, the 'Esther Ministry' started the campaign 'For love of my Nation, I will not keep silent' among parents. This campaign discussed issues such as 'Transforming misery into wellbeing and prosperity'.⁶⁹ As will be seen later, the confrontation with structures which afflict the country take on a more spiritual shade, and generally they do not get involved with sorting out the socio-economic problems or dealing with oppressive structures.

4. Liberation of the spiritual forces that oppress

From the perspective of Neo-Pentecostal theology, the world is under the oppression of evil forces who affect people, societies and nations. The social, political and economic, problems are a part of this spiritual reality. So they affirm that these problems need to be

⁶⁷ The researcher discussed this participation in 'La Participación Política de los Evangélicos Guatemaltecos Una revisión Crítica', Israel Ortiz in the conference presented in the Foro Evangélico Permanente under the auspices of the Latin American Theological Fraternity, Guatemala May 1999.

⁶⁸ The analysis of James Grenfell (1995) and Mathew Samson (2002) show the particularities of both governments.

⁶⁹ In 'For love of my Nation, I will not keep silent' letter sent by Maly de Bianchi to parents of the ICV and other churches, Guatemala September 1996 [without date of month].

confronted through spiritual warfare. This is the hermeneutical key to understand and confront the structures which oppress society. According to the Neo-Pentecostals, corruption, poverty, illiteracy, delinquency, and misery have a spiritual origin and so they need to be combated in this plane. Caballeros says that ‘spiritual warfare is the tool given by God for effective evangelism, revival and the transformation of our society’ (1999: 9). They have moved the cosmic battle to the area of social problems. In this sense, problems are identified with demons which need to be exorcized to free a neighbourhood or a country from their negative influence. Every Christian has to assume this battle so as to achieve the spiritual and material blessings as an individual and at the level of society as a whole.

The theme of spiritual warfare applies to a series of indicators such as attacks on social disorganization by spirits or the need to bind up Satan. These spirits assume specific names as territorial spirits, of say social injustice, human exploitation, and spirits which move and work in the cenacles of political power (Wynarczyk 1995b: 117). In other words, countries, social structures, should be liberated from the demons which have them in slavery. The way to free them is through the spiritual battle by means of prayer warfare. The Neo-Pentecostals have moved the spiritual war to the terrestrial plane. It is a fight to death with the forces of evil which oppress people and society.

Some of Neo-Pentecostal pastors and lay people think that these diabolic forces are deeply entrenched in idolatry. Cantón says that ‘idolatry moves in two directions as it can be found among both Catholics and people from the Mayan traditions’ (Cantón, 1998: 233). This battle has therefore negative implications for the Mayans as the NPCs believe that idolatry is responsible for a curse that rests over Guatemala (1998: 282). This reading of social problems does not allow them to confront injustice or corruption head on as they all are attributed to spiritual forces which need to be fought in a spiritual way.

5. Life in the Spirit and the restoration of people

According to their pastors, NEOP is a movement which provides an experience of the Spirit. They re-dimension the place of pneumatology and the experience of the sacred. This searching for the subjectivity of the faith experience is a fundamental part in their beliefs and religious experience. In this way they connect with the spirit of the age which gives more credence and space to experience and subjectivity. This experience of the Spirit becomes a reaction too against the rationalistic Christianity of the western world (Sik Hong 2001: 105-107).⁷⁰ It has to do with the subjective appropriation of the divine (2001: 92-94).

According to Neo-Pentecostal pastors that encounter with God is not just a catharsis or a subjective experience, but rather it has to do with an experience which changes and gives meaning to life. The lay people interviewed affirmed that their experience of faith and of the Spirit changed the way that they thought and provided them with a new way of acting in their personal, family and work situations. Senior pastor of LDG notes that the pneumatological experience is the essential feature which differentiates them from the historic churches. For him the baptism of the Spirit, speaking in tongues and divine healing are essential in the life of the believer and the growth of the Christian communities. In other words they must have a Pentecostal experience (P4LDG). At the same time this move of the Spirit is translated into an anointing which can take different nuances in the meeting between the subjective and the supernatural.

Margaret Paloma in her analysis of the so called 'Toronto Blessing' and postmodern society says that the Pentecostal/Charismatic subculture has the potential of providing an alternative model to rescue the place for human experience and the subjectivity of the Christian experience. Taking into account some of the difficulties he says:

A crucial component of the maintenance of an alternative world-view is the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement's image of person. The Toronto Blessing demonstrates a holistic view of person – an integration of body, cognition, emotions, will, and spirit – that has all but been lost in the materialism, rationalism, and technologies of modernism. This model

⁷⁰ In Sik Hong notes this characteristic as one of the central points of Argentinean Charismatic movement.

moves away from the limited and limiting Cartesian mind-body dichotomy that has dominated Enlightenment thought, a perspective affecting religious as well as secular thinking. Its worldview offers a creative response to both the straight-jacket of modernism and the abyss of postmodernism. Whether this latest venture of the Pentecostal/charismatic movement will be successful in retaining its distinctive perspective of whether it accommodates to the larger world-view of western society remains to be seen' (1999: 382).

Intrigued by the 'Toronto Blessing' the researcher visited the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship from where this phenomenon emerged. He visited one of the churches formed through a process of decentralizing of the central church. In the service people worshipped seated, standing or reclining on carpets or shared their faith or concentrated on prayer on their own. People moved around to pray with others. After an hour and a half the service appeared to have finished. After talking and taking a beverage together the second part, the sermon started. The manner that they expressed their emotions, their spiritual battles and the way they came to God freely, was surprising. While this type of service may raise some questions it does show how these churches give priority to subjectivity of the Christian experience.

In NPC's services there is also this freedom although there is a little more control. In a visit that the researcher made to the Verbo church of the Zone 7, he was surprised at the time dedicated to praying in groups before the service. The governing elders led the prayers and attended the believers. For the IVF church, ministry of ⁷¹ praying for the sick or for liberation from spirits is part of the pastoral care that NPC's offer. To receive this ministry in the Neo-Pentecostal context represents for the believers not only help for their spiritual lives but also psychological help (L6IVF). These churches offer counselling inner healing and liberation from demons as a service to restore people and families. Of course this practise is not just to be found among the NPC's, but is a continuity of the Pentecostal heritage with regard to the ministry of liberation. Maybe the deference is the emphasis that the NPC's place on the theme of inner healing.

⁷¹ Ministry of prayer has been a key element for the people with problems of identity, vices, forgiveness, healing, among others.

These churches have teams to serve needy people by praying for them or liberating them. The researcher observed in his visits the interest and disposition of those who were leading the intercessions. On one occasion it was not possible to speak to the pastor because he was in a prayer session with others. The pastors of the family groups provide fellowship, prayer and mutual support (4LDG). These churches try to help their members through these family groups so that they can meet the challenge of changes in the lives of the people and their families. This network of family groups will be analysed ahead in order to understand the dynamic and the way they serve the process of affirmation of the members.

6. Social help for the needy

The Neo-Pentecostals are starting to develop some social help programmes to support needy members of their congregations. This has been a slow process because these churches were born essentially with an evangelistic emphasis. Helping the needy is often neglected among those churches. Some lay people and pastors recognize that the church had not been thinking about or including in their missionary labour social help. One pastor who has shown more interest in the social theme affirmed that Evangelical revival has not had a social impact yet. (P3ESH).

The Verbo church started their ministry with a programme of social aid after the 1976 earthquake, and later concentrated on planting churches. The senior pastor told the researcher at the beginning of the investigation that although they had a social project as a national church, at the local level they did not have programmes of aid for the needy (P1ICV). In more recent years the churches of Guatemala City and the interior have started some projects such as the Verbo church in the department of Huehuetenango.

In 2005 they inaugurated a community pharmacy in the installations of their church building. Leaders of the church said: 'with respect to social projects, we have had limitations in giving, but recently we see a dream becoming a reality, that of providing

medicines free of charge not only to the members of the congregation, but also to whoever needs them ' (Boletín 'Nacidos para Servir, Avance Verbo' No.9/octubre 2005). So in a rather timid way some of these churches have started a few social aid programmes.

A good number now of these churches have schools, medical clinics, or carry out medical visits to the rural areas, distribute food and clothing to poor people. The researcher observed that the pastors and laity considered social aid as a way of getting people together so that they could be evangelized. In other words, helping socially is not something that is done for itself but rather a function of evangelism. Some of these churches call these programmes mercy services or help for the poor. As can be seen later, these programmes are at an incipient stage and do not receive much attention with the exception of some of the churches who have more defined programmes.

7. Evangelism as a means to change the country

For the Neo-Pentecostals as for the rest of the Evangelical churches evangelism is the centre of their mission. They maintain the Evangelical motto that they 'can change a country by changing individuals'. The Neo-Pentecostals have a firm belief that saved individuals will save the country. They consider that the gospel does not only bring personal changes of a new relationship with God, but also to the heart of society. Cantón specifies that among the Neo-Pentecostals salvation reaches out in two directions: it is a concept which articulates individual salvation and salvation of the nation (1998: 262). This idea can be seen in the ESH church which has as its goal seeing Guatemala as a nation enjoying the blessings of salvation here in this present epoch.

Personal conversion plays an important role in this process. People who have studied Protestant phenomena are beginning to recognize the impact of the gospel as a factor of religious change. Cantón states that 'the idea of conversion is associated with the practice of global acquisition and represents a radical new way of living, drastically separated from the previous forms of existence' (1998: 130). For the NPCs Almolonga, the

so called miracle town is an example which they mention to affirm the change in the spiritual, social and economic spheres starting from conversion, as a result of warrior praying. Conversion then implies leaving behind the previous life, accepting the new faith and forming part of a new network of social relationships.

For what reasons are evangelistic campaigns and home cell groups aimed at announcing the gospel and bringing in more converts? First of all because they are interested in numerical growth, secondly because they think that evangelism not only brings salvation and eternal life, but also provides power for the believer to confront the world around them and helps them to solve their problems. A good number of pastors think that numerical growth will give them the possibility to reach more influential circle through key people in these spheres including the use of political power. Finally, some of them think that the message of reconciliation in Guatemala is very important in the context of pain and hatred which comes as a result of the armed conflict which the country suffered for a quarter of a century. [This will be discussed in more detail later].

B. THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROPOSAL

The investigation got information on the NPCs' projects and how they are involved in them.

1. Neo-Pentecostal Schools

Guatemala holds the penultimate position regarding literacy in Latin-America. According to a World Bank analysis on poverty in the country, the lack of education and training is the second cause of poverty in rural communities ('Parte 1: Magnitud y causas de la pobreza' 2003: 18). The education problem is accentuated due to disparities involving gender, ethnicity and poverty. One of the most critical problems is the fact that Guatemala is a country with a 'primary education' that lasts 4.3 years on average ('Parte 1: Magnitud y causas de la pobreza' 2003: 15). This low level of education affects profoundly the

economic, social and political development of the poorest people. However the deficit concerning physical infrastructure, human resources and the curriculum of state education, has given way to the appearance of private education with its respective advantages and disadvantages for the population.

This is the general context in which the NPCs emerge with educative proposals both at secondary and university levels. Directors, teachers and pastors of the NPCs point out that the fundamental objective of their education projects is to offer an excellent education in order to contribute to the spiritual, cultural and social development of the country. In order to do this some import text books, others write their own, and others are in the process of integrating different perspectives into their content. All of them say that they must follow the curriculum indicated by the Ministry of Education.

They said that one of the biggest challenges is to combine secular values with Christian values so as to integrally train their students. The IVC Pan-American University and the ESH San Pablo University seek to integrate scientific knowledge into their curriculum, which according to them provides no contradictions with the values of the Christian faith. They are trying to work with a double challenge in order to train their students in the best possible way.

The researcher was able to observe the ESH schools of zones 14 and 16, IVC schools in Acatán and the FCG have modern installations with classrooms, laboratories, football fields and well kept gardens. Order, cleanliness and discipline form part of the reference point of the education that they offer. The other IVC schools and the LDG schools are in middle and lower class zones. These have less facilities and resources. The IVC schools in the provinces have similar deficiencies. The following is a general description of schools that these churches possess in order to understand their educative proposal as part of their contribution towards society (Table 3.1). Five of the studied

churches founded schools as part of their missionary expansion with the objective to collaborate with education in the country.⁷²

Table 3.1 Educational entities of Neo-Pentecostal churches

Churches	School in Guatemala City	School in the interior of the country	Universities or Bible institute
Verbo	7	6	1 (with various extensions)
El Shaddai	3	5	1 (in perspective)
Lluvias de Gracia	1		1 Bible Institute
Fraternidad Cristiana	1		1 (in perspective)
Visión de fe	1 (not running)		
Familia de Dios			1 (Theological Seminary)

Source: Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Guatemala investigation 2003

a. The School of the Fraternidad Cristiana

This school was founded by senior pastor and a group of educators in 1986. The school states that its fundamental intention is ‘to share with the Christian family the holistic formation of its children, within an academic level of excellence having Jesus Christ as the model to follow’. Their target public is the children of the members of the church and other Evangelical congregations. They offer training from nursery to Baccalaureate in bilingual education in computer science with a scientific orientation. It is a bilingual school (Spanish and English) with a population that includes middle-class and upper middle-class students. According to requirements of the school, the fourth year baccalaureate students must pass the TOEFL (examination of the English language). This examination permits students to apply to foreign universities. This school as well as the ESH ‘Colegio Bilingüe’ are the only Evangelical schools that offer this examination. Upon graduation students also receive a diploma in Basic Theology (Fraternidad Cristiana Revista 1999a: 50-51). There is currently a student population of around 1000. According to their projections, they hope to have 2000 students in their new building which will lodge 12,000 people in a new mega-

⁷² Evangelical schools are not new in Guatemala. For example, the Presbyterians founded La Patria school, an Evangelical lay men founded the Instituto América Latina, and the Methodists established the Colegio Uatlán. These schools and others also function and have served the Guatemalan family now for several decades

church. The student population comes from middle and high class families.

b. The Lluvias de Gracia school

They established a school with the vision to ‘form men and women who fear God, enabling them to carry out evangelism that will impact their community, society and country’. According to the Principal, ‘we are not only giving them knowledge, or science, or humanism, we are really giving them principles, Christian values that will help the children to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour’ (L3LDG). The school includes levels from Primary to Baccalaureate. Their goal is to ‘form men and women as agents and new generations to bring about positive social changes.’ (L3LDG). The student population comes from working and lower middle-class families.

They are prepared under the idea that they will be ‘leaders within their respective groups. They will establish many differences because they have been taught from a positive position, on solid basic principles based on the word of God’ (L3LDG). This school promotes some meetings with middle level teachers to reinforce the formation of the teachers in curricular aspects. In 2001 they celebrated the ‘Primer Encuentro Educativo 2001’ in the LDG installations. Forty-two workshops in different topics were offered by lecturers from the secular and Christian educational worlds. They also have an editorial project to produce their own textbooks hoping thus to integrate Christian principles and values into the areas of social sciences and the Spanish language for basic education. An extension of the Universidad Pan-Americana of Iglesias Verbo functions on their premises at weekends.

c. The Verbo schools

These schools were started with the foundation of some churches through the Foundation for the Promotion of Education (FUNDASEDE) (P1ICV). This educative entity promotes the creation of these schools with the vision of forming students following Christ’s character, applying moral and biblical ethical principles to all subjects, and that the

children should apply these principles in all areas of their development so that they can some day be leaders in their nation.

The general coordinator underlines that they are interested in ‘forming leaders that love justice and the truth’. This formation, they affirm, has been used to train useful and successful individuals (L9ICV). At present they have schools in different parts of Guatemala City and rural areas of the country (P1ICV). The ICV School of Acatán, Zone 16, reaches the middle and upper classes, whereas ICV School, Zone 19 and other similar zones attends a lower middle class student population. They were initially known for their practices of strict physical discipline, which parents had to accept as a school norm. Years later this norm was eliminated under orders of the Ministry of Education.

They also have a university which has been functioning for seven years. The Universidad Panamericana has faculties of Theology, Communication Science, Business Administration, and Law. It also provides doctorates in Communication Science and Law. According to the Rector, their philosophy of education is to integrate advances in human sciences with key values of the Christian faith such as freedom, honesty, love, the right to live, discipline, among others; and a lifestyle congruent with these principles (L6ICV). Their goal is to provide holistic education through distinct programmes and a team of professors that integrate their professional life, knowledge, and Christian testimony.

d. The El Shaddai schools

The ESH schools emerged from the vision of the founding pastors through the Education Foundation (FUEDES). According to their testimony, they were motivated by the ‘vision and responsibility to get the country out of underdevelopment through education’ (A9ESH). Their proposal surfaced from their conviction that Christian Education is fundamental to guide young people towards a being leaders with values and principles.

Their educative philosophy contemplates among other aspects, the idea of

contributing to the extension of God's work in Guatemala through a model educative institution centred in the word of God and academic excellence, reaching children and Christian young people who will positively affect the future of their nation, and provide training to the students so that they can face life's problems and be integral individuals, in good relation with God and their neighbours, capable of thinking, analyzing and solving life's challenges.⁷³

They say that this philosophy has a Judeo-Christian biblical base which in academic terms, means that 'all the methodology, contents, and the organizational structure of the school are based on it' (L7ESH). For this reason, they only hire Christian teachers who must integrate biblical values within their academic materials. The vision of ESH schools is to 'form leaders with a Christian worldview to transform the nation and the nations where God may take them' (L7ESH). The school principle describes the schools goal emotively and brings up questions about the future of evangelical leadership.

We need Christian leadership. Why, what will happen to the next generation? Where are the lawyers, engineers, doctors, pastors, evangelists, where are the strategists, thinkers, literates, artists? In the Christian world there are few, they are not extending or developing this environment. Every area in which the church does not enter is an area of darkness, because the light has not arrived. As such what we seek is to provide tools to these young people [...] that will help them to develop and be able to work in any area in which God may send them to serve. **This is our goal: To form a Christian leadership that will transform and impact our nation and the world positively** [author's emphasis] (L7ESH).

These schools exist in Guatemala City and rural areas. The ESH bilingual schools have been established in Zones 16, 14, and recently in Zone 11. These schools are in the upper-middle classes, and in the rural populations in the interior of the country. They offer classes from pre-school up to diversified education, offering the Baccalaureate, and a degree in education. They offer a High School programme with the accreditation of the International Christian Credit Association of the University of Oral Roberts. They have this relationship because of theological and ideological affinity. The ESH senior pastor completed a master's degree in Christian Education at this university. At a local level they have relations with the International Association of Christian Schools (ACSI).

⁷³ Philosophy of the Colegio Bilingüe Cristiano el Shaddai. <http://www.elshaddai.org>. Accessed 10.12.05

The rest of the schools are in other departments and municipalities. Their goal is to establish in each head of department a congregation with a Christian school and a local radio station. By 2007 they had eight schools in rural area which offered essentially primary education. There is not a great deal of information available regarding the schools in rural areas. The 'rural schools' which function in conjunction with the Manos de Amor foundation offer primary education and literacy programmes for adults.

Another particularity in the ESH educative proposal is the openness to seek new pedagogic alternatives. The Programme for Instrumental Enrichment (PEI) implements their educative process. The person responsible of FUEDES commented that this programme began after learning that a mother in their church had an autistic child. After contacting Professor Reuven Feuerstein in Israel, they decided to bring the programme to Guatemala. It was created in order to help elevate the level of intelligence in disadvantaged sectors with cultural deprivations. The PEI is described as the development of superior mental processes and a strategy to learn how to learn. The PEI was imparted to school staff and later to teachers of other schools in November 2001.

This programme was also offered to the Under Secretary for Education with the idea of improving the development of intelligence of children in public schools. The idea did not become a reality because of a lack of funds. As well as applying this programme in their schools in Guatemala City they also run it in rural areas (A9ESH). The senior pastor says that both secular and Christian education has been a key factor in the development of society historically, and he affirms that because of this education is the medium necessary to remove Guatemala from its state of underdevelopment and poverty.⁷⁴

The Neo-Pentecostal educative proposal is linked with their objectives of missionary expansion. At the same time, it is a contribution in favour of the development of education in the country, especially in the light of a demand for new educative alternatives. The Neo-Pentecostal schools and the nearly two hundred Evangelical schools

⁷⁴ Conference: El Poder de la Transformación 'La historia de la Educación cristiana, Cassette VC221202B-7, ESH Ministries, Guatemala.

that exist are an important contribution towards the social and economic development of the country. They provide education to their members and some of the schools open their doors to the rest of the Evangelical population as well.

A survey performed by Gallup on religion and politics found that in Guatemala Evangelicals have a notable presence amongst people with higher education, nearly one in three Guatemalans with a degree in higher education is Protestant.⁷⁵ The result of the general survey [GSNPL] shows that the NPL possess a high grade of education at distinct levels. The data of Pew Forum on the level of education in Guatemala stated that the Pentecostals, Charismatics and other Christian groups have a higher rate of schooling than the general population (Pew Forum 2006b).⁷⁶

On the other hand some schools are criticized for the following reasons: The schools of the ESH, FCG and one of the ICV teach children from middle and upper class backgrounds. The high matriculation fees exclude the low resource population. World Bank analysts affirm that matriculation fees in Guatemala do not rise as a result of lack of money ('Capítulo 7: Educación y pobreza' 2003: 78). Also, these schools do not receive children that are not 'Christian', and generally do not provide scholarships. According to the testimonies of some parents of one of the schools studied, their children left school because they could not pay the fees and the schools do not give scholarships. Some families criticize the business logic that some of these schools manifest.

2. Leadership training

The obtaining and cultivation of values is fundamental in the training of human social capital in the process of strengthening civil society. According to Robert Putman 'social capital' refers to the characteristics of a social organization, such as truth, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society (1993:167). To what extent do the

⁷⁵ Survey Gallup International Research Institutes, Interdisciplinary Consultancy in Development, S.A (CID). Public Opinion about Religion and politics Guatemala July 1-3, 1991.

⁷⁶ See details about it in The Pew Forum On Religion & Public Life Surveys 2006a: 'Spirit and Power A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostal' Available at <http://pewforum.org/surveys/pentecostal/> Accessed 17.01.08.

NPCs inculcate ethic values in their members to impulse the surging of social capital? The investigation found various instances of teaching to form leadership. A description of these programmes follows. Most are of recent foundation and function as departments tied to the churches.

To understand these programmes the researcher participated in some class and congresses in order to comprehend their theological emphasis. He was surprised by the punctuality, dynamism, commitment, and discipline of the leadership of the LDG to attend and participate in the weekly meetings of the family groups. This is surprising as they arrive after work usually by public transport. He also observed the interest of some lay people to learn in the services and workshops offered. They take notes during the pastor's message. These training programmes are new and not every one participates in them yet in relation to the total Neo-Pentecostal population. Some of these programmes will now be discussed briefly.

a. Seminaries and Biblical Institutes

These churches offer both formal and informal biblical teaching. The Neo-Pentecostal Theological Seminary of the IFD offers diplomas in Baccalaureate, teacher training in biblical studies and offers a bachelors degree in theology since 1992.⁷⁷ It is directed to workers, pastors and lay leaders so that they can serve in the context of the local church. The ESH church forms leadership through the Leadership Institute (ILES). They offer a two year diploma in biblical studies that provides knowledge of the Bible, character formation and abilities for Christian ministry. According to their director they encourage their leaders to contribute to society, be agents of change and transformation, and stimulate them to have an interest and a call to have political participation in society (A7ESH).

The LDG church forms its leaders through their own institutes and material. Their programmes provide training to serve in the church, leadership development, topics about

⁷⁷ In 'Prospecto, Reglamento y Calendario de Actividades 1996 of the Seminario Bíblico Teológico Neo-Pentecostal Panamericano.

the Christian life and its challenges, laws, strategies and methodological tools to evangelize, and have manuals for growth. In general, their material has more of an ecclesiastical vision, centred on church growth. This church offers an annual congress on explosive church growth.

The FCG church promotes the formation of leadership through a programme which it denominates 'The Faculty of Leadership'. They started to provide training for their church members in the 'Centro de Estudios Ministeriales de la Fraternidad', CEMFRAC (Centre of Ministry Studies of FCG). It is open to all church members from different level of education. Their materials 'Foundations of Faith' (I and II) cover general topics of Christian faith and themes related to basic doctrines, life and family challenges. The ICV offers a less elaborated programme through seminars from time to time. They place strong importance on their finance courses. The IVF church provides formation to their members through small groups during the week and congresses on subject matter related to 'spiritual warfare', marriages enhancement, finances, leadership and other similar themes. The ICV University recently added the faculty of theology which offers a Bachelor in Theology in a four years programme.

b. Congresses, seminars and retreats

The majority of these churches have congresses throughout the year on diverse topics. Congresses such as 'Transforming Nations' (ESH), 'Open your Eyes' (LDG) 'Youth Explosion' (FCG) to train their people and leaders of other countries inside and out of Central America. Local and foreign speakers teach on topics such as 'Church Growth', 'World Revival', 'The God's Kingdom', 'Community Transformation', among others. They also offer 'Worship Seminars', 'Leadership', 'Financial Concepts', 'On the Family', 'Spiritual Warfare', 'Prosperity', programme training like 'One Million Leaders' and other themes. In 2002 the ESH church launched the World Congress on 'Community Transformation' where pastor Harold Caballeros was one of the speakers; his theme was

his vision about revivals and social transformations. Thirty percent of some 5000 participants came from various Latin American countries as well as some from outside the continent. It was interesting to find a Nicaraguan Evangelical leader in Managua who told the researcher that in some manner he was going to adopt pastor Caballeros' vision.

In 2006 the researcher went to the Fraternidad Cristiana de Guatemala where the 'Million Leaders' Project was presented supported by the pastor and writer John Maxell. The challenge presented was how to raise 50,000 Guatemalan leaders to assume the great mission and to serve the nation. On that night there were 3000 people present, many leaders of distinct churches and Evangelical organizations queuing to sign up for the project. The leadership of FCG promotes this project in Guatemala. These examples show the effect that these congresses have within the NPCs in Guatemala and the rest of Central America.

They also have a series of short retreats related to family groups. They place a lot of attention on retreats for couples of different ages and young people. In some of these churches special attention is given to single women or divorcees. These churches have popularized retreats for inner healing which previously had been pushed by the more Pentecostal groups. The pre-encounters, post-encounters of the G12 have a central place in numerical growth and as a means to provide inner healing to their members. The slogan of the FCG retreats states: 'You must be healthy to be able to serve'.

These encounters have raised concern among the leaders of the historic churches because of the psychological pressure which they put on those present. Some critics ask 'is it really true that in the services which they conduct each week there is an unbalanced emphasis on having to go to the Pre-encounters, the Encounters and the Post-encounters? Are they abusing the members of the church by putting on them psychological pressures?' (La Prensa Evangélica, 'Poder de lo alto' No 33/2006: 37).

c. Mass Media Communications

Radio has been a key element in the diffusion and growth of Evangelical beliefs. The Catholic Church has copied this strategy by placing their own radio stations alongside Evangelical stations. The NPCs have used television, radio, Internet and all the technical media at their disposal. All these churches have their own website. The IFD Church owns Channel 27, which is on air twenty hours a day.

Channel 23 called Enlace has the affiliation of various churches and is transmitted throughout Latin-America. The pastor of FCG transmits evangelistic segments on a secular channel. The ESH Church owns Radio Stereo Vision with 21 re-transmitters throughout the country. The manager affirmed that they have a 'social compromise in favour of the transformation of the nation'. When asked how they expect to impact the nation, he stated that they do this through 'the pastor of his church preaching but also they are still searching for creative ways in which they can spread a message which will have an integral impact on the whole nation' (L11ESH). The IFD Church owns Radio Exclusiva. This station transmits Christian music, interlaced with messages from the Pastor and other preachers. Those communications tools provide spiritual support and teachings.

Lay people that answered the Survey of Neo-Pentecostal Entrepreneurs and Professional (SNPEP) affirmed that they received teachings to serve others to be successful in business. They summarised the themes most repeated as: a) love for ones neighbours; b) help for the needy; c) motivation for honest and efficient work; d) transforming the culture; e) to give to God and the poor in order to prosper and f) to evangelize to change the country. Stated in religious terms these teachings help them confront economic life and serve others. One professional said 'I do not receive teaching on how to participate in society, I receive the teaching of the bible' (L7FCG). His answer reveals that their pastors teach in religious terms which may not help professionals in their specific work situation.

The television programmes reveal the presence of North American, Latin American and local preachers. Programme content includes evangelistic sermons, constructive

messages, healing campaigns, worship concerts, and practical advice on healthcare, family problems, and general news. These programmes send out messages of salvation, consolation, moral values, and practical advice for the audience. Some programmes reflect a North American vision and lifestyle, and little space is dedicated to Guatemalan cultural values. Likewise their content gives little attention to the social, political and economic problems of the country.

Smith strongly criticizes Evangelical media in his study on the theme in Central America. He states that they provide entertainment, not religious instruction, and therefore do not fulfil the pastoral needs of the people (1990: 303-304). In general terms, the researcher agrees with Smith's observation, but he has also observed that some of the programmes shown on TV networks and channels contribute to the spiritual and pastoral needs of the audience in a significant way. Some programmes promote the gospel of prosperity.

Summarizing, the training that the NPCs provide is incipient and developing. They do not have a structured theology as they are new churches and value the charismatic experience over written doctrine. Nonetheless, common points can be perceived throughout their teachings. The following elements can be found: traces of Calvinism regarding salvation, basic doctrine of Pentecostal pneumatology, elements of dispensationalism and post-millennial eschatology, and their own Neo-Pentecostal emphasis on manifestations of the Spirit, entrepreneurial organization, and spontaneous liturgy, subjectivity of the Christian experience, apostolic reform, 'prosperity theology', and spiritual warfare. They also provide teachings and moral values to instruct people about their personal, family, work and ecclesiastical obligations, and help them confront the challenges of everyday life. Generally the NPCs do not relate the content of their teaching and biblical materials with the critical social issues of the country.

An observer pointed out that the NPCs have a strong Pentecostal influence and thus calls them 'refined Pentecostalism' (IO2). That is they are Pentecostals but with emphases

and liturgical practices different to those of classic Pentecostalism. According to another observer it is an eclectic theology that takes what it finds interesting from various Evangelical movements. He underlines that they have a 'strong concept of teaching', 'Servanthood', and the 'Holy Spirit', but have a 'very poor Christology' (IO1). An associate pastor of these churches, states as a self-critique that their hermeneutic is individualistic and mystic, with the exception of those churches that come from a reformed background. The radio and television programmes promote evangelism as their first mission objective. Some programmes like 'Buenos días of Channel 27 provide space for diffusion and discussion of some social community projects. In general, the mass media of NPCs do not debate social problems as some ecumenical Evangelicals leaders do. In the same way some of the mass media programmes, NPCs programmes have been questioned seriously because of emphases and methods which are used to raise funds.

With all of their proposals for training and leadership it is clear that they need to go deeper about training from the holistic mission perspective. Most of the NPL have only the basic doctrinal knowledge about their faith. Also they need to learn from the experience and theology of other Protestant circles. Now is not possible to see if they are educating leaders to promote social change, or on the contrary, are they accommodating to the status quo that characterizes the middle and upper class of the country. Those questions need to be studied for analysis ahead in order to know the results of those educational objectives.

C. SOCIAL PROJECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Various studies of Pentecostalism and NEOP affirm that these churches have a pessimistic vision of the world and that they are not concerned about solving social problems. As can be observed in this present thesis the NPCs present a different image. Most of NPCs promote programmes of social aid. This aid is given through the provision of food, medicines and clothing to needy people. This phenomenon can be observed in other Central American countries. Orozco says that Nicaraguan Pentecostalism is neither 'a-

historic' o 'alienates' the minds of the poor and the marginalised, 44 per cent of the population under study showed interest in 'social concerns' (1993:36). Petersen says that the Central American Pentecostals are not only interested in social issues but have projects where they seek to transform society (1995). Neo-Pentecostal projects that are described next fall into Sider's second category of social responsibility (1993). These are promoted by IVC and the ESH churches.

1. The Casa Bernabé orphanage (CB)

The researcher had the opportunity to visit this Project on two occasions where he was able to get to know and to observe the services they give and talk to the programme's director. He also had the opportunity to participate in the graduation of the school year and hear how the children had advanced and talk to some of the members of the national council of Casa Bernabé. One of the members of the council is a dentist who for many years led the Christian Medical Association and has contributed in a significant way to Guatemala and the rest of Central America for more than twenty years.

Foundation and philosophy

CB is a project of ICV that takes care of children and young people in risk of being mistreated, abandoned or in extreme poverty. It was started in the 1980s by a North American missionary after the 1976 earthquake. Along with missionaries of the Gospel Outreach Mission they arrived in Guatemala with the idea of beginning missionary work through giving aid to the victims. The Protective Foundation for Orphans (FUNPRONI) was founded to help children whom the earthquake left as orphans and thus CB was born. Its vision is 'to honour God by means of a commitment to excellence to improve the quality of life of marginalized children and in situations of risk' (L7ICV).

Objetives of Casa Bernabé

CB works under the coordination and supervision of a National Board of directors integrated by members of these churches. They take care of orphaned or abandoned children referred to them by the Court of Minors. Its ministry includes three main areas: a)

They try to provide a substitute family; b) they provide spiritual help giving the children the opportunity to know the gospel and grow and develop as people, and c) they provide education at primary and secondary levels as well as a programme of mental ability (PACE) which helps children with learning abilities.

Personnel

Several families including that of the director take care of up to thirteen children who live with their own children. These couples assume the role of parents and look after all the things their households. The children are allocated by ages and sex within these supporting families, who belong to the Assemblies of God, Baptist and IVC churches. Their ideal is to provide a home and not just a place to live. They note: 'One of the things that we see in the Bible is that the Lord says that He gives a home to the abandoned and puts orphans in families'. In CB the children co-exist with the children of the parent substitutes and with the rest of families.

They count on all the necessary services and some extra resources like television, area of games, and music classes. They take care of 142 children under the care of thirty-six people who work full time. The centre is located in twenty-five kilometres on the road to El Salvador in a wooded land with an extension approximated of twenty-five blocks donated by one of the people related to the church. CB is a non-profit Christian organization that does not charge for services. They are maintained by offerings and voluntary work that come from believers in the United States. The ICV of Guatemala helps with donations such as grain and contributes with 1 per cent of the budget.

Operation of Casa Bernabé

The programme helps children to grow in an integral way. The adolescents between fourteen and seventeen, apart from studying must learn a job. CB has a car mechanics workshop, a bakery, a small farm of chickens and pigs where the children learn to be useful. The older young people can learn a job outside provided by the centre. When they reach eighteen (the age of majority in Guatemala) the young people must leave home to

give to space to other children. Within CB there is a school that offers primary and secondary levels. Those that finish are sent to the Latin America Institute (an Evangelical school) to study the baccalaureate on the weekends. They receive children orphaned by natural tragedies and young female adolescents who have been abused and forced into prostitution.

Profits of Casa Bernabé

Several young people have graduated as Bachelors in Sciences and Letters and Teachers. One young person who grew up in CB became an engineer. Some of the young people return to working in the centre and others leave to face life on their own. According to the director, 'our goal is to give to society men and women who fear God and have a productive life'. At the close of the school year the researcher observed one small orchestra made up of children of six to twelve years. They played the flute, clarinet, violin, battery and other instruments with an unusual skill. Their faces were full of joy, security, and confidence contrasted with the sad condition of many of the street children who are glue sniffing addicts so as to not feel hunger or forget their tragedy which often turns them into delinquents. The change was remarkable.

To sum up CB plays a key role in the spiritual and social transformation of orphans and abandoned children in Guatemala. It provides them with a Christian family, food, education, abilities and values to help them to construct or to reconstruct their world, and prepare them to be useful in society. Although CB belongs to ICV its budget depends on foreigners. When inquiring on the reason for this dependency the director indicated that the ICV churches only participate a little because 'in the idiosyncrasy of our society it is not customary to give. We are a monopolistic, egoistical society so to speak. I am well and it does not matter to me if that someone else is ill, they have not discovered the joy of giving' (L7ICV). The local Verbo churches have begun to start projects of social aid.

Only a few members of ICV participate in the centre. The volunteers come from the churches in the United States. According to the director, 'very few volunteers come from

the IVC although they have several churches in the capital'. This slight presence reflects a lack of interest in the social reality of the children and their problems. Finally, in spite of these deficiencies, and although the vision came from outside, the National Council of Churches Verbo assumed the project in terms of legal representation and lineament through their board of directors.

2. Hands of Love Foundation (FMA)

The researcher had the opportunity to converse with the founder, medics who take part in the work teams and several lay people who support the programme. They shared the valuable information which has been collected for this thesis. Each one of them is committed to this vision and they have contributed with resources knowledge, time and abilities in favour of the projects.

Origins

This foundation was born in an unusual way. According to their founders the vision was born after a visit of Cindy Jacobs in 2001.⁷⁸ She gave a prophecy to them in the following terms: 'The Lord says if the church does not give food to the needy the guerrilla warfare will start up again'. According to her, 'Those people will come to indoctrinate them with opposite ideologies to the word of God and will instil hatred and other things in their hearts'. This is the reading that the majority of middle and high class NPL has of the country's problems. The pastors assumed the prophecy in literal way and established FMA to provide social aid and transformation to the poor communities in the interior of Guatemala. According to its director this prophecy confirmed a restlessness they had already to help the poor rural people. The original idea included the idea to encourage other churches to participate in the project.

⁷⁸ Cindy Jacobs is the president of the National Prayer Embassy in the United States. She participated in the Second Congress of World Evangelism in Lausanne Switzerland and was the coordinator for the 24 hours of intercessory prayer in Urbana of InterVarsity in 1990.

Vision and strategy

Its vision is 'To see Guatemala transformed by the love of God based on biblical truth and principles, making her the light for the nations'. This mission tries 'to answer the call of God demonstrating his love reaching the needy with aid and restoring the spirit, soul and body, thus transforming people, villages, communities and nations' (propaganda FMA). Manos de Amor adopted the municipality of Tukurú located in the department of Verapaz at a distance of some 400 kilometres from Guatemala City. The village of Secanal 1 where the project started is in the mountains of the municipality of Tukurú. Their strategic plan consisted of three stages of action, to determine biblical values and principles which will change the Guatemalans and then society through the work of Jesus Christ.

Their plan was to reach the rural villages, which are poor and at risk, with the love and the mercy of Jesus Christ, providing medical services, food, clothes, preaching and teaching. Their aim was to establish a holistic plan of development that included programmes and projects of social and rural development, with the participation of all the community, but especially promoting the participation of women. The FMA budget depends on donations of members of ESH, people who wish to be a part of the project, and contributions from the churches and donation of medicines from local pharmaceutical companies.

Operation of the project

FMA works under the direction of a board of directors integrated by people of other Neo-Pentecostal churches, a national director, a central team of eight coordinators, and the team of volunteers. FMA chose the municipality of Tukurú because it was in a zone of conflict, little developed and because of the prophetic word that they had received. After a journey of five hours, the village of Senacal 1 can be found in the middle of the mountains. Previously an old military regiment had worked in the municipality. FMA began with the idea of providing days of medical service once a month, followed once a fortnight and later

weekly. Doctors, dentists, veterinarians, biologists and other members of the church went on these days of service.

According to one of the FMA volunteers this population which has an Evangelical majority in its population, faced isolation, shortage of food and deficiency in the system of education. According to a lay woman member of a high class family, the experience opened her eyes, touched her heart and she and her husband became completely involved with the progress of these villages. When asked about the impact of their participation in FMA she (L9ESH) commented,

For me it has been the best thing that could have happened. I was indolent before about the reality of my country and this touched my heart and has changed my life. I now want to serve independently before I did not have this vision, and I realized the need to bring to the church the needs of the community. When they go on the service days I see that this is what impacts the members of the church, the reality, and how people of the community with all their love accept the Lord, and how their lives are transformed. I cannot explain the amount of testimonies, whenever the teams return; there are testimonies after testimonies of how the love of God changes people. It shows how **word and action go hand in hand** [author's emphasis].

From these days of service the idea arose to found schools in order to contribute in a more permanent way to the development in the rural area. A professor of education from the University of San Marcos, San Diego, California has helped in the implementation of the education proposal. She visited the villages and advised the ESH work party how to elaborate a curriculum, the direction of the school and the qualifications of the teachers. They use the schools built by the Governmental Foundation for Social investment (FIS). FMA works under the direction of a board of directors integrated by people from other Neo-Pentecostal churches, a national director, a central team of eight coordinators, and the team of volunteers.

The teachers are paid by the municipality of the place. According to them, the FMA trains teachers and parents when requested in the villages. The children receive first grade of primary, and parents receive instruction in nutrition, hygiene, adult literacy, and projects of development. According to them they offer the Program of Instrumental Enrichment (PEI) to higher the learning potential of the children.

The dynamics of the service days

Three different teams interact in the process. The advance team promotes the experience. They take care of logistics, diagnosis of the economic and social reality, prayer and spiritual mapping (this spiritual cartography is an essential part of spiritual warfare). The team of coordinators for the service day is made up of a doctor, a dentist, the one in charge of ministry (emotional prayer for the patients, problems and exorcism if necessary), bible classes for children, pharmacy, hair dressing, order and home visitation. The third team follows up. They include an agronomist to advise on crops, an engineer who gives advice about obtaining drinking water, a coordinator of primary education and alphabetization, a person that helps in the education of women and a pastor for the village provides spiritual aid to the members of the community.

They work in coordination with one of the ESH churches of the village to follow up the project. In each service day forty people participate on average plus twenty more who participate from time to time. They remain between twenty-four to forty-eight hours in the villages. Students of the ESH School participate in these service days. All the volunteers must cover their expenses for transportation and food during their time in the villages. One of the doctors who shared information of FMA with the researcher expressed the following experience with the project.

I began to come to the church three years ago and soon I was invited to participate in the medical service days that FMA promotes. Some time later I understood that it was not just this, but that the objective was to change Guatemala taking her out of poverty through education in agriculture, literacy and other areas of need. In FMA I found a new calling: to see my nation transformed. I learned in the church that we need to share a gospel that puts bread on the table and impacts the nation. I do not have to stop being a doctor to be able to share the word of God. I have been impacted by seeing people of my church and especially those of the communities that love to help promote the development of their neighbour (LSSH).

Profits of the programme

FMA has done twenty five service days in most regions of the country. The only department that has not been visited is Petén. After the service days the central ESH church adopts a village and they do follow up in them. Seven villages were adopted by churches of ESH churches in the different departments. By 2007 they have six rural schools and a

regional training centre in Tukurú. According to the volunteers of the project, the rural school in Secanal Uno has managed to upgrade the level of primary education among the children, and has helped in the formation of new habits of hygiene, eating and education.

They also note that they have helped the villages to improve their economy through crop diversification. They had been depending only on corn and so if they lost the harvest they lost everything. In the regional training centre twenty-six pastors finished primary and basic education and are waiting to do their secondary schooling as mature students. Another gain has been the diffusion of the vision of FMA through people who after receiving aid have founded a similar project in a community of the Ixil triangle (a zone which suffered during the armed conflict that affected Guatemala for thirty-six years). At the congregation level they have managed to stimulate and to involve a good number of volunteers. Entrepreneurs, professionals, students, housewives and pastors comprise the team that work together during the service days.

To summarize, FMA was born out of the Neo-Pentecostal charismatic experience. It shows a different way of facing social challenges. In practical terms this religious impetus helps them to propose the social assistance and self sustaining projects that they are developing. At the same time the position of North Americans preachers on society can be seen. The association of the guerrilla with ‘diabolic forces’ reflects an ideological understanding of the country’s problems that the leadership of the ESH also assume. The following sentence is in the FMA objectives, ‘In the villages we will reject the powers of the darkness, because the Church will have brought to the people a Real Solution to their poverty’.⁷⁹

The FMA also shows the possibility of creating a conscience and social commitment among the members of the high and middle classes. Their notion of rural development could be useful to project self sustainability, and their education projects could help to reduce illiteracy and poverty in the rural areas. Unlike CB, FMA has a budget

⁷⁹ A ‘prophetic word’ in the General Information about FMA, Ministerios el Shaddai Available at <http://www.elshaddai.net> Accessed 10.12.05

provided by members of ESH, and a team of volunteers from their churches. The attitude and participation of volunteers in the FMA projects show a potential bank of human resources within and outside of the Neo-Pentecostal world.

D. NETWORKS OF MUTUAL SUPPORT

The numerical growth of the NPCs is visible in the urban zones of Guatemala and the rest of Latin-America. Their mega-churches unite thousands of members on Sunday. This phenomenon is a motive for concern among some missiologists because it seems to run against the idea of being a community. Some affirm that they have created mere geographic conglomerations. Inside these churches they do not see this in the same way. These depend on the family groups to promote their numerical growth and to provide certain care of their members.

1. The model

At the beginning the Family groups (FGs) followed Dr. Cho's and some local churches' model. Later, most of NPCs adopt the model called G12 (groups of twelve) following Jesus' way in the choice of his disciples. This model was established by Pastor César Castellanos of Colombia. According to the Pastor Vladimiro Vázquez, the success of the G12 is due to the so called 'ladder of success' which has the following steps: a) to win the person so that he is converted to the Christian faith; b) to consolidate their faith by means of loving care, including a retreat for inner healing; c) disciple them for ministry and to face life's daily challenges, and d) to send the believer to disciple others.⁸⁰ Although the concept of family groups is not exclusive to the NPCs they have the largest number of them. The LDG had more than 1500 groups in 2005 in all the zones of Guatemala City.

⁸⁰ In 'Conociendo el Modelo de los doce' Iglesia Visión de Fe Available at www.visiondefe.com Accessed 11.01.06

The researcher inquired about the family groups (FGs) through interviews and through the GSNPL to discover how they relate to and support each other. The result of GSNPL sample showed that 97.9 per cent of those surveyed have FGs, 73.6 per cent attend these groups; 96.0 per cent said that the FGs are open for all; 72.7 per cent pointed out that the objectives of the groups are numerical growth, bible study, and spiritual and material support so that more people will be converted; 43.3 per cent said that the groups provide aid in terms of clothes, food, medicines, or finding jobs for its members; 94.1 per cent affirmed that they receive some type of marriage council. When asked what attracts them to the meetings of the FGs, 58 per cent indicated the following reasons: a sense of belonging to the group, the teaching and values received to face life and the aid that is provided for those in need. The researcher participated in several meetings of leaders of groups and visited two groups where he perceived, among other things, an open comradeship, prayer for others, promotion of leadership of adults and young people, and freedom to express the gifts of the Spirit that would empower them to face life. These groups contribute to the construction of healthy relations between their members and are an open space to provide a sense of community to non Christians.

According to Martin these small groups within the Pentecostalism constitute a protective capsule where they reinvent life (1990: 284). They offer space for the people to develop. They provide values for them to face life and to exercise certain leadership, which they then transfer to their daily lives in society. One of the surprises that the researcher had was that the ESH cell groups are not only to be found among the high and middle classes, but also reach out to the lower middle and working classes.⁸¹

⁸¹ This was the case of shanty town about five blocks from the ESH central church. The person responsible for the house group suggested that the researcher visit this family group. The house was very simple, just tin sheets and wood with no basic services of running water and drains. In spite of the critical situation the leader [who said that he had emerged from a situation of poverty, affirmed that after his conversion and mental changes following the teaching of the church, his economic situation had changed] encouraged by the message shared that they could get out of poverty and could be agents of change in the power of the Spirit. This leader showed the researcher after the house groups his business which was not very far away. This means that not all the middle class NPL can get the economical resources to help them to live with dignity.

2. Reason to attend the groups

From the interviews with the NPL the researcher received the following answers to the question, why do you go to these groups? They responded in the following ways. 'I go to the groups because I learn of the Lord; they help me to relate to others and they teach me to serve. They provide moral support, counselling and some times economic help if anyone has a health problem' (L1ICV). A Business Administrator affirmed that 'questions can be asked in the groups. They provide spiritual help to understand why things happen, take-up offerings for those who have some economic need and they collect food gifts for the needy' (L3ICV).

A lay person said that he likes to go to the groups 'because he feels received and they give him confidence. In the street people make fun of him. In the groups they explain the bible so as to understand life better. And they help with food and with money when somebody needs them' (L5ICv). A leader of FGs indicated that he participates 'because they put into practice the mission to make disciples and because he can study the bible. In the groups advice is provided. If anybody does not have work they are given some temporary assistance to help them along the way. They also share experiences about businesses' (L8ICV). A FGs leader indicated that he attends 'to testify to the community. The group is a social and spiritual project to enable the holistic development of the person. The groups give talks on finances, saving and provide some aid consisting of food and clothing to the needy' (L5IVF).

3. Conversion

The FGs are primary source of the numerical growth of these churches. This is the place where many experience their conversion. A farmer shared with emotion that he attends the FGs 'because I got to know Christ there and I was restored'. One of the informants exemplifies the impact of these groups in his personal experience:

The attendance to these groups brought a change that transformed my life. I had been a drug addict for many years. I left my house because my parents could not put up with me

anymore. In the street I was member of a group of the “maras” gangs and committed a series of crimes with them. Nevertheless, everything changed in my life when I attended a group of the twelve. A friend invited me to participate and I began to attend. There I knew the love of other lads and the love of Jesus Christ who changed my life and gave me new meaning. After attending a retreat with members of my cell group I assumed the leadership of a group. Things began to change in my life.

Religious conversion produced in lay people a change of religious conduct and of vision that helped them to transform aspects of life and way of thinking in order to face life. The case of this informant illustrates the possibility of transforming dangerous social conduct. The ‘maras’ who are gangs of violent young people, are a real problem for Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. According to newspaper reports thousands of young people from both poor as well as middle class families are involved in these gangs (Reynoso Prensa Libre August 17, 2003). It is the second factor affecting the increase of violation of women, robbery, violence and crimes in these countries. The policies that most of governments have imposed on these groups is to put them in jail with long sentences and in some cases they have even been object of ‘social cleansing’ (violent deaths).

Without leaving a side the structural problems of the country, the case of that informant shows the problems of many Guatemalan young people including lack of love and care from their parents. Analysts of this phenomenon in Guatemala, indicates that a key factor that feeds the growth of these gangs is ‘family disintegration and the way society excludes them’ (Reynoso Prensa Libre August 17, 2003).

He affirms that these young people of poor families and even of families of the middle-classes have not been treated as they should be and that their parents do not know what they do. The FGs become for many of these young people an extended family. According to the LDG pastors have managed to form family groups in dangerous areas where these gangs operate. They have formed among them communities that provide an experience of faith and brotherhood which helps many of these young people to change their lifestyle.

4. Support to their members

These groups also fulfil a certain role in the pastoral care of their members. A young lay person emphasized that in his church they do not tackle subjects related to the social problems, but indicated that the FGs help their members when they have the opportunity:

The first assistance given is normal, advice and prayer as they do in all the churches. And, I have seen in the group of adult young people if they can help they do. A couple that lost a baby late in pregnancy could not pay the medical expenses. The group took up an offering to help them which was given to them later. There are always people in our house group ready to give. I cannot generalize that this happens in every house group, but I have known people that have been helped at a time of surgery or if they are unemployed they get help, not that everyone is prepared to give on this way (L6FCG).

An informant noted that ‘the groups are like an extended family where there is unity and confidence. It is a place where liberation is offered to others (through preaching, fellowship or exorcism of demons), bringing personal victory and a chance to exercise leadership’ (L3ESH). Others underline that ‘they participate because the groups give the possibility of having close contact so that we can help each other. They help people who are out of a job by giving recommendations. These groups are a necessity for big churches’ (L4ESH). A publicist affirmed that he participates ‘as an act of obedience and to listen to the message of Jesus Christ’.

These groups sometimes help by looking for work for the unemployed, giving economic support and food in a temporary way. One person said ‘I received two baskets of food in times of need’ (L1FCG). Another layman expressed a similar experience. ‘Yes, I participate in the fellowship among the brothers and sisters because I can learn in more depth. We try to help each other depending on the needs and capacity the group. I received economic and moral support and when I had financial problems’ (L2FCG).

An informant commented that she participates ‘because in the groups a family relationship is experienced and where we share our problems and we feel the presence of God’ (L1IGL). David Bueno, from his case of study of Salvadorian rural Pentecostalism, affirms that this provides an alternative moral construction to understand this context, and later he adds, ‘It also facilitates transformation by creating social networks that can

legitimize a new social order by altering lateral relationships' (2001: 175). Miller from studies of churches in developing countries affirms that this process is growing: 'in the last decade or so, many Pentecostal and charismatic churches around the globe seem to be increasingly catching a vision of addressing the social needs of their communities' (2006: 18). Although there may be variations this tendency is also observed in these churches through the family groups.

To sum up, it could be said that although the FGs have as their primary target numerical growth, they function as a support network. They provide their members with a sense of community which helps them to relate to each other, offer mutual support for them at times when they need jobs, or have spiritual, economic or health needs. These groups also provide ethical values for them to orient their personal, work and family lives. These groups are also exposed to certain slants of a vulnerable nature. The constant division of these groups creates a certain anxiety because members must transfer to a new group once it reaches twelve. Some of the churches give more attention to numerical growth that could affect the objectives of those groups.

A former leader of these groups expressed that he left the group because of the pressure of the numerical emphasis and his disagreement with the strategy. Some critics indicate that the G12 model follows a vertical style of leadership that imposes the authority of its pastors without the possibility of being questioned. They say, 'the programme, in short, is like a marketing brand, which is based on a method, a product which can be marketed aimed at the establishment of "G-12 franchises" in the market of the faithful' (La Prensa Evangélica, Poder de lo Alto, No.33/2006: 36). The majority of the NPL say that in their experience the FGs are an important asset for the development of the life of the church and of the families of the church.

E. MISSION, THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE

The Neo-Pentecostals find themselves in a dual pathway as far as the importation and exportation of ideas is concerned. At the same time as they are receiving influences they are also exporting their experiences and human resources. Garrard-Burnett affirms that this has to do with the Neo-Pentecostal missionary movement, and on the other hand it is a real process of pollination or the encounter of ideas and theologies.⁸²

These churches are sending missionaries and establishing churches within and outside of Latin America. For example, the ICV church has established more than thirty-five churches in the United States and Latin America. The ESH church has established fifty churches in the United States, Spain, Portugal and Latin America. The LDG church has established churches in different parts of Central America and the United States. The IVF church has some churches in the United States and El Salvador. The NPCs take with them all their theological, ideological and cultural baggage to plant the new churches. In some way it can be said that the subsidiary churches are replicas of the mother church taking into account contextual differences. For example, the ICV church of Nicaragua follows the model of leadership, liturgy, and theological emphasis of the ICV churches of Guatemala.

However, the researcher observed that ICV in Nicaragua is more open to give priority to social aid because of the context in which the church is inserted. Most of Neo-Pentecostal pastors travel as evangelists, workshop leaders and preachers in Latin-America, the United States and on the other side of the Atlantic. The missionary content and impact of those churches outside of Guatemala is a new field of work that needs to be analysed in the future. A separate study later could indicate the type of missionary contribution, influences or mistakes of these churches outside of Guatemalan context.

⁸² Virginia Garrard-Burnett, 'Commentary Israel Ortiz' thesis on chapter five', Garrad@mail.utexas.edu 19-03-07.

These churches also celebrate annual congresses to which believers from Latin-America, Spain and the United States assist. For example, the ‘Congress for Revival’ which ESH organizes, ‘Widen the lines of your tent’ of the ‘Casa de Dios’, Church Growth Congress ‘Open your eyes’ organized by the LDG church and others, are just a few examples of these events which bring together thousands of participants. The NPCs do not just receive influences from abroad but they also export their beliefs and Neo-Pentecostal emphases through congresses, and pastors and missionaries who are working in Latin America and abroad.

Some emphasis in the field of music, worship, congresses for women, youth prayer congresses (among others), attract Latin American and other Neo-Pentecostals. The video on the model of Almolonga has gone round the world to show what they call ‘transformation of communities’. It shows the spiritual, rational, economic, and social changes which the gospel brought to this town. According to the Neo-Pentecostal thesis, the change which Almolonga experienced was possible because of the spiritual warfare won in that place. These ideas are transported through the media of videos DVDs, cassettes or television programmes within and outside of Latin America (‘Almolonga, la ciudad milagro’ Video Almolonga: VHS Guatemala).

On the other hand, the NPCs have influenced the Evangelical and Catholic churches in Guatemala and beyond. They export evangelistic vision, liturgical emphases, leadership and some ideas about church growth within and beyond Latin America. This ‘move of the Spirit’, as the Neo-Pentecostal pastors [NPS] would call it, is also beginning to be exported to other countries. Of course, some critics of this movement would argue that they are also exporting various emphases and practices that do not correspond with the biblical pattern (IO1). These areas of expansion need to be analyzed in further studies to observe what sort of churches they establish, what their biblical and theological basis is, the leadership they train and how they project themselves in their socio-religious context.

CONCLUSIONS

The NPCs are a new social actor within and outside of Guatemala from the religious perspective. Their ideas about how to confront their present world and the way that they visualize some solutions show that the NPL have not retreated from the world. They are active in their churches, in their daily work, their businesses and have begun to project themselves into the heart of society.

In spite of their short ecclesiastical history the NPCs have achieved important organizational, ministerial and a missionary advances. They feel that the present belongs to them and confront life with enthusiasm in the midst of the socio-political crises which Guatemala is going through. At the same time, they are starting to project themselves in various directions in church activities, business, and social aid projects or in politics.

In spite of the negative experiences of Ríos Montt and Serrano Elías, the NPPs are looking for opportunities to become inserted in Guatemalan politics. They are also getting involved in some government posts. Could the new political actors be different from previous ones? Are they prepared to contribute to the country from the platform of ethics and Christian values? Can these politicians demonstrate a different standard of conduct to that of the nation's elite? Are they willing to establish strategic alliances with other evangelical sectors to reach political power? Is the laity involved in civil society serving in favour of the community?

The Neo-Pentecostal churches are establishing some social aid projects as part of their evangelistic mission. Most of those churches have no social programmes, but lately they are getting involved a little bit more. The organization and infrastructure of most of the aid programme is precarious and they do not have sufficient assigned resources to operate on a greater scale. They are usually subordinated to projects of numerical growth of the churches. The percentage of NPL that participate in the projects is small, but it could

to be increased if their pastors encourage them to get involved whether at the local level of church or within society.

The projects Casa Bernabe and Hands of Love have a lot of infrastructure, administrative organization and financial resources. Those projects are providing people with some kind of vision for development. The contribution of both social programmes could stimulate the emergence of new programmes within other Evangelical churches. Of course, CB and Hands of Love need to be evaluated in order to know if they are accomplishing their goals and if the people of those churches are getting involved.

The NPCs' education projects are an important part among most of the churches studied. Although their schools and universities are not available for all the population, they are a very important contribution to the social and economic development of the country. Nevertheless the schools in the Guatemala City are inaccessible to most of the population and accentuate the process of exclusion of the lower middle and working classes. In what ways are those educational centres forming leaders with social vision to serve their churches and society? Their objectives to form leaders to be better professionals and serve the country, needs further analysis.

Their concern for social problems does not necessarily mean that they know how to approach them or face them. There does not appear to be, especially among NPL of the members of the higher classes, a vision or movement that could be a vehicle for social change from the structural point of view politics and economics. Where the NPL show certain potential that could contribute to social change could be in the sphere of political culture.

Finally, it is important to point out that the network of FGs are a key platform for the believers' personal development, as in these mega-churches it is hard to cultivate close personal and community relationships. Up to what point do these groups achieve the objectives of their mission and do they provide pastoral help for the believers and the new converts? Some critics of G-12 say that the family groups create a lot of pressure on the

members, and that they are just a market strategy for rapid growth and expansion. The next chapter will analyze the thinking of the pastors with relation to the role and social presence of believers in the world. In the conclusions the two perspectives will be compared and contrasted.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOCIAL THINKING OF THE NEO-PENTECOSTAL PASTORS OF GUATEMALA CITY

In the NPCs the figure of the pastor is central in its foundation, direction, formation and development. Members depend in many ways on their vision and messages to direct their thoughts and conduct in daily living. That is why it is important to analyze the thinking of the Neo-Pentecostal pastors (NPS) in terms of their role and social presence in the Church and to observe how it is transmitted to the members. For example studies done by Paul Gifford (2004) on charismatic churches in Ghana and by David Maxwell (2006) in the Assembly of God of Zimbabwe show how the vision, thinking and leadership of their pastors determined the direction of their churches and affected other pastors.

The analysis includes material gathered from interviews with senior pastors (P), associate pastors (A), internal observers (IO) and external observers (EO) from these churches and some lay people (NPL). One of the letters indicated above is attached to every quote together with the code of the church and the number assigned to it as laid out in the study plan in the first chapter.

A. THE BACKGROUND OF THE NEO-PENTECOSTAL PASTORS

First it is important to take a look at where these leaders come from.

1. The geographic situation of the churches

The churches under study are all to be found in Guatemala City and municipalities that have been absorbed by the greater city boundaries. Most of the churches are attended by middle and upper class people are found in residential districts while the rest of the churches are in more popular areas. The study included this range of churches in order to cover a wide spectrum of the Neo-Pentecostal population. How is the social distribution in Guatemala? According to data from the (United Nations, Guatemala 2005), the

socioeconomic stratification in Guatemala 1989-2004 contemplates the following strata and percentages (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Socioeconomic stratification in Guatemala

Strata	Population (thousands)			Percentages		
	1989	2000	2004	1989	2000	2004
High	368.0	529.1	380.5	4.3	4.7	3.2
Middle	749.7	1,332.2	1,847.1	8.7	11.7	15.5
Lower middle	1,258.8	2,220.0	2,421.6	14.5	19.6	20.4
Low	4,219.9	4,636.2	3,819.3	48.9	40.9	32.1
Extremely low	2,032.5	2,624.8	3,419.7	23.6	23.1	28.8
Total	8,623.0	11,342.5	11,888.3	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source data elaboration de ENS 1989, ENCOVI 2000 & ENEI 2004

According to the data above 3.2 per cent are in the high class, 35.9 per cent middle and lower middle classes and 60.9 per cent the lower and extremely low classes of the total population. Within this range, the indigenous population is in the lower and extremely low strata. In general terms, the possibility of mobility within the social scale will present difficulties for those who have low levels of income and education. For example, of the lower and semi lower sectors (60.9% of the total population), less than 2% have access to tertiary level education which limits their possibilities of incorporation into the labour market, presenting an obstacle for the possibility of a short term rise in social mobility (Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano, 2005: 96). The high percentage differential between the high social strata or classes and the lower ones reflects the accentuated socio economic disparity among Guatemalans.

Some authors point out that the profound division between the rural areas and the city, and the structural dualism which has existed in Guatemala since colonial times, separated the population in two layers with characteristics of domination with one over the other (Amaro 1970: 158). According to Loup Herbert, 'the relationship of exploitation of the ladino over the indigenous people constitutes the dominant contradiction in the class structure' (1970: 94). For Casaus Arzú the dominant class (the elite of the Guatemalan oligarchy), their structure, racist posture towards the indigenous people since colonial times, has defined the present social structures of the country (1995: 12-14, 21-25).

According to these analyses, 'the dominant class, who has power and the means of production, represents the relationship of production established in society over the dominated class. These relationships are reflected in the power structures and in the State (Stavenhagen 1972: 37). Within this theoretical framework social stratification is essentially rigid.

Other studies affirm that the systems of stratification of the modern world are not so rigid and allow an individual to pass from one social class to another one. In other words, in western society all the citizens have the same opportunities to ascend. Of course, it is evident that those who do not have economic means or educational background will not always be able to access these opportunities. Some sociologists say that social mobility of the population is a part of the social dynamic of the developing world (Stavengahen, 1972: 28). From the perspective of functional analyses, social stratification is defined in function of the social ideal of immediate accessibility for those who consume less to be able to rise to become high consumers (Recalde, 1968: 54-56). This mobility is called 'the passage of an individual or group from one social strata to another, higher one or to descend to one that is lower, which may or not be accompanied by the movement from one social class to another' (Gallino 2005: 598). According to Stavengahen the change in strata happens mostly at the level of the individual, as the change in the position of strata has more to do with evolution and social development (1972: 26). It is possible to affirm that in Guatemala certain changes can be observed in social stratification more on an individual level than in the social structure. Later the analysis with respect to the social mobility witnessed by the laity in the NPCs will be considered.

How about the Neo-Pentecostal churches? Stoll suggests that the population of the high class in the Guatemalan NPCs does not pass 5 per cent of the Guatemalan elite (1994: 108). According to the analysis of the SEPAL, the Evangelical population in Guatemala City is distributed in the following way: high class 4 per cent, middle/middle class 10 per cent, lower middle class 10 per cent, upper lower class 20 per cent, middle lower class 25

per cent and low/lower class 25 per cent (SEPAL 2003: 6,14).⁸³ According to this data the high class is really just a small part of the total Evangelical population in Guatemala City and certainly even much less so in the interior of the country.

One important data in the middle and high class churches is the fact that working class families join in with them also (Table 4.2). Although each Neo-Pentecostal church has a clear definition of middle or upper class membership, the presence of working class among those churches can be seen. The data on rural and urban populations based on the census of the National Statistic Institute 2000 show that while the urban population of the Department of Guatemala reached 12.80 per cent there was 27.80 per cent of Evangelicals in this area. Within the 87.20 per cent of the total population of the interior of the country, Evangelicals represent 25.10 per cent (cited by SEPAL 2003:19). This shows that the Evangelical population has a similar concentration in both sectors.

The NPCs are growing more numerically among Evangelical population and they have the largest number of mega-church buildings, media channels, education centres, and the members of these churches participate actively in politics. They have extended into both the interior of the country as well as to other countries. The majority of the churches were established by the present pastors with the exception of the IVC church. These churches were chosen because of reasons which were laid down in the introduction to this thesis. These churches were founded approximately within the space of ten years from 1976 onwards (see Table 4.2).

⁸³SEPAL The Josué project El Estado Actual de la Iglesia Evangélica en Guatemala registers that the mega-churches with the Assemblies of God and the Church of God represent the most significant growth rates.

Table 4.2 Foundation, date and social composition

Church	Foundation date	Social composition
Iglesia Cristiana Verbo ICV	1976	High class and especially middle class.
Fraternidad Cristiana de Guatemala FCG	1978	High class and especially middle class.
El Shaddai ESH	1983	High class and especially middle class.
Iglesia Evangélica Lluvias de Gracia LDG	1984	Working class and lower middle class.
Iglesia la Familia de Dios IFD	1985	Middle class, lower middle class and working class
Iglesia Visión de Fe IVF	1986	Middle class and lower middle class.

Source: Interviews of Neo-Pentecostal pastors

2. Ecclesiastical roots

The Neo-Pentecostal pastors [NPS] come from different church backgrounds (Table 4.3). The LDG church was born within the context of the historical churches. The senior pastor led first the Presbyterian Church of Colonia Centroamérica. After experiencing the baptism of the Holy Spirit his church grew dramatically. This phenomenon spread to other churches of the Mission to such an extent that the National Synod took measures to contain the movement. This pastor along with thirty-six leaders made up of ‘elders’ and ‘pastors’ from five churches founded the LDG after being expelled from the National Presbyterian Church. The senior pastor and the pastors which left with him were accused of Pentecostal manifestations and changing the Presbyterian doctrines (Guillén 1997: 5).

The FCG founding pastor was formed and developed into a Pentecostal type of church, the Calvary Central Church which was fundamental in raising up leaders who founded Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches. He left the church to found his own church. The IVF senior pastor, a Presbyterian by background, was a disciple of Otoniel Ríos Paredes the senior pastor of the Elim Central Pentecostal church. The IFG senior pastor, a former member of the Freemasons and Yoga groups, founded the Ministry for Christian Motivation after his conversion, and the project for his church grew out of this. After founding the church they acquired Channel 27 and ‘Radio Exclusiva’ which transmit their messages and other Evangelical ministries.

The ESH senior pastor came from a Catholic home and became a born-again Christian within the circle of his wife's family. From the beginning he had contact with some churches in United States such as Lakewood where he was ordained to the ministry. He founded ESH the church with a small group of friends and relatives. Several pastors from the ICV church were interviewed, but the senior pastor was chosen as their representative as he is the leading elder in the Verbo ministries and one of the founders of the ICV. Before his conversion to Christianity he had links with Gospel Outreach, a group of churches whose headquarters are in Eureka, California. He came to Guatemala, together with other North American families, having been sent by the church to help people affected by the 1976 earthquake.

Table 4.3 Church background

Pastor's code	Church	Religious or church background
P1ICV	Iglesia Cristiana Verbo	Gospel Outreach California
P2FCG	Fraternidad Cristiana de Guatemala	El Calvario Pentecostal Church
P3ESH	El Shaddai	Catholic Church
P4LDG	Iglesia Lluvias de Gracia	National Presbyterian Church
P5IFD	Iglesia la Familia de Dios	Catholic church, Masons and yoga
P6IVF	Iglesia Visión de Fe	Elim and Presbyterian Church

Source: Interviews of Neo-Pentecostal pastors

With the exception of the LDG church the rest of the churches came out of small congregations or family groups. They are now the churches which are growing most along with the Assemblies of God and the Church of God. The NPS identify themselves with some of the beliefs of Pentecostalism and some features from the Protestant Reformation. According to a Pentecostal theologian those churches choose selectively and apply some content of the latter according to their own criteria (IO1). That is they take some doctrines or strands of teaching from the Evangelical tradition which fits into their Neo-Pentecostal vision. From the start they have had links with evangelists or preachers from Latin America and the United States from the Pentecostal and Charismatic worlds. Oscar Amat commenting on the Peruvian case points out that these churches were established not only

as a 'renewal movement within the denominations but also with their own institutional life' (Amat & Pérez 1997: 13).

3. Academic background

The majority of the NPS have university degrees and theological education. Some have done postgraduate studies in religious studies while others are self-taught bible students. This level of training distinguishes them from the Pentecostal pastors who, generally speaking do not have a great deal of academic training although during the last decades some pastors have done post graduate studies in theology and Christian ministry. These churches do not follow the model of the pastors of historic churches. They follow the Pentecostal model⁸⁴, but they have a higher level of studies especially at university level. Among the pastors interviewed, some came from higher middle class families while others were from poorer families.⁸⁵ Some carried out studies in the United States and others in the local universities and seminaries. The ESH senior pastor graduated as a lawyer from the Catholic Francisco Marroquín University which is a stronghold of the values of market economy, while the IVF senior pastor studied economy in the Universidad Nacional de San Carlos usually identified with left ideological thinking (Table 4.4).

This educational background helps one to understand the way they think as well as how they administer the churches. This explains their more managerial perspective and their familiarity and inclination for the North American culture as a model of prosperity and democracy. Within this context it seems natural to them to connect with and relate to evangelists, prophets, apostles, churches and the media of the neighbouring Neo-Pentecostal world in the North and the South

⁸⁴ Generally the Pentecostal pastors have not undertaken much either secular or theological education. The majority entered the ministry convinced of their call to the pastor, and sent out by their churches to different areas of ministry. In many ways this was why they successfully grew and expanded. Now there are more theological recourses and prepared pastors.

⁸⁵ The senior pastor of FCG of whom it is said: 'He was born into a humble family which meant that in his infancy there were many privations, they lived in a rented house, with a mud floor, cooked with coal, and had no portable water' P2FCG .

Table 4.4 The academic training of the pastors

Pastors	Academic training
P1ICV	Journalist with other studies in the United States
P2FCG	Biblical studies, Masters degree in Divinity and Doctorate in Humanities. Studied in Guatemala and the United States
P3ESH	Lawyer, Master's Degree in Christian Education. Studied in Guatemala and the United States.
P4LDG	Degree in Pastoral Ministries, Doctorate in Christian Ministries. Studied in Guatemala and the United States.
P5IFG	Bachelors' degree in Theology. Doctorate in Divinity Studied in Guatemala.
P6IVF	Degree in Economics from the Universidad de San Carlos, Guatemala.

Source: Interviews of Neo-Pentecostal pastors

B. THE PROFILE OF THE NEO-PENTECOSTAL LEADERSHIP

In order to situate the leadership style of these pastors the following features will be analyzed as part of their profile: Charismatic leadership, managerial profile and autocratic leadership all mixed together.

1. Charismatic leadership

The NPS are considered to be charismatic leaders. According to Weber's model, legitimization of authority takes three forms, rational authority, traditional authority and charismatic authority. This last one represents that type of authority which rests on 'devotion to exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him' (Weber 1968 Vol. 1: 215-16).⁸⁶ According to this paradigm the emphasis falls on the personality and qualities of the leader.

Young-Gi Hong (2000) in his thesis on charismatic leadership in South Korea underlines that it is possible to apply this model as no agreement exists among academics

⁸⁶ For more studies on the subject see the following: Conger & Kanungo (1998); Mardsen & Snow (1991); Tucker (1968: 731-756); and Willner (1984). Willner makes a clear differentiation between the charismatic leader and the leader in general using the following criteria: 1) The dimension of the image, 2) the dimension of acceptance 3) the dimension of conformity to the leader and 4) the emotional dimension (1984: 4-8).

about this concept or the criteria for its appropriate application.⁸⁷ Taking this into account some of the elements which stand out in Weber's model of charismatic authority will be mentioned here in order to understand the profile of the Neo-Pentecostal pastor.

One first aspect has to do with the qualities of a leader. For Weber the carrier of the 'charisma' should have certain exceptional qualities to distinguish him (Weber 1968 Vol. 1: 241). In the Neo-Pentecostal churches this element is crucial. The leader has to be gifted with special qualities and with power. The idea of 'empowerment' by the Spirit is a central part of legitimizing the leaders, as is also the demonstration of this power in their mission practice. The majority of the pastors emphasize that the baptism of the Spirit has marked their lives and leadership. They mention this experience to legitimize their spiritual and pastoral authority. The term 'anointing' is the most common idea used to refer to a powerful presence of the Spirit. This anointing, according to the Neo-Pentecostals, empowers the charismatic pastor and is manifested in the 'rhema' (or word in the power of God) which they preach, in healing and in working miracles.

Their call to the ministry came to them as a revelation of God who has them in his ministry. Pastors from other churches question this pretension because they consider that it opens the door to personal subjectivism and relativization of the Canon of Scriptures. In the Neo-Pentecostal context this anointing belongs to the charismatic pastor, and also to the membership. According to the Pentecostal model, the use of spiritual gifts is democratized. That means they break with the traditional model of the clergy of the historic churches. In some of services the researcher observed the pastors spoke in tongues and prayed that the members would have the same experience. Oscar Amat points out that 'the use of the charismata seems to have been the central axle of congregational growth and the proof of the supernatural power of God, are keys elements to produce a change in the content of missiological agenda' (1997: 10).

⁸⁷ He discusses the depth of the theme and applies his own criteria about the charisma of the South Korean pastors of the mega-churches in his doctoral thesis (2000).

A second feature of Weber's charismatic authority has to do with the recognition of the charisma. The leader needs to be recognized by his followers. The group of people, who are subject to that authority, need to recognise the charisma and realize how it is going to benefit them (Weber 1968 Vol. 1: 242). In the case of the Neo-Pentecostal membership, they submit, follow and recognize the pastors as their spiritual authority and benefactors. Members of these churches recognize the charisma of their pastors, and point out that they have been blessed and challenged by their lives and preaching. An informant recognized that they received 'vision' and 'stimulation' to reorder life and start a small business (L10ESH). These pastors claim that they have power and direct revelations from God which they use to legitimate their charismatic authority. Members of these churches usually do not only recognize the authority of their pastors but they also submit to them and follow them.

In the third place, Weber underlines that the charismatic leader ponders over or carefully measures the task for which he is destined and demands that others obey him and follow him by virtue of his mission (Weber Vol.3 1968: 1111-1112). The sense of calling to fulfil a mission is fundamental in these pastors and their followers. This 'calling' is used both by the pastors and by the members to legitimate their leadership, ideas and projects. In some cases they use their calling as an argument to drive gigantic projects.

According to these pastors the credibility of their ministry is perceived by the thousands of followers who believe, support and give their lives to the vision and the proposed projects. An example of this can be seen in the teams of voluntary workers. They assist thousands of people in their Sunday activities and mass events. They carry out different tasks that they have been assigned empowered by the vision they have received from the leader and as a result of their commitment to their new faith. Hong found this same phenomenon in his analysis of the Korean mega-churches (2000: 3). The commitment, organization and mobilization of the laity comes mostly as a result of the

belief that the leader has a special call and mission which the pastors are responsible to transmit to the faithful.

Fourthly, charismatic authority elects a team and accompanies it (Weber 1968 Vol. 1: 243). Something which is very characteristic of these churches is the form in which the leaders are chosen. According to the Neo-Pentecostal pastors their collaborators are chosen by them on the basis of their gifts and the function which they assume in the designated ministries (A8ESH). These do not follow the traditional model of pastoral election, but rather make personal choices. This method has been criticized by several authors as it does not permit others to intervene in the elections of their closest collaborators (Núñez, 2001: 28). The LDG senior pastor says that the ‘election of elders through the voting system only brings problems and arguments’ (P4LDG). Their form of choosing leaders has converted the church into a family business in some cases. The pastor chooses according to his own criteria the team of collaborators whose ideas are the closest to his own.

Peter Wagner affirms that ‘the new apostolic churches frequently become businesses of mum and dad. It is not rare to find several family relatives in the personnel of the new big apostolic churches’ (Cited in Núñez 2001: 30). While visiting the churches the researcher observed this phenomenon in important ministries such as the co-pastor and the administration of educational projects and other ministries in the church.

2. The managerial profile

Managerial leadership is not necessarily different from charismatic leadership. However, due to the specificity of the Neo-Pentecostal context it will be mentioned as a part of the profile of these pastors. The researcher found that some of these pastors brought with them some training and experience in management. Others guided by the vision of their calling implemented a biblical and administrative training. For example, a pastor talking about his conversion said: ‘What the Lord Jesus Christ did for me was to prepare me as a leader of a

company such as the Foundation for Success, as an insurance counsellor, as a manager of a pharmaceutical company for Central America and Panama [...] so that He could call me and give me the ability to administer the work that God does in his church' (P5IFD). This function he described was not like the model of the traditional pastor.

Neo-Pentecostals empowered by their charisma assume distinct projects in which they show features of managerial leadership. For example, the IFG senior pastor founded Christian Motivation, bought television Channel 27, 'Radio Exclusiva' and established a church built on land that extended for twenty three blocks. The ESH senior pastor showed the same tendency. After founding the church he established schools, a network of radio stations, the 'Manos de Amor' Foundation, and CEIDAL (International centre for Latin American Development) and founded the San Pablo University. These phenomena are occurring in others continents as well. The pastor Mensa Otabil who founded in 1984 the International Central Gospel Church in Ghana, recently opened a Christian university college and some charities in Ghana (Gifford 2004: 114-116).

The FCG senior pastor believes that Christians spend their lives with a sense of excellence and hard work: 'We can do everything with excellence and with our own resources' (P2FCG).⁸⁸ He built the greatest mega-church in Central America which has been criticized for the amount invested in it. This type of leadership fits in with the model which Conger & Kanungo propose within the contemporary organizational context. According to these authors, the charismatic leader evaluates critically the environment and the status quo, formulates and articulates a vision for the future, and builds up an environment of confidence and credibility in the minds of their followers (1998: 47-57).⁸⁹

Frigerio & Seman see this same characteristic in Pastor Héctor Aníbal Jiménez who has had a lot of success in Argentina and who is called a religious 'entrepreneur' (1995:

⁸⁸ According to the FCG Pastor the construction of mega-churches is a sign of advancement. He affirms: We are giving a new image' (López 2002: 9). At the present time he is building the biggest church in Guatemala and the Central American region that can hold 12,200 people. The cost of this project was estimated in the beginning at 160 million quetzals (\$20 million) which is being paid for with local funds.

⁸⁹ There exists vast bibliography treating aspects of charismatic leadership within the spheres of their organization. For examples see the works of Marsden & Snow (1991) and Peter L. Wright (1996).

11).⁹⁰ This form of ‘embarking in new projects’ is part of the way they do things to train, encourage and commit their people. This leadership style among the Neo-Pentecostals is seen in the way that they present their vision, how they organize and administrate, develop work in teams, and implement technical and strategic support to carry out their activities and missionary projects. They have strict control over their work agendas, evaluation processes and control of their goals, sessions with the teams and the drive to continue projects. In the visits the researcher observed in the majority of the churches a huge work load, dynamic and organized teams, all supported by the latest equipment and technology in a comfortable environment within a context of work and brotherhood. They meet to pray and chat about their projects, but also they make room to eat together. The pastor of IVF invited the researcher to have breakfast with members of his leadership team. Of course, the relationship among pastors of other NPCs is seen more throughout some religious events.

This leadership and organizational style contrasts with the model of the traditional pastor who gives a good part of their time to counselling and pastoring and administering the church through a council of elders. These churches are of course exposed to internal fights between the council of elders and the pastors for different reasons, and they do not necessarily have the best administrative resources.

According to the NPS their way of doing things improves the administration of their churches and ministry. Some critics of NEOP comment that this vision exposes the church to managerial market economy criteria. If this is so then, in what measure does this managerial vision change the community character of the church? Up to what point has this management criteria been placed over the pastoral nature of the church? In what measure do these pastors, from their managerial platform, differentiate between market economy criteria, their pastoral task?

⁹⁰ The Associate Pastor of the “Iglesia Cristiana Verbo” in Zone 7 of Guatemala City pastors the church while at the same time he administers a business which supplies articles for the shoe trade (A4ICV).

3. Autocratic leadership

Among the NPS an autocratic style of leadership can be observed where an influx of vertical authority is exercised as a part of their charismatic leadership. Their word and character in some way becomes law. In some of these circles they are treated as the ‘anointed of the Lord’. Their charismatic leadership qualities and the way the congregation commonly recognise this is the basis for their authority. This leadership allows them to drive projects that they have envisioned and say have received from God, which the congregation must necessarily believe and support.⁹¹

One of the associate pastors pointed out that: ‘the number one pastor is the leader. He is the one who makes the decisions’ and that he ‘has the vision’ (A8ESH). Associate pastors and key leaders are nominated by the founding pastor, because they recognise that he represents the maximum authority among them (P4LDG).⁹² Some churches have a council of elders or board of directors but their function is more for consultation and support.

Some external observers criticise the autocratic style of leadership because they have all the power of decision making for the church. A journalist affirms that ‘this type of leadership concentrates all the decisions on the person of the principle pastor’ (IO9). This model raises certain fears within the Guatemalan Evangelical circle. Especially after various NPS were granted the title of ‘apostle’ and belong to the Apostolic Council.⁹³ This council was established after naming these pastors as apostles in Guatemala City in 2000.

Those who do not approve of this platform of apostolic leadership fear this will become a new structure for ecclesiastical power. Núñez describes this new movement and

⁹¹ Generally, the leadership teams and membership submit to the visions and projects which the pastors promote on a personal level. One of the co-pastors interviewed affirmed that his pastor is a man of God and a visionary.

⁹² In the Verbo churches although they have a Council of Elders it is the ‘governing elder who has the final word in the operation of the local church’ (P1ICV).

⁹³ On the 28th of October 2000 they were named Apostles in the Mateo Flores national football stadium in Guatemala City. This title was given to them by the International Apostolic Council. This council is made up of a group of apostles from North America, Latin America and other countries and is supposed to give coverage and spiritual recognition. Although this Council does not have any ecclesiastical authority over these pastors, it gives them spiritual authority under the apostolic domination.

its possible consequences in the ecclesiastical environment. In his criticism of the hermeneutics of the apostolic movement he points to the ‘hierarchical and structure orientated interpretation which they give to Ephesians 4:7-12’ (2001: 28). Fear of authoritarianism continues in the Evangelical context in spite of the fact that some of these churches and their pastors form part of the Guatemalan Evangelical Alliance.

From a different perspective Kay emphasizes the gift of an apostle together with the other ministries mentioned in Ephesians as a key factor for the advance of the apostolic network and the advance of mission in different directions (2007: 242-46). Bastian following the D’Epinay’s thesis, notes that Pentecostalism reproduced within itself the old authoritative patterns of the hacienda in the figure of the pastor (Lalive D’Epinay 1968: 180; Bastian 1993: 55).

From another point of view a theologian commenting on the vertical model of the Colombian Neo-Pentecostal churches affirms that in ‘a society with so many alternatives when someone says that this is the way, it helps many people to choose answers and leadership’ in a time of ambiguity (EO1). This model appears to be a necessary evil in the context of a society that is suffering a crisis of political leadership, post-modernism which has de-structured, among other things, the respect and belief in authority or universal truth.

To sum up, the model of leadership whether it is charismatic, entrepreneurial or autocratic reflects the profile of the Neo-Pentecostal pastors in one degree or another. These features are manifested according to their personality, family background or ecclesiastical context. Their leadership appears to have great acceptance among the membership. Another pastor questioned the supposed apostolic authority which they demand for themselves. Despite their strong leadership, the NPS show a relational approach to their members and especially to the members of their teams.

According to André Droogers, this double attitude is shown in the context of what he calls the Pentecostal ambiguity. In these strongly hierarchical churches, the pastor has a lot of power. They do however show a certain sense of equalitarianism where all the

members have access to the power of the Spirit (1998: 6). For example, some of these pastors share the practice of fasting and prayer with members of their pastoral team, in order to get answers and power from God, and to backup their authority and leadership. Of course, it does not mean that the Neo-Pentecostal pastors share with their associate pastors their decisions. They are open to hear advice, but they make the decisions about the church and its projects. That is why is important to raise the next question, does their charismatic leadership contribute or not to these churches having a role and social presence in society? Robert Tucker in his analysis of leadership applies an interesting criterion to distinguish the presence of an authentic charismatic leader. He affirms that this is not any sort of leader who is idolized and freely followed for his extraordinary qualities. But rather, it is that person who demonstrates such qualities in the process of calling people 'to join in a movement for change and in leading such a movement' (1968: 737). In Evangelical language they need to assume the model of the servant-leader. On the other hand, are these churches prepared for the transition of leadership? Though they are young churches, the danger of getting into a rut which Weber has raised applies to the pastors of the NPCs. O'Dea comments that 'This derivation towards the routine which is an inevitable social process constitutes a dilemma'. That is why 'Religion needs institutionalization but it also suffers under it' (1976: 190).

In the light of this affirmation some questions need to be asked: Do these Neo-Pentecostal pastors have a social vision of the gospel? Are they providing teaching to their faithful to improve their spiritual and social life? Are they training their members to have a social vision which will capacitate them to confront the challenges of the world? Do they stimulate their members to participate positively in the different spheres of the social, cultural and economic life of the civil society? These questions will guide the analysis towards the section in which aspects related to thought processes and social vision of these pastors will be discussed.

C. SOCIAL THINKING

In this section the manner in which these pastors understand social presence and the role of the church in the light of their Neo-Pentecostal theology will be examined. The objective is to capture their argument about these themes and later contrast it with the way that the members of their churches think. What message is emphasized by the NPS? What elements are included in their discourse about the mission of the church and her role in society? What type of practices accompanies this discourse? With the idea of understanding their thinking and social action, Ron Sider's scheme about the social responsibility of the church will be used.

In his book Evangelism & Social Action In a lost and broken world, Sider suggests three types of social responsibility which could throw light about where to place the NPS on this issue. There are levels of action which complement each other: a) Social aid which has to do with the assistance of victims of natural or social disasters. Food, refuge and other needs are provided to help these victims to survive. b) Social development where help is offered to individuals, families or communities to get appropriate instruments, abilities or knowledge which will enable them to look after themselves, and c) Structural change which involves the macro level of law, politics and economic life. He considers politics as an important medium to change structures in society to create more liberty, democracy, economic justice and a sustainable environment (1993: 139-140). According to Sider's scheme they could be involved at the first level and part of the second one. The analysis shows that the reality is much more complex and in practice the first phases become mingled with each other, especially in the light of the paradox demonstrated by pastors and lay people regarding their discourse and their social practice.

1. Paradox of the Neo-Pentecostal pastors

What is the social thinking of the NPS? The analysis shows that they do not have the same perceptions and understanding about their role and presence in society. Some do have

definite ideas in this respect while others are not so precise. This paradox causes confusion to the observer and makes it difficult to see what is happening within these churches. Droogers says that these paradoxes among Pentecostals need to be examined carefully as they are not always what they seem to be. For example, he indicates that they reject this world and they separate from it, but simultaneously they act like citizens and exemplary workers. Also he underlines that in the charismatic movements, despite the fact that pastors play an important role the lay people are able to create their own space (1998: 6-7). In some ways this paradox could confuse the observer by not permitting him to see what really goes on inside these churches. Understanding this disjunctive helps to show how they think about their role and presence in society.

In the first place this paradox stems from the religious language which the pastors use in their discourse. Their ideas on social issues are generally couched in religious language as is the case even with lay university students. For example, the idea of conversion implies social change but they do not express it in that way. They do not articulate their thought in a theological or sociological frame. The researcher had to make some adjustments in his questions in order to understand better the Neo-Pentecostal thinking. Cecilia Mariz says that ‘it is more useful to identify the practical consequences of religious beliefs and experiences in the daily life of the faithful, than to discuss the degree of political conservatism of their ideologies (1995a: 2005).

In second place, the investigation shows that the thinking and social role which the NPL have is better understood from their understanding and practice in daily living. They do not articulate social theory but assume life with its challenges full of Neo-Pentecostal faith motifs. The NPL weave their ideas about life and the world from their experience of faith. They speak naturally about their faith, work, businesses, or sport. Their idea about the Kingdom being present now helps them to be more open to the world and not to separate the sacred from the profane, especially the high and middle class lay people. John Burdick argues that one needs ‘to untie the paradox that on the one hand their new sense of

self and personal value provides a strong sense of rights and citizenship, while on the other hand they do not often constitute a major presence in social movements' (cited in Martin 2002: 88).

In the third place, the researcher found that not all the pastors relate the mission of the church to social responsibility. That is to say, it is not always due to a question of ambivalence of the speech, but rather to a lack of greater commitment with the social challenge of the mission. Although they perceive the social problems they do not always relate them to the task of mission. They affirm that mission includes the social area but in practise they do not always give the attention and resources that it deserves. Their focus of mission concentrates on numerical growth.

Finally, Míguez Bonino says that the problem of the paradox runs deeper. He says that 'it has to do with the relation between linear logic of the "illustrated" rationality and the rationality of the symbolic that include "many voices" that comes nearer to the "rationality of the life" which the town people live'. He notices that 'to try to reduce the second to the first runs the risk of sterilizing experience' (1995a: 73-74). Bearing in mind this ambiguity, we proceed to examine the principal ideas of the NPS about their thought and social role.

2. Vision of the church

The NPS believe that the church is the 'community of believers' who confess Jesus Christ as their personal saviour both in the universal dimension as well as a local one.⁹⁴ Their definition is usually based on the first century church described in the book of Acts. They appear to distance themselves from the concept of the institutional church such as would be found in the historic denominations. They consider themselves to be a 'renewal movement'. According to their pastors the Neo-Pentecostal church came into being as a

²⁹⁴ This concept acquires the same meaning but is expressed in distinct ways in the following documents. 'La vida en la iglesia'. Manual de Discipulado Iglesia el Shaddai pp. 18-21. 'Compartiendo con la Nueva Familia' Manual de Discipulado. Misión Cristiana Evangélica Lluvias de Gracias pp. 10-12. Declaración Doctrinal Iglesia de Jesucristo la Familia de Dios.

result of ‘a new move of the Spirit’ in times when the Pentecostal churches, historic and other churches were experimenting loss of power, spiritual stagnation and ritualism.⁹⁵ They see themselves as a sign of renewal of life in the Spirit within Protestantism, and believe that church itself is a contribution to the spiritual life of the people which is accompanied by changes in other areas of their life and their social setting.

The Neo-Pentecostals assure folk that the ‘supernatural’ presence of God makes the people find in their churches ‘the touch of the Spirit on their lives’. A theologian from the Colombian context points out that the ‘manifestation of the Spirit’ of new Pentecostalism ‘invites people to explore the new riches of God’ (EO1).⁹⁶ Rigoberto Gálvez from the ‘Familia de Dios’ church says that the NPCs ‘have recuperated the hermeneutic of experience and the theology of subjectivity which fits in with the gospel’ (2000: 11). This presence is what these pastors say attract many people who need spiritual, emotional, physical and economic change. They consider that this presence of the divine represents an opportunity for these people to change their lives.

Bernardo Campos from his analysis of Peruvian Pentecostalism affirms that it is a ‘religious movement’ which ‘empowers the church and produces organic and visible signs’. He affirms that ‘Pentecostalism’ is a religious experience with a ‘divine origin’. That is why he signals that this movement of spirituality can ‘channel social changes and dreams, and hopes and utopias of the possibilities of a better world’ (1995: 57, 58, 70). The NPS see themselves as a renewal movement within the Christian church. The researcher observed in services and televised programmes how some members experience what they call ‘the anointing of the Spirit’. This experience produced a series of manifestations which brought joy or healing to them. Some authors affirm that the power of the Holy Spirit is a force which transforms the NPL into strong Christians who can face threats whether they

⁹⁵ ‘¡Sacerdocio Santo...!’ in Boletín Quincenal No.21, Iglesia de Jesucristo La Familia de Dios, Guatemala domingo 14 de noviembre.

⁹⁶ He affirms that Neo-Pentecostalism arises in a context where traditional theology, Pentecostal or historic and also the Theology of Liberation, have not responded to the expectancy of a society that has lost hope in modernism and its proposals. He considers that Neo-Pentecostalism could be considered as an answer to the challenges of postmodernism.

come from social crises or from demonic opposition, alcoholism, popular groups or the guerrilla, among others (Schäfer 1992: 203). The Neo-Pentecostals believe that these experiences are due to the presence of God that breaks into their lives, families, churches and the world.

Other analysts question their nature and form of being a church. They criticize their emphasis in church growth and the huge mega-church buildings which they say contradict a sense of community. According to Harold Segura today in Latin America a 'restricted ecclesiology' can be observed which is distant from the world and entertained by its own triumphs (2002: 61). Bastian points out that Pentecostals and NPCs are distinct from sixteenth century Protestantism as well as contemporary. They are rather 'religious movements which offer goods which are symbolic of salvation' (1997: 193, 208). From the Neo-Pentecostal point of view, these churches from the beginning have had the goal of being a 'model for the church in Latin America' (H. López in Obras año IV No.15 Junio 2002: 9). [In the fifth Chapter the perspective of the laity on this issue will be analysed].

The Neo-Pentecostal churches have Guatemalan roots. With the exception of the Verbo churches that were born out of Gospel Outreach, all of the other churches were started by local initiatives. Although they have links and differing grades of cooperation with other churches and Neo-Pentecostal leadership outside of Guatemala, they see themselves as a movement with autochthonous features. Pastor J.H. López says that this autochthonous nature has to do with economic sufficiency and the existence of national leadership (in Obras año IV No.15 Junio 2002: 9). A theologian states that 'Latin American Neo-Pentecostalism is native in terms of leadership, design, projects and finances' (EO1). Other analysts affirm that these churches very easily adopt schemes or ideas of foreign pastors, evangelists, prophets or apostles who are the models for the way that they understand their mission (IO1).⁹⁷ The researcher observed that in these churches

⁹⁷ An example of these new ideas would be the discoveries of Peter Wagner about the emergence of the New Apostolic Reform which the Neo-Pentecostals emphasise (Caballeros & Winger 1998: 171-183). On the

different forms of liturgy, organization, leadership, platforms in the sanctuary among other elements, reflect an external influence especially from the United States. He found some Jewish symbols too but could not see any symbol of the Guatemalan culture. The senior ESH pastor recognizes that they have neglected using symbols of Guatemalan culture (P3ESH).

3. Mission of the church

a. Salvation of the soul

How do the NPS define their mission? The majority of these pastors express their essential mission in terms of announcing the ‘salvation of souls’ which has to do with salvation from eternal condemnation and new life in Jesus Christ. One Pastor affirms that the primordial mission of the church is ‘to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and salvation and eternal life, to offer the sinner freedom from his sins through the Saviour and then help him in his life here and now’ (PIFD5)

Pastors of the FCG insist that the most important thing is that the people get salvation for their souls and that their families are restored (A2FCG). The leaders of the LDG church affirm that ‘The fundamental mission of the church is to evangelize, consolidate and make disciples’ (L3LDG). Pastor Madrid states that the most important mission of the church is to evangelize which belongs to the spiritual sphere and brings numerical growth. He says: ‘When I am talking about growth, it needs to be spiritual growth [...] each one of us has the decision to give love so that the rest of the people who do not yet know Christ can do so, as long as **the development of this growth results in our churches growing**’ [author’s emphasis] (Vides Aleluya News: Año 2 No.13:6-7). These expressions reveal the level of discourse with regard to the spiritual element of salvation. However, this posture as can be observed later on does not necessarily put to one

other hand, other analyst notes that these churches have to be in constant movement to maintain the people, who when they perceive that the “move” of God is not present start to look for another church to go to (IO1).

side interest in this real world. At the same time, it is observable that their emphasis on the spiritual sphere of some of these pastors limits their presence and role in society.

Míguez Bonino notes that Evangelicals have confused 'evangelism' and 'mission'. He underlines that they have reduced the totality of mission to the 'task of evangelism' known as the plan of salvation and the invitation to conversion. Later he notes that in practical terms this dichotomy separated 'evangelization from service, conversion from the search for justice, worship of God from life in the world, participation in the community of faith from responsibility in society' (1995b: 139). Although the NPS show more interest today in the present world and in the social development of their members, they tend to reduce the social effect of the gospel to the personal and family lives of the believers. Along with other Evangelical pastors, the NPS are beginning to include in their church activities some social programmes to help the needy. For example, they now send medical teams out to offer their services, they distribute food and clothing and other projects which the NPL noted in the GSNPL. Natural disasters such the earthquake of 1976, hurricane Stan in 2005 and other such problems, have stimulated the emergence of social aid projects.

b. Conversion and the change of the nation

Conversion in the thinking of the NPS is not limited to the salvation of the 'soul' in the spiritual sense, nor is it separated from daily life. At the centre of their message is the call to conversion which involves every believer 'being born again'. This is the difference between Christianity as culture and the Evangelical tradition which emphasises the new birth. From the point of view of Protestantism 'Personal conversion' based on a personal encounter with Jesus Christ provides the convert with a new perspective of themselves and of their new life. This encounter eliminated the mediations of Catholicism, helped the convert to subordinate natural events to the supernatural, and provided ethics and morality (Míguez Bonino n.d.: 10-13). Cleary adds that among Pentecostals 'Conversion serves as

the basis of living and of membership, stabilizes families, and impels those who have undergone in to reach out to others' (1999:140).

According to NPS, evangelism and conversion are key items for the social transformation of the country. In other words, they think that salvation is not just a ticket to heaven. They consider that 'winning Guatemala for Christ', will bring changes to the country. They note that 'salvation' does not just belong to the spiritual sphere, but there are also social repercussions. Their religious discourse describes change starting from a person's conversion experience. According to the NPS, 'winning the nation for Christ' implies the transformation of people and later the life of the nation. David Stoll commenting on the Guatemalan situation affirms that the Evangelicals are trying to translate personal moral reformation into public morality. He says that this starts with the Evangelical traditional belief in the transforming power of individuals who have been born-again to change society (1994: 109, 112). Stoll adds that this idea comes especially from the middle classes who continue to think that conversion to Christianity could change society without radically transforming the structures (1994: 114). Garrard-Burnett points out that the difficulty encountered is the 'the lack of political platform which many people are looking for'.⁹⁸

The NPS do not think in terms of 'social change', but rather changed lives. This concept includes both the spiritual as well as the social dimension of life. So they do not usually speak about changing structures in society, but rather the change in the lives of individuals who can contribute in favour of social changes. They believe that this change comes as a result of Evangelism. Weber observed a similar situation among the reformers of the sixteenth century. He says that:

We need to emphasise the fact that none of the reformers [...] gave much importance to programmes of moral reformation. There was not even one among them who could be called the founder of an ethical culture; likewise it is not possible to say that any of them represented a humanitarian desire for social reform or cultural aspirations. The centre of their lives and actions was circumscribed totally to the salvation of the soul. So that the

⁹⁸ Virginia Garrard-Burnett, 'Commentary on Israel Ortiz' thesis chapter five', Garrard@mail.utexas.edu 21. 06.07.

ethical ideals and practical effects of their doctrine have no other explication than this essential goal, they were simply the results from a purely religious foundation (Weber 1989: 54-55).

The NPS usually conceive change as a religious experience which has repercussions in the individual and social levels of society. One of the pastors when asked about social responsibility replied ‘if you ask me to what have we been called I would say that “our mission is to transform lives” in other words “win souls for Christ”’ (A11FCG). This winning of souls for Christ is not separated from the transformation of people on the social plane. Ruth Marshall on Pentecostalism in Nigeria affirms that being born again is an act of faith, and a continuous accomplishment of both intellectual and symbolic construction, through new practices, in which the individual also sees himself as experiencing a new relation to society and history (1993: 241-242). In a certain sense, their religious language does not exclude the things of this world although the discourse underlines the spiritual sphere.

This social and economic impact in the cultural context has been registered in some field work as a contribution of Protestantism in Guatemala. For example, Annis (1987) and Paul (1988) have shown the incidence of Protestantism as an important factor in the development of the indigenous communities. More recent studies such as those of Henri Gooren (1999) in marginal area of Guatemala City, and Caballeros & Winger (1998) and Garrard Burnett (2007) about Almolonga in the interior of the country, show the changes produced in the culture and reality of the communities analysed as a result of evangelism, the impact of evangelical revival, the indigenous culture’s values and the advance of capitalism.

The emphasis that the NPS give to individual sin diminishes the weight of social sin. They speak out against certain vices such as alcoholism or adultery but do not denounce social inequality. They do not usually question openly the socio-political structures of the present social order. They emphasize moral change over social change, which could provoke a generalized change of society. This idea is illustrated by one of the

lay people interviewed in one of these churches. He affirmed that in his church help is given to the poor, but there is no ‘concern, or social change’ or anything like that. The leadership is involved in preaching verbally the message of the gospel (L11VF). So in their discourse, the majority of the NPS hardly take on themes such as injustice, impunity, corruption, environmental problems or poverty. They concentrate on preaching the gospel but do not give due importance to social sins. Some lay people comment that ‘preaching is not about society it is directed at the individual’ (L6FCG). This emphasis does not leave much space for discussion of Guatemala’s structural problems. They give more space to the problems of the individual, the family, healing or liberation from spirits or financial concerns. The majority of the NPS do not discuss or teach openly about social problems.

To sum up, Neo-Pentecostals emphasize individual spiritual salvation and believe that new converts are raw material to change the nation. Only the senior ESH pastor talks openly about poverty and why the Evangelical revival has not impacted the country. Most of NPS emphasise the idea of winning the country for Christ in order to bring social transformation. Paul Freston from a sociological perspective affirms that ‘One must also avoid a tendency on the part of some academics, usually expressed implicitly through a choice of negative epithets, to regard the traditional Evangelical expansionist impulse, couched in the language of “winning” society by converting its members, as inherently politically dangerous’ (2001: 289).

4. Social responsibility

How do the NPS perceive social responsibility? How do they assume this in their day-to-day affairs? How do they project it? The paradox that they show in the way that they express the church’s mission is also reflected in the posture they take with regard to social responsibility. The majority of the pastors use religious language to talk about social issues. Most of them do not give due importance, infrastructure and financial resources to

their social aid programmes. In some cases it is not a matter of ambiguity, but a lack of interest in investing efforts towards social projects.

a. Understanding social responsibility

Although not all the NPS have the same idea about the theme, they do show interest in social problems. They believe that Christians ought to have a positive presence in society. One Pastor affirms that the mission of the church is to assume the role of ‘salt’ and ‘light’ (P2FCG). For those pastors the Christian perspective of living for God means to be involved in society. The gospel of Jesus Christ has applications for the whole human being. In their perspective the proclamation of the gospel is for people’s salvation and to transform nations (20 Años Fraternidad Cristiana de Guatemala 1999a: 5). This includes preoccupation for the spiritual issues and a concern for the social development of their hearers.

The Pastor of ‘Familia de Dios’ church notes that the Word of God ‘ought to affect the mind, the soul, the heart and the spirit of the believers’ so that ‘wherever they go they will exercise and practice the gospel’ (P5IFD). From this same perspective the LDG pastors note that ‘the church ought to be occupied in both spiritual and material things’ (P4LDG). Other Pastor believes that the preaching of the gospel brings, above all, spiritual and emotional restoration to people. According to this perspective, the restoration of people will bring inner healing (resolution of emotional problems) which enables them to confront their world (P6IVF).

The ICV pastor (P1ICV) interprets the church’s mission in terms of the kingdom of God. In the light of this declaration he points out that the church should be present in the world as the kingdom of God has to do with the restoration of everything. His perspective follows in some way the re-constructionist ideas which appeal to the Old Testament model for governing of nations. According to this pastor the church’s mission goes beyond preaching the gospel and making passive disciples. From this perspective the kingdom of

God has to manifest itself in all of life and in every aspect of human culture. He says that if a believer wants to apply the principles of biblical laws in his life it is possible to transform society now. This biblical point of view shows why some of the members of these churches get immersed in education, in commerce and in politics. The majority of the NPL are occupied in their own businesses and interests. The survey applied to the NPL and the professionals shows this tendency.

Caballeros notes that from a biblical perspective the ministry of the church 'does not distinguish between spiritual and physical work'. He affirms that in reality there is only one ministry which serves man's needs from a holistic point of view (1999: 193). He considers that these aspects should not be unconnected. In his book El Evangelio Transformador de Jesucristo he describes the change that it is hoped will emerge as a result of salvation and a religious revival. He says, 'when I mention the word change, I am not using the word in a spiritual or religious connotation but rather in extremely practical terms. I am referring to a change which brings with it improvement in situations of economic, social, political and cultural underdevelopment which the continent is experimenting' (Caballeros 2002: 124).

b. Social programmes

Historic churches have always introduced health and education projects alongside evangelism. A good number of Latin American Evangelical churches have creative projects which benefit the community.⁹⁹ According to the information collected, the majority of NPCs have started some sort of programme of social aid, or activities directed towards low income people, prisoners or the hospitalized. There appears to be more interest in social aid from the Neo-Pentecostal churches in the middle and higher classes.

The FCG church has some permanent programmes such as a medical clinic, a laboratory for clinical analyses, medical clinics in the city as well as in the interior of the

⁹⁹ Yamamori, Padilla and Rake have led some workshops about holistic mission among pastors and they have studied some cases of holistic projects from local churches in Latin American. See their book Servir con los Pobres en América Latina Modelos de ministerio integral (1997).

country, prison visitation, and a children's programme as part of their evangelism. The 'Visión de Fe' church has a medical clinic in its installations. Recently a couple from this church began a project to help children with problems related to Down syndrome. The ICV churches have the Casa Bernabé orphanage providing a substitute home for children who have been abandoned for different reasons. Recently some local churches started small social projects to help the needy. For example lay people from the Zone 7 Verbo church in Guatemala City provide on occasions student grants to the children of church members who have economic difficulties. One interior church provides medicines for poor people.

The ESH church has a more established social programme in favour of some communities in the interior. Initially they started with the ideal of helping widows and giving needy children study grants. Later they founded FMA to bring social assistance to a town in the interior of the country. This vision became the 'Comunidades en Transformación' Project which seeks to take help and bring transformational development to the poor communities in the rural areas.

The LDG pastors are less engaged in social issues. This church 'provides on occasions bags of food for needy families of the congregation (A3LDG). The senior pastor said: 'I believe that the church has social responsibility but there is not a lot that can be done. The church does not have the resources' (P4LDG).¹⁰⁰ According to them the impulse of evangelism is the way to make a contribution to the country. This is the church with largest working class members.

The co-pastor of the IFD church affirms that social aid is carried out through prison visitation, support of temporary voluntary workers, supporting an orphanage of another mission in the east of the country and through economic aid to service entities such as the ministry to street children called REMAR. Through the internal missions department, medical teams are sent out and clothing is provided as part of the evangelistic programme

¹⁰⁰ He said that the church does not have resources or budget assigned to social aid because the monthly budget is used up in paying personnel and other church expenses. The monthly budget is Q 400.000 (\$50,000).

(A10IFD). Those efforts of social assistance do not have much infrastructure, resources and are more of a temporary nature.

These churches usually have economic resources but they concentrate their attention on evangelism. For example, the co-pastor of FCG said that the social action was understood as helping the poor in the surrounding areas, which needs to be done but it is not the principal function of the church (A11FCG). He affirmed that one possibility for the future could be to build an orphanage, and an old people's home, but 'now this is not our calling, our calling is to win souls for Christ' (A11FCG). A lay person from this church said that although the leadership of the church talk about the 'impact of Christianity on the nation' the emphasis was on the commission to evangelize and to make disciples (L6FCG).

The ICV Pastor affirmed that they do not have social aid projects at the local level. Their orphanage is a national project financed principally from outside (P1ICV). The IVF senior pastor said that although his church has a medical clinic, they have not made the development of social aid programmes their priority (P6IVF).

Other pastors commented that the church is facing different problems with regard to carrying out their social responsibility. One of the associate pastors of LDG commented that 'the ideological conflict through which the country passed during the war polarized the country and as a result it is hard to do social work'. He underlined that their 'message is very poor about social issues' (A1LDG). The researcher observed that even though some have ideas about social aid projects not all of them have been implemented. This is the case of the 'Familia de Dios' church. The senior pastor said that he had plans from the beginning to build an orphanage and old people's home when they had the right property. However, in 2007, these projects have not emerged although they have moved into another headquarters (P5LDG).

One of the lay people recognized that there is a lack of having a bigger conscience and disposition for service. He said that 'there exists a certain amount of accommodation

which prevents them from thinking about others' (L7ICV). The majority of the pastors said that they channel social aid to their members through the family groups.

c. Lack of social impact at national level

The majority of these pastors said that the Evangelical church has not achieved social impact at the level of the structures of society. They recognize that Evangelicals do not have a social agenda which serves society in general. The Senior Pastor of IFG when he was asked about social impact of the Evangelicals in society affirmed that this had been:

Very little, the reality is easy to see. If the church was really what it says it is, fifty per cent of the population, if this was really true our moralizing presence, good conduct, all that is ethical in life would be reflected. But what we see is something terrible as if we were not there [...] We are talking about a section of the population that has no influence to ensure that the laws are just, that the police are truly just, we are before a people who do not form a part neither do they make it possible to better society and many times I ask myself why? And I question why it is that we have not yet arrived at having a presence amongst the people who make decisions. We are not sufficiently influential [...] I am worried about our presence of which 25 per cent appears to be neutralized (P5IFD).

This acknowledgement shows a consciousness of the country's social problems and that this idea has not reached down to the population. In the same line of thought other associate pastors recognizes that the church has not permeated society, but needs to become involved in the transformation of society through academia, and legislation, among others. (A8ESH). Caballeros commenting on this same situation, says that the lack of impact can be perceived within the church itself. He comments there is something missing: 'The church needs to understand the process of transformation and the need to become involved in social impact'. Then he emphasizes, 'in order to do this we need to change our paradigms and possibly our theology' (Aleluya News especial edition 2002:10). This acknowledgement shows an advance in the awakening of the NPS social conscience which could permit them to deepen the way that they carry out mission and the role of Christians in today's world. In order to do this they will have to re-formulate their theology about social issues and give more attention to the national context.

To summarize, there is no uniformity among the NPS with regard to how they should assume social responsibility. As was affirmed in the beginning of this section, the

thoughts and social practice of the NPS can be placed in Ron Sider's first typology, about 'social aid' (1993: 139-140). Not all the churches however give the same importance to social aid. Some even believe that it occupies a secondary place in their mission. The majority of these churches channel their resources to evangelistic mission which includes the building of huge church buildings. These construction projects are the object of criticism both within the Evangelical church and without because of the investment of millions of dollars which are used from their budgets, money which comes from the members' pockets.¹⁰¹

With the exception of the social programme 'Manos de Amor' of the ESH and Casa Bernabé of ICV, the majority of the programmes remain at the level of social assistance. This tendency can be also observed in other churches. A Guatemalan historian comments in this line of thought that the social projects of the Evangelical church in Guatemala provide mostly 'assistance', that social responsibility does not yet form a part of the thinking of the churches and that they have not penetrated in the macro spheres of social life (IO2). Later on the social projects of these churches and their Neo-Pentecostal theology will be analyzed.

Finally, the researcher observed that the pastors of the IVF, IFG and LDG churches, whose membership is middle and working class, presented a less elaborated message about the social issues and showed less concern for social problems of the country. Some pastors recognized that the social impact of the Evangelical church is poor, and that they do not have a theology of social responsibility. What they have at the moment is more the result

¹⁰¹ The Mega-Frater which has a capacity for 12,200 was inaugurated in 2007. This construction cost about \$30 millions (Nuevo Siglo 2007:8). This church has received a series of criticisms from both the evangelical world as well as from secular society. According to Pastor López, Mega-Frater church is a symbol of progress which shows a 'change of image'. He underlines that 'it is important for us Latin Americans to be able to have things of excellence with our own resources (both human and economic) as he concept that the Latin American is not capable persists' (in *Obras* 2002: 8). A evangelical journalist questions this posture affirming that the mega church buildings are built because that was the instruction given by the anointed one and because of this they dispose of millions of quetzals in the face of a people who are dying of hunger, and thirst for justice (Callejas 'La mentira convertida en ideología' in *El Periódico*, Guatemala 25 de septiembre 2002). When Lopez was asked about the huge investment in the mega-Frater church project he justified the construction emphasizing that they do not leave aside social responsibility as they have their own social projects (Lorena Seijo', *Prensa Libre*. 2003:14-15)

of their carrying on with their mission rather than an intentional exercise in thinking about social responsibility.

D. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPROVEMENT

The previous section showed that the NPS do not have an elaborated discourse about social responsibility neither do they concede the same importance to the implementation of their programmes of social aid. This double posture does not necessarily signify lack of interest in social problems. They show preoccupation for the wellbeing of their membership and for the wellbeing of the country expressed in essentially religious language. As will be observed later, they have social projects along Neo-Pentecostal lines. Ron Sider's second typology about social responsibility (1993: 139-140) can be applied indirectly to their social projects. This has to do with the provision of tools to promote self management and development of people. Some beliefs and programmes that the NPS have could be taken as a proposal to promote spiritual and social development.

Not all of the pastors show the same attitude or provide necessary space for social issues in their pastoral reflections. Generally, these pastors do not plant their ideas within the categories of sociological analysis as some Evangelicals¹⁰² would or take into account the academic context. They use their own language to confront the social issues. They present their ideas and social beliefs in categories which come from a religious order. Conversion does not only reach the spiritual world but also brings with it the idea of transformation in this present world. They visualize social issues as a problem within the spiritual order, and as result, they say that they are caused through the warfare against evil

¹⁰² The church's social responsibility has been discussed in several congresses celebrated in both the context of Evangelical conservative churches as well as churches of a more progressive nature both in Guatemala and outside. For example, the Latin American Fraternity (FTL), celebrated the First Latin American Congress of Evangelism 'Acción en Cristo' in Bogotá Colombia in 1969; in Lausanne, Switzerland, the World Congress for Evangelism in 1974. In this congress the well known Lausanne Pact was made which includes social responsibility as an integral part of the mission of the church; The Evangelical consultation on the Gospel and Social responsibility in Grand Rapids in 1982 adds the need for social transformation in the centre of society. The different conferences about solidarity and justice carried out by the Latin American Counsel of Churches (CLAI), are examples of the interest that Evangelicals have in this theme.

spirits. So the Neo-Pentecostal faith is not only understood as a means of eternal salvation, but also to get material blessings which they feel belong to God's children by divine right. These ideas and religious practices are to be found and operate within the context of the culture as it was mentioned in the introduction.

The analysis shows that the NPS express their ideas about social change in day-to-day terms as part of evangelism. Their sermons and teaching start out from the particular Neo-Pentecostal hermeneutics and theology. The majority of the NPS include in their ideas and values that fact that they are helping their members to confront the world. There are members in some of these churches who have a more open interest towards the social, economic and political life of the country.

Some Neo-Pentecostals have reached political power and have occupied other different spaces in government. These politicians believe that changes to favour the population should be carried out by the State as will be shown ahead. They participate based on the idea that 'God has called them' to the political arena to carry out a mission, as well as based on previous political experience that some of them had had before their religious conversion. In spite of the paradox then with regard to their pastor's discourse about social issues, the Neo-Pentecostals project themselves socially in some areas of the socio-political life of the country. The more general elements that can be observed between the pastors and their churches will now be examined.

1. Education for development

Of the analysed churches four have education projects. The pastors believe that education is an important element for personal and national development. Some of these pastors say that education has been an important contribution of Christianity in favour of development. Because of this they believe that being involved in education is important to confront Guatemala's educational and social crisis. According to studies carried out by the United Nations, 'Education is the basic capacity which confers value to human life. It enlarges

personal options contributing to human development' (United Nations 2002: 37). So, all efforts to strengthen the education system in Guatemala are essential. This is true especially in the light of the education problems affecting extreme poverty. Guatemala continues to be second on the list of illiteracy levels in Latin America and has serious problems in this field.

LDG and FCG pastors place education within their vision for evangelism and mission outreach. They say that it is a means of sharing the gospel both in Guatemala and outside and a strategy to affect society in a positive way (L3LDG). They state that education is a key factor in the mission of the church and contributes to the country's development (P2FCG). The ESH Pastor said that education is the heart of the 'reformation' process needed to transform the nation. He underlines that a great part of the social and economic national problems could be solved through the field of education (P3ESH). He sustains his vision based on the effect that the Protestant Reformation process caused in the Anglo Saxon countries. He considers that the church should give great importance to education to bring social and economic benefits to the country. His vision about education aims at reaching and affecting the country and the nations with the gospel (Caballeros 1998: 14).

Based on this conviction the ESH pastors started FUEDES (El Shaddai Educational Foundation) that runs three bilingual schools in Guatemala City and five schools in the Guatemalan interior. The Universidad San Pablo is part of that social vision. The vision for the future is to establish a school at the side of all the churches in the twenty-three Guatemalan departments. Finally, the ICV senior pastor says that their ideas about social development are specially channelled by founding schools. Schools emerged at the same time as they planted churches in Guatemala City and in some departments.

In 2007 they have thirteen schools which are serving a lower middle class, middle class and high class population. Their education vision was widened when they founded the Universidad Panamericana. In order to allow the people to participate they established

campuses in some of the Guatemalan Evangelical churches. This is significant within the Guatemalan education system which provides a pyramidal type of education. Only 1.34 per cent of the population goes to university. Of the thirteen million inhabitants only approximately 175 thousand students go to university.

To sum up the educational vision and development of these schools and those of other Evangelical churches are a contribution to the economic development of the country. There are about 250 Protestant schools in Guatemala (L3LDG). According to the statistical data of the SEPAL, there are more literate people among Evangelicals (2003: 11-12). According to the data of Cid/Gallup the Evangelical and Protestant population have the following percentages and levels of education: illiteracy 32.8 per cent (Catholic 51.6 per cent), Primary and Secondary school 30.4 percent (Catholic 51.4 per cent), graduate studies 27.1 per cent (Catholic 56.4 per cent) (CID/GALLUP 2008). Pew Forum stated that Pentecostals, Charismatic's and Christians in general have a higher grade of education than the rest of the population (Pew Forum 2006a).

2. Leadership training

The vision of the NPS does not only contemplate the idea of contributing to the education problems but also meets the need of training leaders. Among their objectives is to form leaders who can serve the country. The training that some of these churches offer their members, is not only oriented to service within the local church, but also as a preparation to get involved in society. The associate pastor responsible for the ESH Leadership Institute when asked how this institute trains and stimulates students to participate in the country's development answered:

We want our leaders to project themselves in society. The practical part of ministry is not just preaching, counselling, training churches, but also assisting and going to communities with the 'Manos de Amor' ministry where not only will the bible be taught but this will be accompanied by medical teams, work with alcoholics, and hospitals. The idea is that we have with all of this is that the people that we have in the project are agents for change and transformation. We want to awaken in many of them, especially among the professionals, an interest for social and political participation in society. As churches we see the poverty which limits our people, we want our leaders to always carry the message of God's word to encourage these folk to leave their limitations; and at the same

time we want to help them with their material needs, for example, how to help them to design strategies for small businesses (A7ESH).

In the visits to this church the researcher perceived among the members a more integrated vision about faith and the world. Laymen and women talked openly with the researcher about their Christian point of view about life or social issues. Also a good many of them have served in an area of service with the 'Manos de Amor'.

The ICV pastor says that the Evangelical church does not yet have the influence which it should in Guatemala. The great challenge is to train leaders with a critical mentality and proposals based on the bible. He states that discipleship is the key to change the defeatist mentality of many Christians and to start a responsible participation in society.

We have to make disciples which imply training people to be identified with Jesus Christ and everything that He wants to do in the world and walk in His ways. And so if I change my internal environment will change. I will be contributing in a small way to bring about the kingdom of God here on earth. And if I teach others we will start to make a more significant impact on society up to the point that eventually we could become a mass of trained people in Guatemala. In what ways can this be done? In politics, government, commerce? No, with people trained in what the bible says: to live pious lives and be a positive influence in society: everyone needs to be salt and light in their respective professions or work. We are called as Christians to assume our civil responsibilities (PHCV).

He suggests the urgency to train believers to be useful in this present world through the use of Christian values. There is a close relationship between training and faith and training for living. This pastor feels that making disciples is not unlinked to action in this world. The FCG co-pastor stated that 'leadership training is not just for church leaders, it is leadership which applies for all, and because leadership is leadership wherever you find it (A11FCG).

Other programmes give more importance to the formation of pastors without abandoning the preparation of lay people. The SBTNP (Neo-Pentecostal Theological Biblical Seminary) of the IFD church affirms that 'the programmes that the SBTNP offer are designed for pastors, workers and leaders who are committed to the Lord and need training which will allow them at the same time, to care for their churches, their ministries and their work as lay people' (A10IFD). According to these declarations Neo-Pentecostal training provides orientation to carry out 'ministry' and to help members to confront problems of a personal order.

The majority of pastors have a programme to train their members in their faith and their missionary work. ESH founded ILES (Lay people's Leadership Institute), and CEIDAL which is a centre to provide guidance for the emerging development projects among the church's professionals. The Faculty for leadership of the FCG provides a basic level of Christian faith and leadership for all the membership. ICV in zone 7 offers a series of short courses on doctrines as well as courses about finances.

The IVF pastor trains the team of leaders who run the growth groups where practically all of the Neo-Pentecostal leadership is formed. The IFD pastor says that his aim is that the members get new habits, assume a new positive mentality to confront life's challenges, and discover through the success workshops which gifts they have within the great Christian values which will enable them to do great things (Solares, Aleluya News Año 5 no 37. 18-20). Some short seminars are given about how to draw up a budget, how to avoid debt, or how to start businesses which enable believers to confront life and work things out in the world (L5IFD). The researcher participated in some of those classes and observed a large group of lay people in these training programmes. Most of the contents are related to first steps of discipleship and several themes of Christian faith, finances and how to become successful. The main resource to teach used to the membership of those churches is through preaching.

The training programmes among the Neo-Pentecostals are orientated to faith, evangelism and leadership training. These are generally new programmes and their content is focussed essentially on the church's spiritual business. From the context of civil society, leadership training is important to bring about social change. As Putnam (1993) suggests, it is an essential factor for the formation of the human resources for social, economic, political and cultural to fortify democracy. The question is, are those churches training their membership to face up to the challenges of life, and are they preparing them to serve the country?

3. Change of values

The NPS say that certain values exist in Latin American cultures which hinder development and socio-economic advances. They affirm that these values are rooted in the local culture and define the way people think and make decisions in the world. González-Anleo states that the values are ways of acting within a culture which become criteria which delimit the importance given to people as well as to the forms and socio-cultural objectives (1994: 237). The NPS feel that these values have a negative influence on society. Because of this they see a need to replace them with Christian values. They believe that in this way they can bring about changes in mentality followed by changes of conduct.

According to these pastors, values are spiritual in character and come from the Evangelical message, and need to be applied in the individual sphere as well as collectively. The NPS and the other Evangelical pastors, challenge their members to change their values when they get converted. They say that life in Christ implies leaving behind 'this world's values' and assuming the new values of 'spiritual life'. For example, they must leave behind them vices such as alcoholism, betting, adultery, lying, among others. Other pastors have a broader perspective and apply this to a wider radius of action. For example, pastor Caballeros states that in Guatemala 'culture has not yet experienced the full impact of renewal which comes from the bible'. He emphasises that the country is still waiting for 'times of reformation, a real revolution in thinking and acting' (2002b: 30-33). Which values do they hope will change? How do they conceive the ideological framework of these values? Which sectors of society are they exhorting? Firstly, they talk about certain forms of thinking and practice inherited from the Iberian-Catholic culture. Secondly, they want to change the values and mentality both of the non converts as well as their members. Geertz says that culture brings with it models of meaning incarnated in symbols and inherited concept systems which are communicated generationally and develop knowledge and attitudes about life (1993:89).

For the ESH co-pastor those values are identified with the Catholic heritage. He says that ‘characteristic of the Catholic-Iberian society does not have very deep virtues and values. It represents a divorce between ethics and confession’ (A8ESH). He signals out some cultural vices such as lying, irresponsibility, poor quality of work and corruption, which affect the conduct of many Guatemalans.

This observation does not only come from the NPS, but also from other authors as John. A. Mackay who affirms that the Iberian soul modelled the Latin American mentality from the conquest. For example, he mentions exacerbated individualism manifested in an ‘insatiable acquisition impulse’ and the ‘lack of social instinct’. The conquistador wanted riches and possessions not to accumulate them but to waste them. He did not look for riches as work instruments, but as means of emancipating himself from the need to work. He affirms that the lack of social instinct produced resistance to the success of collective businesses and became embodied in Spanish regionalism (1988: 31-49). For example, in the Guatemalan context these attitudes are translated as a dislike of manual work and an inclination to be ostentatious. White collar workers like the government bureaucrats are valued more than those employed in physical work in whatever field. This vision can be contrasted with the values of Protestant ethics which has a more holistic vision of the worker and his job.

Why is this fundamental change in values needed according to the NPS? Caballeros affirms that ‘values are the determining factor because they give “moral qualification” to actions and to the individual in society’. He says that Latin America needs a paradigm shift with regard to cultural values inherited from the past. He underlines that ‘the values which define the Anglo-Saxon culture are totally opposite to those of the Catholic-Iberian, and the result is obvious’. Following Weber he says that ‘the effects of Protestantism have created a series of values and virtues which led the North American Protestants to reap the fruits of capitalism, freedom, justice and uncountable blessings which come as a result of biblical teaching’(2002b, 105, 109). In this affirmation he points out the effect of Christian

values on socio-economic life and relates those values with the capitalist system. Benítez says in his book 40 Virtudes que lo Harán Triunfar, that there is an urgent need to revise certain values which have done a lot of damage to all Latin Americans. He underlines the following, saying that:

As Latin Americans we need to pass through a process of unlearning and learning again certain vital values. We need to unlearn because we are suffering from bad habits and perceptions such as unpunctuality, the practice of injustice, relative 'honesty', unfaithfulness, bribery, generalized corruption, fatalism, to mention a few. We need to learn, because we need to modify profoundly our habits and attitudes to replace the relativity, become more honest, of good reputation, integral and virtuous (2002: 12).

The NPS also consider that some of the Guatemalan vices affect Evangelicals too. This has not always been the case as previously Evangelicals were respected as workers who were honourable and responsible. In the past, the Evangelicals got jobs faster than the Catholics because of their good testimony and trustworthiness. But now the NPS and their members recognize that a cultural change is also necessary in the Evangelical world. An associate pastor said that there are some Evangelicals who still lie, bribe or take bribes (A8ESH). The researcher was able to observe that the Neo-Pentecostal pastors and lay people have a tendency to assimilate certain values or concepts of the secular world [especially with regard to the economic marketing systems], which they apply both in their personal lives and as a way of conceiving the church and her mission as will demonstrated later. In some cases these values have improved the day to day administration of the church, but they also expose them to criteria which do not necessarily correspond to the nature of the church as a community of the Kingdom of God.

The report about the state of the Evangelical Guatemalan church carried out in 2003 reveals that 75 per cent of the Evangelicals do not have a solid foundation for their faith, especially Evangelicals who come from the rural areas. This report shows the urgency of making disciples in an Evangelical church which grows numerically but not so much qualitatively. It underlines as urgent and essential the task of making disciples to form a strong church (SEPAL 2003: 3, 15). Caballeros says that this situation is due to lack of discipleship, and because of this, he notes that 'Evangelism without discipleship is

synonymous with Christianity without social impact' (2002b: 21-22). This declaration reveals a concern to rethink the results of Evangelical revivals.

Summarizing the NPS information about values of a moral and spiritual character which they use to train their people, they are tools which could be useful to confront the challenges of daily life and protect from the world. The diffusion of values could help in the conformation of human resources through the leaders they form. At the same time through their links with other Neo-Pentecostal leaders, they run the risk of acculturation especially from influences coming from of the United States. Of course, the NPS reject certain types of behaviour which are related to secular humanism such as homosexuality and divorce. For Stoll the Evangelical 'reformers' encounter some restrictions in their internal and external contexts. He affirms that the shadow of globalization and the challenges of the consumerist society are affecting the mentality of the new generation of Evangelicals and this is threatening the values they share and the ability to serve as a vehicle for cultural change (1994:119).

The Evangelicals including the Neo-Pentecostals also have to confront criticism from the Catholic hierarchy and social scientists who call them 'foreignizing sects' that are threatening the Guatemalan culture and identity. Of course, the Catholic people do not recognize that most of their priests are foreigners as well. They take for granted that Guatemalan identity is related with the Catholic culture.¹⁰³ Cleary points out that some Catholic priests have the idea that Latin Americans have a Catholic soul and a Catholic culture that bind them together. He says, 'I believe it impossible to maintain the fiction of a unity of Catholic culture in Latin America' (1998:10).

The indigenous leaders also question the Neo-Pentecostals because of their identification with the cultural values of the Unites States, and their rejection of indigenous

¹⁰³ In their declarations, the Catholic authorities take for granted that the 'Catholic religion' was a consubstantial part of Guatemalan culture, while the Evangelical religion, had a foreign origin. They do not recognize that it was imported from Spain and established in the townships through the decrees of the Spanish Crown as the official religion. In Guatemala at present the majority of the Catholic priests are of foreign extract as was mentioned in chapter two of this thesis.

culture (Similox in Alvarez 1996: 4-5). This criticism is a sign of one of the problems of the Guatemalan reality, the lack of acknowledging the multicultural character of the nation. [Later there will be a full discussion of this issue].

4. Work ethics

Although this could have been mentioned in the previous section, it has been placed here because of its particular importance. For the Neo-Pentecostal pastors studied material prosperity is not something which should come as if by magic. The researcher found in some written work, messages and interviews with the NPS and with lay people certain interest in affirming the dignity and place of work. It does not appear as an elaborated theology, but as a comprehension of the faith in contact with work experiences. They say that work is essential for the person's development and a means of glorifying God. For example, J. H. López (1990) includes among his ten biblical principles for prosperity to 'be a worker' that 'God blesses workers. He says that this is not very popular with those who want things but don't do anything to get them as God doesn't prosper lazybones. In his opinion a good worker should adjust the following principles: be diligent at work, associated with hard working diligent people, be a responsible worker, be careful not to be lazy, and not be careless.

An ICV associate pastor who used to own a business, states that his pastoral task about work ethics implies teaching the members the following: a) to maintain a healthy family economy which implies keeping out of debt and keeping a careful account of all credit card spending; b) be good workers; c) be honest entrepreneurs, bosses or traders which implies for this Pastor to be just and pay all taxes due (A5ICV). Another associate pastor from the same church who works as a pastor and as an entrepreneur, says that part of his pastoral responsibility is to 'teach new attitudes about work' so that people can develop (A4ICV). A NPS from a church outside of the churches studied affirmed that they say that as a church they propose to 'impact a complete generation of entrepreneurs who

understand their social responsibility' that they understand that they are not there 'to make money for themselves', that they don't get rich using people and that their 'business grows to give the families better opportunities of work and blesses the consumer' (A12ICD).

For these pastors, it is fundamental to emphasize hard work which in some circles of society has not been considered dignified. Benitez expresses his perspective about the issue in the following way: 'It makes me sad to see young men in the corners of our towns during work hours, watching the world go by, chatting and philosophising about things they never do. There is nothing more worthy of admiration than a person who does more than is expected of him' (2002: 85). This commentary reveals a lack of initiative and motivation for productive work. The NPS generally consider work to be a blessing from God. They say that all Christians, because God has chosen them, should be responsible workmen, and all work should be done for God's glory.

Gooren found a similar tendency among Neo-Pentecostal micro-businesses in a marginal area of Guatemala City. He discovered certain parallels between their ideas and the Protestant work ethic. Among his informants he observed the following conduct: Responsibility and individual action in their life style; a link between daily life and the sacred; work as a divine calling; business successes as a sign of God's favour and a sober life style which emphasizes self discipline. Gooren notes that of the five key elements found, action and individual responsibility was the most important for his informants (1999: 218-22).

The NPS also give equal importance to saving. Benitez affirms that frugality 'speaks to us about stewardship, it asks us to be austere, not to waste money; it speaks to us about saving money'. And later he adds, 'we parents should teach our children to be frugal, not creating in them love of money. But rather we need to seek the common good to get as a sub-product economic sufficiency' (2002: 23). Eduardo Palacios¹⁰⁴ a financial consultant

¹⁰⁴ Palacios is a medical doctor and member of the 'Fraternidad Cristiana de Guatemala'. He has developed a series of articles in secular and religious periodicals in the areas of finance, entrepreneurial skills, and use of money, among others.

and member of the FCG, emphasizes the need ‘to avoid being in debt, disciplining consumer spending and the value of saving’. He exhorts families to cultivate a habit of saving to become prosperous. He affirms that ‘money which we don’t spend will stay in our house and we can consider it as our capital’ This view about work and saving is expressed by the pastors who come from the higher middle and high class people as well as the lower middle class and the working class. This vision about work ethics is different from the theology of prosperity posture of some preachers of the wealth and health Gospel. Prosperity comes from God’s hand in blessing alongside hard work and savings.

To recap, the NPS have a positive concept of work and promote a productive life in the economic and social realms. Their ideas also echo with the Protestant work ethics laid out by Max Weber. They do not necessarily base prosperity on predestination or puritan Protestantism. Critics of the prosperity gospel affirm that it is a message which comes from the United States from a context of individualism, materialism, hedonism and consumer spending (Padilla 1997: 151). From the NPS’ perspective prosperity of the believer is the result of God’s blessing and arduous and disciplined work. Finally, it needs to be said that NPS hardly ever focus on the unemployment issue, lack of favourable wages or other labour problems. Some of these pastors in fact believe that Christians should not participate in workers syndicates because they consider that they are corrupt and are only seeking their own benefit.

5. Conversion and life improvement

For the NPS salvation which conversion brings not only provides eternal life but a better life here and now. They are convinced that conversion brings with it spiritual and material development to the new Christian.¹⁰⁵ Conversion, affirms one ICV associate pastor brings internal and external changes to the life of the person. It is a ‘change which produces a re-

¹⁰⁵David Martin points out that there is a tendency in sociological circles to interpret conversion among Latin American evangelicals as a part of the conspiracy theory. They affirm that the conversion of millions of Latin Americans can be explained by the subvention of North American imperialism. He underlines that those that assume this explication do so to avoid the task of sociological revision (1992: 9).

ordering of life' (A4ICv). This new orientation of life and values help to introduce new ways of thinking and living. For NPS the 'believer's change in thinking and acting brings with it a raised standard of life, which includes economics' (A1LDG). As Cantón points out, the informant's social position, doctrine and the way their particular denomination functions play an essential role in how they give an answer explaining their conversion (1998: 198). The field work among the NPL shows that they express different opinions and at the same time agree with some ideas beyond their social positions.

The so called 'testimonies' NPL share in public or in small groups give evidence to changed lives, including the economic area. They talk about a process of change which will re-order their inner life and their family and labour relationships. Those testimonies show that before they become born again some of them had been alcoholics and had lived a disordered life which affected their families and work relationships. After their religious experience they felt the power of God which provoked changes in their lives in different directions. Of course, some studies show that conversion does not always occur as a result of a disorderly life in a time of crisis. The conclusions of the study carried out by ISER among Brazilian evangelicals show that almost half of the new converts interviewed, said that they were not suffering acute problems at the moment of their conversion (Instituto de Estudo da Religiao, ISER 1996: 21-22). Droogers says for Pentecostals conversion involves a radical change: 'Conversion is viewed by believers as a radical change; social scientists would say a structural change. The convert adopts new social and symbolic structures (1998: 27). When Evangelicals say that 'Christ has changed them' it includes all areas of their lives at least at a personal level. This does not just stay in the spiritual sphere of faith.

The Guatemalan economist Marco Cajas states that 'Evangelical theology maintains that the key for improving socially is individual regeneration' (n.d.: 36). For him conversion brings new faith in Jesus Christ and the 'possibility' to improve in the social, economic and cultural areas. It does not just remain as a religious experience set aside from

this present world. The Neo-Pentecostals' opinions and testimonies reveal that their conversion produced spiritual change, as well as economic improvement which eventually led them to a certain amount of social mobility. According to Haralambos & Holborn social mobility can be in an upwards or downwards movement. They say that the major types of social mobility are intra-generational mobility which occurs in a simple generation, measured by the occupational status of an individual and the inter-generational mobility refers to social mobility between generations (1995: 101). The former one was applied here.

Have the NPL experimented social mobility? The testimonies which are presented in Chapter five do reveal that when they convert and begin to work hard some changes in social and economic status occur. Protestant and Pentecostal analysts note that these factors were in some way the vehicle to improve the members' social and economic status.

In his analysis of Guatemalan Protestantism Luján affirms that 'the emphasis of the Evangelicals of bible reading, and therefore on literacy, as well as family unity, sobriety and saving, has contributed to the social improvement of many converts' (1998: 383). Along the same lines as Lujan Muñoz the sociologist Claudia Dary affirms that the believers within the historic churches 'little by little started to climb out of poverty as a logical consequence of the total change of religious ideology which governed their lives, helping them to abandon the economic responsibilities linked to Catholic brotherhoods, among other expenses' (1993: 83). De Angulo states that Bolivian Neo-Pentecostals testify to the fact that they experiment improvement in the social and living conditions as a consequence of reorganization and hard and sacrificial work (1995: 49).

Cleary affirms that in Latin America although the majority of the Pentecostals belong to the lower classes, there are among them craftsmen, small entrepreneurs and teachers among whom some reach the higher middle classes, representing a creative strata, whose aspirations provide leadership. Later he states that 'Through the passage of time, by saving money, and working hard, children of those converts have entered into the middle

classes' (1999: 136). Droogers from the point of view of Willems' study on Brazilian Pentecostalism notes that, 'Pentecostalism is not only a response to an anomic situation, but at the same time it stimulates the growth of the middle class and therefore contributes to modernization' (1998: 11). Cleary says that in Chile 48 per cent of Pentecostals belong to the middle classes and affirms that in countries such as Guatemala, Brazil and Venezuela a 'substantial incursion into the middle class is evident (1999:136). Also the data of social strata in Guatemala presented at the beginning of this chapter shows the possibility of upward social mobility. The so called middle strata in 2004 underwent a certain type of social mobility. This data shows that both rising and falling within the same social strata is possible in period of fifteen years (United Nations, Guatemala 2005).

One of the ICV associate pastors who converted to the Neo-Pentecost's illustrates this sort of change. He testifies that both his marriage and his home were saved after his conversion. He says, 'our life had been very dramatic, to the point that we were about to get a divorce a few days later, I led an ungovernable life', then he emphasizes, 'When I went to the church God touched me and one day I accepted him. I believe that was when our life started to become blessed' (A4ICV). His testimony shows three important elements in his conversion: the 'touch of God', 'accepting' the new faith and the 'blessing' expressed in social and economic improvements. This dramatic change resulted in his family life, his economic situation and his later leadership being re-established. It affected his identity, life style and helped him to face successfully his social context. In his language, to be 'rescued by the grace of God', implies freedom from condemnation and the slavery of sin, and to be moved to the kingdom of God which brings with it good things or 'blessings'.

Cleary points out that for the Pentecostal 'Conversion serves as the basis of living and of membership, stabilizes families, and impels those who have undergone it to reach out to others' (1999:140). Cantón underlines that in Evangelical conversion, the conjunction between the transcendent and the daily events, and a personal and individual relationship with God and the commitment with the congregation occurs' (1998: 208).

Among Pentecostals ‘the economic category of “goods” is part of the moral category of the good’ (Martin 1992: 12). The idea of improving economic performance is mixed with the experience of conversion and the salvation they receive. The starting off point then is ‘conversion’ which results in a dramatic reorganization of the key elements in the person’s symbolic universe altering the way they perceive what is ‘good’. This reorganization in the Neo-Pentecostal context does not stay within the sphere of survival, but becomes a possible way to reach a materially prosperous life.

The NPS add that prosperity comes not only as a result of God’s blessing but also through hard work which every Christian must engage in. Caballeros & Winger’s study about the so called ‘miracle town’ in Guatemala, shows that their socio-economic development came after conversion through the spiritual warfare and work ethic that this community assumed (1998: 237).

So for the NPS conversion brings with it not only the spiritual benefits of salvation but also material benefits. The believer has the possibility to better his economic condition through conversion and eventually could experience upward social mobility. The country’s social reality shows that they do not always achieve the longed for prosperity even though they practice positive confession. The structural problems make it difficult for every Guatemalan to have access to the privileges of progress. It means that the economical improvement is possible mostly for the people from the middle and upper classes. Melendez states that of the Pentecostals that, ‘the converts continue to live in the same conditions as before, the difference is that their limited daily life full of deficiencies , becomes full of new meaning which produces peace and satisfaction for them’ (1993: 39).

E. POLITICS AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STATE

1. With relation to politics

The NPS do not usually discuss politics because they concentrate their attention on their church business and issues related to their projects for expansion. However when asked

they were available to express their opinions. They consider that politics is part of what Christians should do and so they ought to be interested. According to these pastors' criteria this participation is on an essentially personal level. The church as an institution should stay out of all political participation. The theme of politics in this section is covered more intentionally by the pastors of the 'El Shaddai' and 'Verbo' churches. Both former presidents were members of those churches. The rest of the churches studied show more reserve with respect to politics and only mentioned it as a part of the Christian responsibility in the world. Previously Evangelicals, for different reasons, kept themselves away from politics. But in the last two decades the Neo-Pentecostals have been active in politics as part of their day to day work. How do the NPS guide their membership about politics? Do they encourage their members to get involved in politics?

The ICV senior pastor affirms that the kingdom of God includes the political domain. He commented, 'we do not teach that our participation in politics has to do with parties, but rather it is a civic affair. We have an obligation in the church to teach the people the principles, and the biblical directives so that a citizen can represent the kingdom of God in politics' (P1ICV). The vision for politics of some NPS starts from a post-millennial eschatological standpoint which affirms the idea that the kingdom of God is a present reality. Of course some of the NPCs maintain in their declaration of faith dispensational beliefs about the rapture of the church as assumed by classic Pentecostalism and other churches such as the Central American Mission.¹⁰⁶ In spite of this pre-tribulation position some Evangelical pastors and their churches have had some social projects, and have made a concrete contribution to the country before Neo-Pentecostal politicians did.

On other hand, ICV pastors say that Evangelicals have to participate in politics to get the power to change the bad things in the country. An associate pastor said that the Lord left principles in his word to govern in a different way to the humanist system, and so Christians are those who should be in government (A6ICV). From this affirmation the idea

¹⁰⁶ For example the Declaration of Faith of the Familia de Dios church In 'Prospecto, Reglamento y Calendario de Actividades 1996 Seminario Bíblico Teológico Neo pentecostal Panamericano'.

can be deduced is that Christians have the right to govern their nations. Another pastor said that what needs to be done is to teach the membership the right to elect and be elected, and cover, help, counsel and remember those who are involved in whatever aspects of the political scene (A5ICV).

The ESH pastors also believe that politics are a part of the Christian's responsibility. They note that politics are part of being Evangelical. To reach this end the ESH co-pastor underlines that the church has to 'be transformed' so that it can later, 'transform societies'. For him, this task implies accomplishing two critical standards, firstly, Evangelical piety, which means living a holy, humble, integral, and devotional life and secondly a life in accord with the demands of this present world. There should be 'prepared people, thinkers, sociologists, pastors who can penetrate the public opinion of their countries and cities; inventors, innovators, authors, educators, politicians, diplomats, scientists; all of these Evangelicals in their own professions'. He points out that the idea is to 'affect and transform our communities, beyond a mere physical cosmetic change' guided by historic models such as those of apostle Paul, Luther, Calvin, and more recently as the South Korean models (A8ESH).

This perspective contemplates politics as part of the mission of Christians in the world. This interest in politics of the ESH pastors is not new as they gave their support to the candidacy and government of the former president Serrano Elías. As is generally known, he had to abandon power through the decisions of the Supreme Constitutional Court for breaking the country's constitutional order. The senior ESH pastor says that politics is a means to initiate change in the country, and that Christians should participate openly in this process. Since 2003 he has organized some dialogues and encounters between Evangelicals and Evangelical politicians to try to find ways to serve the country.

At the end of 2006 pastor Caballeros surprised the Evangelical community announcing that he was going to retire from the pastorate to dedicate his time to politics. In his declaration to the journalists he said, 'Two years ago I began to study the subject of

poverty, and by doing this I arrived at the conclusion that my contribution in the church was from the periphery, unless I could reach a position where I could make public political decisions as tools to change Guatemala' (Castillo, Nuestro Diario, 3 de junio de 2007: 8-10). This decision did not surprise the members of his church who had heard him continually give talks on social issues. He turned from the reflection to praxis. It did however raise some questions among both Guatemalan Evangelical leaders as well as politicians.¹⁰⁷

In spite of the NPS belief that their membership should participate in politics, they now show some reserves about supporting Evangelical candidates. The ICV senior pastor considers that a few Evangelicals in positions of authority in the government 'will not do much' because of the levels of corruption in the country. For this reason he states the country needs to be evangelized and disciplined following Jesus' model so that people can live differently. He says that only in this way can a strong impact on society be achieved changing and eventually forming a 'critical mass' of people who are trained in politics, in government and in business. People need to be trained along biblical guidelines: live pious lives and be an influence like salt and light in their respective professions or jobs (PHICV).

To summarise, the NPS think that politics are part of the Christian responsibility of all Christians. They affirm the idea that the changes that the country needs can be achieved through means of political power. In some ways they think that Evangelicals have the right to govern the country. This way of thinking about politics has led them to give moral and pastoral support to those politicians who have emerged from their membership. In the case of Ríos Montt it was not just spiritual support, but also organic providing some leaders to occupy key posts in his cabinet. Of course, NPCs do not mention the bad experiences of NPPs like Ríos Montt y Serrano Elías. In general, they not reflect on these political experiences and on the implications they bring for the new evangelical politician.

¹⁰⁷ The President of the Guatemalan Evangelical Alliance affirmed that the members of the board had had a meeting with Harold Caballeros where they asked him questions about his decision to assume political leadership and leave the pastorate. On this occasion Caballeros said that he had not renounced his pastoral vocation, but that he saw his leadership in politics as an extension of his call (IO7).

In the face of this search for political power Rene Padilla's questions can be put: Is Evangelical political power possible? Up to what point is it possible to legislate for Christian ethics? What model would be desirable from a Christian perspective? Which are the most efficient ways of carrying out this model, which at the same time are coherent with the Christian faith? (1997:136). Can the new Neo-Pentecostal politician engage in social transformation in favour of the country? Are the NPS available to help those politicians to form their thinking from an integral mission point of view? [This subject will be reconsidered in more depth in Chapter five].

2. Politics and the State

What is the position of the NPS with regard to the State? The NPS generally maintain a conservative position towards the State. The majority of Evangelicals show a respectful attitude and sentiment towards government authorities. This way of thinking reflects the doctrinal declaration of some of these churches. For example, the IFD churches say about civil power: 'We believe that God established civil authority after the fall to control violence and regulate the man's social responsibilities. Christians should respect the government and obey the laws in all things that do not contradict the teachings of Scripture' (Declaración Doctrinal, IFD).

Usually the biblical affirmation that the authorities have been placed by God is accepted as a norm among Evangelicals. Everyone has been called to obey them without resistance, as to do the contrary would imply resisting God himself. This teaching does not mean that Evangelicals give their support to any government or imply necessarily accepting the status quo. The Evangelical churches usually have kept the line of church-state separation although in practice it is not easy to determine this line of separation. Cleary says that in some cases sectors of the Evangelical church play distinct roles in the State [in his study Pentecostals]. Some have harmonious relationships while others are subordinated (1998: 11).

The subordinate position of Evangelicals could also help to understand why they do not demand accountability of the government. In general, they pray and bless the government's authorities, but do not confront them. For example, one of the pastors offered an Evangelical Te Deum (thanksgiving service) in favour of President Oscar Berger in 2004. In the past, this function belonged exclusively to the Catholic Church which blessed and legitimized past governments. Even though in his sermon he read the text of Micah 6:8 to the President ('seek justice, show mercy and walk humbly before God', NIV), he did not mention the acute problems of the Guatemalan society. Some NPS openly refuse to include in their discussions Guatemala's problems because they feel that all they have to do is to preach the good news of the gospel. For some Evangelicals this exhortation was daring in the context of the silence which had predominated the period of internal conflict.

The NPS do not usually make pronouncements about socio-political problems. In their sermons they do not criticise politics or government actions. During the researcher's field work he did not perceive any call or exhortation to the government to look after human rights or in favour of social justice. Although some confront the problem of poverty, corruption and violence, they do not demand that the government fulfils its mission in this respect. This lack of critical attitude towards the State was evident during the governments of Ríos Montt and Serrano Elías. With the exception of some of the Para-ecclesiastical entities, the Evangelical church including the Neo-Pentecostals, made no pronouncements on these issues. Some of the pastors who were interviewed gave a very succinct answer about it.

One of the ESH pastors commented that the experience of Serrano Elías was very bad. He underlined that it is an example of the lack of depth found in the Evangelical Church. He did not mention the role and the support that they had provided during the elections, in his government and after he left (A8ESH). On the contrary, the LDG senior pastor came out in defence of the former president Serrano Elías. He said that everything that had been said about him by the media was lies and that 'Serrano is a good Christian

who violated the constitution because he was too hasty' (P4LDG). Some pastors think that they do not declare against the government because the church is not a political institution. Generally they do not make the difference between 'party politics' and 'politics as action taken by citizens' in which all entities including the church should participate.

Some authors affirm that the open support for the government could be interpreted as a pragmatic attitude given because of ideological affiliation. Paul Gifford commenting about the Ghanaian Pentecostal churches notes that these accepted new governments, not because they were part of a conspiracy, nor because they were aligned to the paradigm of the 'religious right', but because with pragmatism they wanted the government to respect them and if possible bless them with some material rewards (1995: 5). Taking into account differences, probably the NPS have followed a similar pattern of conduct seeking to benefit the country. In both cases, there is some drawing together of religion and policy. Freston says that religion is being used for political means, and often politics are used for religious ends. In Guatemala the politicians and governments have used both the Evangelical and Catholic forms of religion to obtain political ends (2001: 292).

This non-confrontational openness to the government does not mean an acceptance of the state of things. Some of the NPS interpret and confront social and political problems from the framework of spiritual warfare. They consider that the social structures, including the political ones, are under the dominion of Satan and release comes through prayer warfare. Their understanding of the social-political problems rests on a spiritual plane. Through prayer God can change the circumstances and solve the country's problems. Caballeros requested the pastors of the country to unite in the 'Jesus is Lord of Guatemala' campaign. In his letter he emphasized the need to fight a battle against spiritual evil forces in order to change the country. He affirmed, 'we have the responsibility to bring change to Guatemala, a change through the Spirit of God, a change in name of Jesus, a change through prayer' ('Llamados a Redimir nuestra nación', n.d.: 4). They believe in liberation from territorial demons that according to them enslave nations and the structures of the

society.¹⁰⁸ The case of Almolonga is used as an example of this battle and of spiritual liberation.¹⁰⁹

Spiritual warfare, through intercession and fasting is their way of confronting the State and the evils of the society. Stoll comments, that the Neo-Pentecostals combine their beliefs about prayer and the destruction of spiritual powers with an open attitude to social change (1994: 118). Of course, the NPL do not reduce their ideas or actions in favour the country only to the spiritual sphere. Neo-Pentecostal politicians say that they are trying to get political power in order to change the bad things in the country.

Finally, some pastors and lay people linked to the Evangelical Alliance of Guatemala participated in the process of peace among the guerrilla and the army agreed in 1996. One of the NPS participated representing the Evangelical Alliance of Guatemala in the dialogue between the guerrilla and religious organizations. In spite of his conservative posture, this pastor also participated in some forums on AIDS with Catholic communities and was a member of the commission that promoted a new code for children within the Evangelical Alliance. Two pastors of those churches have expressed an opinion on subjects related to corruption, alcoholism, capital punishment and abortion in Evangelical newspapers like La Palabra. They think that the State in the name of the society should carry out justice against those found guilty of homicide, violation or kidnapping. The ESH senior pastor among them has preached more specifically about some critical problems of society.

To sum up the NPS do not usually question the State or confront the problems that the population is suffering. Some of these pastors are starting to talk more openly about social problems that are affecting the country. Time will tell if they will be able to confront

¹⁰⁸ According to George Otis, one of the essential factors for the transformation of a community both spiritually as well as socially rests in the intercession of spiritual warfare. He says that there are three stages: 1) Advance columns need to be established of united prayer warriors, 2) The opening will come when the church starts to grow in substance as well as numerically, and 3) There will then follow spiritual transformation which will end up in dramatic socio-political renewal (Ottis in Caballeros & Winger 1998: 213-227).

¹⁰⁹ Eduardo Lorenzo mentions another similar case in the city of Adrogué, Buenos Aires (Lorenzo in Wagner & Deiros 1998: 95-117)

governments openly, and if the spiritual warfare that they wage against spiritual hosts will adopt the role of historical mediation which would allow them to confront the unjust structures in society. Also some NPS are identified with the liberal economic system because they consider this system to be the closest to the values of the Christianity. Francis Fukayama, as a prophet of this economic system, states that history reached its end with the arrival of capitalism (1992: 387-417). The question is will the NPS be able to distance themselves from the presuppositions of the market and take on a critical attitude towards this challenge? The identification on the part of some pastors with the principles of market economy without using the necessary theological filters exposes them to their assumptions.

F. THE CHALLENGE OF POVERTY

What do the NPS think about poverty? What worries them about it? They have different opinions and approaches to the problem. They do not usually discuss this subject from a sociological perspective. Most of them refer to this problem in religious terms. For example, they indicate that the poverty is due to the ignorance that the people have of their human potential as God's children. Its main cause is the human sin. The Pastor of IFD notes that:

Poverty has its root in the lack of a clear identity of the person as a created being. If people knew their value as beings created in the image of God and their human potential, they would not embark in drugs, alcoholism, deceit and so many forms of the easy life. If people could discover who they are and could prepare themselves then poverty would disappear. The poverty is the result of sin and the consequences of the evil in human heart. This cause can only be changed through the gospel message of repentance (P5IFD).

Their vision explains the spiritual dimension of poverty, but leaves out the socio-political and economic factors of Guatemalan reality. LDG Church leaders, mostly from poor families, emphasize a similar idea. They think that 'the new faith in Christ' is the key to leaving poverty. For those believers it is not only theory, but a real experience. They affirm that members of their congregations have managed to surpass themselves

spiritually, socially and economically resulting from their new faith and life of sobriety.

For this reason these pastors feel that the essential key to eradicate poverty is evangelism.

Conversion is the fundamental factor that also brings material benefits as result of the blessing of God and hard work. Mariz from her study of Pentecostalism in Brazil found a similar idea. She says that they help to re-establish the dignity of the poor, by strengthening self worth, providing them with a direct experience of the sacred gives them potential and offers them a support network. These factors contribute to resolving the material problems of their daily lives (1995a: 205-207, 211-215).

Other pastors think that the cause of the poverty is due to a lack in positive thinking. For example, the ICV pastor thinks that poverty is caused by the lack of a positive attitude to life. It is the result of a defeatist and conformist mental attitude which needs to be transformed. For that reason he pleads for mental transformation in order to change culture and the reality (PIICV). Another pastor from a similar perspective affirms that 'people can learn to raise their standard of life and their limited capacity if they do their part' (P2FCG). These pastors conceived that poverty here results from a defeatist mentality.

Other pastors affirm that poverty also is due to a lack of faith. They state that wealth or poverty depends on positive confession.¹¹⁰ The words have power to evoke poverty or prosperity. This belief is based essentially on the criteria of the movement of positive confession from authors like Kenneth Copeland (1999), David Yonggi Cho (1987), Catherine Ponder (1983) and local pastors who promote and spread these ideas by means of their books and preaching. This explanation sounds strange or irrational for non-believers, but NPS and lay people say that they have seen how God blesses and provides for their material needs.

¹¹⁰ Martin Ocaña analyses in detail the origin and development of the theology of prosperity (2002). Garrard-Burnett links the theology of prosperity with the movement of the gospel of prosperity which arose in the United States in 1890 at a time of great tumult and social uncertainty. Among the apostles were David Rockefeller and J.P.Morgan (1998: 118-29).

Other NPS affirm that lack of education produces poverty. The ESH pastor has developed a whole thesis about the role of education in the history of the humanity and the role of Christians to impulse it. Education is the key element on his proposal to change society. That is why he founded several educational institutions. This education does not only have to do with academic training, but it also makes reference to Christian education. The changes of values and leadership training are in the building blocks of their educative proposal. For that reason most of NPS promote educative projects as an answer to the issue of the poverty as well as an important factor for the country's development.

These pastors also indicated that prosperity comes from God, but the believer must work hard and use their resources in a suitable way. The FCG Pastor states that 'he has seen people without shoes, deep in debt, with no employment who hear that the message of faith changes lives, abandon their vices and bad habits, get employment and prosper: This is the product of the Christian work ethics' (López in Obras 2002: 14). That is to say, the solution is not magical as it is necessary to work hard to be prosperous. Eduardo Palacios thinks that prosperity comes as people learn how to administer what they have (Aleluya News Año 4 No 27: 36). Also Bianchi indicates that this prosperity does not only refer to getting material things, but it includes all spheres of human activity (Bianchi Aleluya News Año.3 No16: 28-29). Palacios emphasizes that it 'does not have to do only with receiving but it must also take account sharing' (Aleluya News Año 2 No.6: 40). According to their perspectives prosperity comes through giving, from making the kingdom of God top priority, as well as hard work, honesty and helping the poor (P2FCG). They conceive prosperity as the blessing of God and the hard work of all believers.

The NPS think that the poverty also is the result of sin and the oppression of spiritual forces of evil. According to their Neo-Pentecostal theology, demons bind up the Christians' prosperity. Martin Ocaña in his analysis of the Peruvian Neo-Pentecostalism criticises this phenomenon and affirms that 'theoretical frame of prosperity theology is

spiritual warfare with its reading of a world inhabited by demons who bind up Christians making them sick, impoverishing them or oppressing them' (1997: 15). Poverty is a product of spiritual forces that oppress towns and maintain Christians impoverished (Caballeros 2002: 88). Among the NPS interviewed, Caballeros is the one who elaborates a theology of spiritual warfare and he takes it as a hermeneutical axis to interpret Guatemala's social reality (1999). He suggests that the mission of the believer is like a spiritual war waged to bring spiritual and material liberation to the nations. In this spiritual fight, the critical social, physical, and material situation of Guatemala is thus created within their scheme of thought. For this reason he affirms that 'poverty and the other evils that the towns suffer are the result of diabolic oppressions' ('Llamados a Redimir nuestra nacion', n.d.)¹¹¹.

How do the NPS face this battle? Caballeros points out that in order to win this war, intercession, which is the 'language of the kingdom of God' is needed (1999:108). He transfers the spiritual war from a cosmological and supernatural order to day to day happenings. The spiritual conflict is interpreted in a moral language to explain and be able to change the historical, social, political and economic crisis of the country. The spiritual exorcism does not just belong to the personal life, but he transfers it to the socio-political and economic fields. At the same time, Caballeros thinks that poverty should be tackled from a socio-economic perspective. He believes that there are concrete reasons to explain why people are unable to advance economically and it is through this that he became interested in looking for power from the State to confront poverty and promote the country's development.

The Brazilian sociologist Mariz says that this enchanted vision of the world is not very distant from politics. On the contrary, the military concept becomes a tool to interpret and to confront the political situation. Within the Neo-Pentecostal context this war becomes an interpretative paradigm of the social reality (1994: 27). Freston says that spiritual warfare is a key factor for Charismatics and, increasingly for other Evangelicals.

¹¹¹ The 'Jesús es Señor de Guatemala' project was born with the idea of raising an army of 50,000 prayer warriors to free Guatemala from the crisis which he believes is caused by spiritual forces in the country.

Then, he asks, ‘What is the potential of Charismatic’ abandonment of pietistic individualism in favour of ritualistic solidarity? He answers, ‘Social exorcism could be the language of top-down reform, or else just a rationalization for not treating structural problems while given elite believers an ideology of empowerment (1997: 191, 193).

Poverty can be overcome. According to the FCG pastor Christians grow in a context where it seems impossible to leave poverty. From his experience he affirms that ‘the myth was destroyed that the gospel is solely for the poor, and we can demonstrate that people who have stopped being poor in material aspects, can also reach wealth of the Spirit and the Word of God’ (in *20 Años Fraternidad Cristiana* 1999: 15). He says that this vision has led his church to financial autonomy: ‘one of the main goals in our finances was to become self-sufficient; we have demonstrated the principles that govern the kingdom of God, are applicable in a developing country’ (in ‘*20 Años Fraternidad Cristiana*’ 1999: 16). And then he adds that stewardship is an important part in the economic growth: ‘Education about integral stewardship, is part of our church, those who are better off learn to tithe and those who are not so well off also learn and leave their poverty. We have innumerable testimonies of people who left financial chaos when they came to the FCG and began to practice giving’ (P2FCG).

The IFD pastor notes that members of his church have prospered from situations of poverty: ‘In the church I have seen people who lived in extreme poverty, in misery, and in a matter of years they have their car, or a little shop or business. I have seen how the Lord [...] raises them up [...] He is the one who blesses’ (P5IFD). Apart from faith these pastors affirm that prosperity comes when the Christians give back to God what belongs to Him. They emphasize that ‘giving is how you receive’ They present a total justification indicating that according to the measure of tithes and offerings given to God, He is committed to return not just a 100 per cent but even more.¹¹² The fundamental factor that

¹¹² The Neo-Pentecostals have been strongly criticized for their campaigns to raise funds. The issue of money occupies the attention of the pastors and some of the programmes that incite the members to give in exchange

unleashes prosperity is in 'learning to give in order to sow'. The logic is here 'give in order to receive'.¹¹³

According to sociologist Mariz in her study of the Pentecostalism and poverty in Brazil, she affirms that to give from the perspective of the poor is an act of dignity. She emphasizes that 'In the act of paying tithes and giving the poor discover that they are able to give. Who gives has power, who receives does not have any; weakness, and submission are reinforced symbolically for the poor when they receive'. She adds that in spite of criticism that can be levelled at prosperity theology, 'it is important to recognize its instrumental role for the survival of the poor as a rejection of the theodicy of redemption through poverty and suffering' (1995a: 215).

To sum up, the NPS interpret poverty essentially as a problem of a spiritual order. They are aware about the spiritual dimension of the problem, but they fail to give the necessary attention to the structures that generate poverty. It is essential to face the problem of poverty in a context where the breach between rich and poor is a reality that cannot be ignored. The level of poverty in Guatemala and the rest of the Central American region according to the World Bank affects 56 per cent of the population and more that 16 per cent live in misery ('Parte I: Magnitud y causas de la pobreza' 2003: 8). In the same way, to turn spiritual powers into the main cause of poverty is to avoid the truth of human responsibility in the face of injustice and other similar evils. On the other hand, to state that one's prosperity depends on the confession one makes with one's lips is to place the believer's prosperity in his own mouth and hands and therefore not necessarily in the providence of God.

The NPS also stress the place of tithes and offerings. In order to prosper the believers need to make a covenant with God through giving their tithes and offerings. The discipline of tithes and offerings is a key element in these churches. According to them,

for blessings that they offer. This criticism has been directed especially against the ENLACE television channel 23 for asking for money from the viewers.

¹¹³Benitez explains his ideas about prosperity in 'Conceptos Financieros: Las ideas de Dios' in a series of two audio cassettes on the issue (El Shaddai church no date).

God commits himself to give back double to those who give. This form of collecting offerings and promises is object of criticism inside and outside the Evangelical context. Martin Ocaña in its book Los Banqueros de Dios affirms that the Neo-Pentecostals develop a biblical rationality to justify the search and promotion of the economic prosperity (2002, 99). Asamoah & Kwabena criticise this form of prosperity because it is built upon a selective hermeneutical method. They underline with Gordon Fee that ‘the interpretation of Scripture is the basic problem of prosperity teachings’ (2005: 215-22). Finally, the reference to the negative elements in the culture is important for the restating of values as the key to economic improvement. Hard work done in a disciplined and honest way is essential for the development of a sound economy which is to develop both at a personal and collective level. The rethinking of prosperity in terms of the ethics of work is an important contribution of the NPS especially at an individual level to other churches.

G. INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The subject of the indigenous communities is crucial for the life of the country because of their size in the population and the critical situation in which the majority live in social-economic and cultural terms. According to the results of the tenth Census of Population made in 1994, 42.8 per cent of the Guatemalan population are indigenous people. Others affirm that the indigenous communities represent 61 per cent of the population. Guatemala has one of the highest percentages of indigenous population in Latin America. Most of them continue to be marginalized and underdeveloped.

The Guatemalan Indigenous people continue to be the object of discrimination and exclusion: ‘They occupy the lowest level of the social strata and show the most unfavourable indicators of social development’ (United Nations, Guatemala 2000: 211). Casaus Arzú in his book Guatemala: Linaje y racismo emphasizes that the racially mixed oligarchy of the Guatemalan elite shows a racist and contemptuous attitude towards the indigenous communities. These consider themselves to be white without the mixture of

indigenous blood, and describe the indigenous people as 'lazy' and 'indolent' by nature. According to Casaus this prejudice is applied to all indigenous people as permanent characteristics that accentuate the domination over them (1995: 21-25, 206-207).

Of course, this contemptuous attitude towards the indigenous native people not only comes from the dominant elite, but also from the Ladino population. In his book La Patria del Criollo Severo Martínez (1973) develops the thesis that the ladino from Colonial times has maintained a sense of superiority and domination over the indigenous populations. An example of this attitude of open racism was revealed in the moment of choosing the Nobel Peace prize winner Rigoberta Menchú. She was not received with any enthusiasm and waited for the support of the government authority presided over by Serrano Elías. Some members of the government showed preference for another lady representing the rich classes.

What do the NPS think of them? Do they deal with them differently? Do they form a part of the Neo-Pentecostal communities? What attitude do they show towards the indigenous communities and their culture? Some aspects will be considered that the researcher gathered in his interviews between the NPS and other field work observations.

1. Indigenous communities among the Neo-Pentecostals

The NPCs do not have a large indigenous population because they emerged from the urban areas of the country. Despite this situation, the researcher observed the presence of indigenous families in his visits to these churches in Guatemala City. Women who attend arrive in their traditional clothes which identify them with some of the twenty-three existing ethnic groups in the country, whereas the men dress like westerners. In the departmental centres in the West the affluence of indigenous families is greater especially among Pentecostals and historical churches. They are not only part of these churches, but they participate openly and serve in different privileges.

The FCG senior pastor affirms that in Santiago Atitlán, a municipality of Sololá in the West, they have managed to integrate together both groups, in spite of the fact that in the past an open separation between them existed. Usually in church, both Catholic and Evangelical, they sit in different places. He emphasizes that in the FCG churches they sit together and no one is rejected. They claim to have attacked racial prejudices as an expression of the body of Christ. This inclusion according to Caballeros is part of the integration of his political party. When asked if there are indigenous people in his political party VIVA he replied: ‘There is Amelia Coc, who is twenty-five years old, is a graduate in education, a young person with a promising future and Armenio Gómez is also a candidate’ (Font & Mendéz El Periódico 24 de junio 2007). Of course, the NPCs do not escape the dangers of homogenization in groups according to age, gender or social position. One ICV church divided the congregation in two groups by social strata so that both groups would feel comfortable (A6ICV). In this case, the strategy of numerical growth pushed for functional pragmatism instead of the theological criteria of unity in diversity.

Three of the churches in the study have congregations in indigenous communities within the country. The LDG has fifty churches in communities in the North of the country. The ESH church also has indigenous churches in some departments of the country. This church maintains a close relation with the leadership of churches of Almolonga. The oldest and largest churches among the indigenous people are within the Presbyterian Church, the Central American Mission, the Church the Nazarene, the Methodist Church and the Pentecostal churches affiliated to The Church of God, the Assemblies of God, Calvario church and many independent churches in the West, North and central part of the country. These cases illustrate the fact that the Evangelicals do treat the indigenous peoples differently and that in spite of their own limitations they have respected them and advanced their dignity as human beings.

Hallum says that the NPCs are found in both rural and urban areas and have grown in number among working class and middle-class professional (1993: 6). This Protestant growth has been registered by different scholars since 1980. Garrard-Burnett has made studies about the Protestantism in rural areas of Guatemala (1989a 2007). In both of her works she analyzed why there was growth and expansion.

In her work on Protestantism in rural areas of Guatemala she supported David Brintnall's study on the town of Aguacatán, Huehuetenango in the 1980s. This author affirms that traditional indigenous peoples consented more to joining the Protestant churches than the new Catholic Churches as they perceived them to be less hostile and more familiar in their local communities (cited in Garrard-Burnett, 1989b: 8-9). Brintnall gave the following principal reasons for this: a) converts continued using their traditional clothes; b) the churches adopted some of the traditional norms of the culture; c) There were activities which substituted the Catholic festivities, and d) they were given power to confront life. In 1960 there were four Protestant churches, in 1980 fifteen churches, and in 1988 a total of 160 churches. Garrard-Burnett says that 'Protestantism, on a spiritual and practical level, is both a conduit for change and a mechanism for dealing with crisis the traditional community' (1989b: 12).

Goldin & Metz in their study on Almolonga analyze the conversion testimonies and the contributions of Protestantism. They say that the indigenous people found in the Protestant communities new leadership that spoke their language, gave them specific guidelines about appropriate conduct, promoted solidarity, a vision of working together, making goals for life, and a public commitment as a way of behaving following the beliefs (1991: 333-334).

Finally they affirm that Protestantism is only partially responsible for cultural changes. Fajardo illustrates from another case of conversion in the village of Salquil Grande in the Guatemalan Altiplano. His study is based on informants from Catholic Action group and the Church of God. In both cases he confirms that the elemental key in

their conversion was to leave certain sinful practices especially vices (Fajardo 1987:55-79). Both cases centre attention on the challenge of abandoning 'customs' which are associated with habits or vices which affect personal, family and community life.

2. Opinions about the indigenous communities

There is no unified form of thought between the NPS with relation to the indigenous people and their role in the Guatemalan society. With some differences, most of the pastors affirm that the indigenous people and their culture deserve their respect as long as they do not enter into conflict with Christian principles. They all agree that both the Ladinos as well as indigenous people were created in God's image and likeness, and so have the same rights. Others recognize the contribution of the indigenous communities, but maintain a language that reflects certain stereotypes that still weigh on the communities. One of the pastors when asked his opinion about the indigenous people talked about them in the following way: 'imagine that 'our little Indians' our 'race' is a blessing'. This form of talking about the indigenous people reflects certain paternalism that the racially mixed Ladino has maintained during the centuries.

The ESH co-pastor notes that it is necessary to value the indigenous person. In his opinion there are certain characteristics of the indigenous people that differentiate them from the Ladinos. He recognizes that the indigenous communities have certain values like 'frugality' and 'respect', whereas the Ladino of mixed race is 'ostentatious', 'a spender of money' and 'vain' (A8ESH). Another associate pastor affirms that Guatemala 'is what it is' because of the indigenous people. They are those that take care of the agriculture and the basic Guatemalan food production (A5ICV).

The ESH senior pastor recognizes that racism exists in Guatemala but that the indigenous people are dealt with differently in the Evangelical churches. That is to say, they are recognized as brothers in the faith, their human dignity is valued, and they are integrated into the life and mission of the church (P3ESH). Throughout the years of

observing the Protestant phenomenon, the researcher has observed how the indigenous families and communities have become part of the Evangelical congregations in the rural areas as well as the cities.

The possibility of living among both has been a critical process where much has been learned as people observe certain features of racism, paternalism and the lack of recognizing positive aspects of the indigenous culture. The Presbyterian pastor Vitalino Similox who has Mayan roots and is a defender of the Mayan beliefs, affirms that ‘The Mayan worldview, religion and spirituality as a way to view life were not just ignored but also syncretised by other Christian religions [...]’ (2005: 218). Later he shows that the relationship between the Catholics and the Mayans has been of ‘antagonism’, ‘integrationist’ and a practice of ‘integral-conciliation’. On the other hand, he points out that the relationship with the Evangelical churches since the beginning of their arrival in Guatemala, was marked by an evangelization which signified persuasion followed by moral sanctions. In this case they used ‘eradication’, ‘substitution’ and ‘transaction’ which according to his perspective drastically changed the Mayan beliefs and practices (2005: 218-229).¹¹⁴ Sarasa, who appeals in favour of the prehispanic rites and customs within Catholicism, affirms that campaigns like ‘Jesus Christ is Lord of Guatemala’ (led by the El Shaddai churches in the 1980s), was an open attack on Mayan tradition (1992: 51-52).

Other authors underline that the presence of Protestant churches and the Catholic Church, brought to indigenous communities some spiritual and social benefits. For example, Sywulka notes that in Guatemala Bible translation alongside the setting up of schools and medical attention was a key contribution in favor of progress for the indigenous communities. He underscores that the work of the Central American Mission among indigenous evangelical leaders stimulated the foundation in 1994 of the Instituto

¹¹⁴ In his analysis of both churches Similox focuses his criticism more on the Evangelical churches showing that Protestantism harms the indigenous people more. He recognizes that not everything is fundamentalism within the Evangelical churches alluding to the churches which are related to the ecumenical world (2005: 233, 237).

Bíblico Integral Verdad y Vida set up to serve believers who speak Cakchiquel and Tzutujil (1999: 145).

Garrard-Burnett points out that Protestantism helped the indigenous people to free themselves from some traditions such as belonging to some religious guilds (organizations responsible for the festival for the patron saints especially among the indigenous people). Belonging to these groups is considered to be burdensome and contributes to the consumption of alcohol among the members (1989: 7-15). Green provides a good summary about indigenous communities and evangelicals in Guatemala. She says, 'Rather than a turning away from Mayan values, these evangelical affiliations, in spite of their fire-and-brimstone discourse, provide Mayan women and their families with a mechanism to recapture control over their lives, however contradictory such a statement may seem'. She concludes, 'Women are trying to regain a sense of community, sharing, groups undertaking in a respectful and dignified way, so emblematic of Mayan culture' (Green, 1993: 175)

3. Process of becoming mixed raced Ladinos

Other pastors think that the best thing for the indigenous people would be to leave their cultural characteristics like the language, in order to make contact within the global world. They consider that this way they would have better access to certain educative and technological resources. This proposal leans towards the process of ladinization that the indigenous people are experiencing which is also proposed by Ladino academics. In practice, many indigenous people have had to pass through this process due to pressures of the urban world, mixed marriages or fear of rejection and the discrimination.

In Neo-Pentecostal churches a double situation was observed; in some churches of the Guatemalan interior the indigenous women have to use Ladino dress codes to serve as deaconesses while in the churches of the Guatemala City, women use their indigenous clothes as they use to do in their mother towns. The indigenous families usually get to be part of the congregation although they do not always have access to same the privileges or

relations. This does not necessarily mean that there is no criticism or rejection of the way people dress or their person.

This process of becoming part of the Ladino culture is part of the transition that Guatemalan society is living through and is experienced in other Evangelical churches. In both cases, Protestantism appears like a factor that stimulates this process. Amy Sherman (1997) affirms that Protestantism in the indigenous communities of Guatemala, has caused a greater opening to new ideas and groups through the contact with ideas and groups of the western world specifically the Protestant missionaries. This approach and the rejection at the hands of Catholic indigenous communities, has pushed the indigenous Protestants to have greater interaction with the Ladino world. She emphasizes that the study of Sexton in Panajachel, Guatemala, shows that tendency: 'Protestantism appears to be reinforcing the adoption of Latinized culture, such as wearing more Europeanised clothing, living in modern-style houses with more modern possessions, and speaking more Spanish' (1997: 48-49). This process is also rejected by some organizations and indigenous communities that claim from the State their full rights and dignity. Members of CIEDEG (The Conference of Guatemalan Evangelical churches) are against the process of ladinization and plead for respect for indigenous dignity, culture and rights and their communities (Solares 1993:121-134).

To conclude, the Neo-Pentecostal churches have indigenous families and communities within their membership. They are present especially in the communities in the Guatemalan interior. In Guatemala City, Ladino families coexist with indigenous families. This affiliation does not mean necessarily that they relate openly inside or outside of the ecclesiastical atmosphere in the same way as they do with the other church members. But the NPS do not have the same attitude toward the indigenous people and their culture. Although they affirm that they are equal before God, from their opinions, it is possible to deduce that they feel that the best thing would be the assimilation of the indigenous people into the Ladino culture.

Even though they emphasize certain values and virtues of the indigenous people, they reject other ideas and customs of their culture that they consider do not harmonize with the values of the Christianity. Some pastors showed that they are against certain practices like idolatry, witchcraft, spiritism or animism that indigenous families and communities practice. The NPS do not usually promote the values and rights of the indigenous people and their culture. They are more eager to identify with the lifestyle and values of North American culture.

Although the NPS do not get rid of certain ideological slants and stereotypes about the indigenous people, they do take positive steps in overcoming the ethnocentric barriers that have characterized the Guatemalan society. These pastors and their communities show a more open attitude and a sense of brotherhood towards them and their communities. This openness and welcome are important factors for getting a more participative and democratic vision in a society where the indigenous and Ladino poor live on the edge of society especially in the rural areas. According to some Neo-Pentecostal pastors, the social and economic development of Almolonga, the miracle city, is a sample of social change that the indigenous communities can obtain through the gospel. The ESH senior pastor affirms that even still not sufficient attention has been given to indigenous social problems which could give rise to social upheaval (P3ESH).

In that line of thought, Paul Gifford comments that the Pentecostal churches in Africa could play a role in breaking down the ethnic barriers as the intensity of the 'conversion' confers a new identity which extends others. Later he emphasizes that this identity can help to foment democratic virtues like tolerance, respect, moderation, cooperation and commitment (1998: 347). The NPS and other pastors have before them the challenge to fight openly and intentionally in favour of the promotion and respect for the identity, dignity and rights of the indigenous communities at the national level.

Finally, in spite of the culture of exclusion some sectors of indigenous communities have achieved some social, economical and cultural advances. There has been fruit for

their efforts and organization within the civil society and the political structure of the country. The Nobel Award winner, Rigoberta Menchú has been recognized for her fight on behalf of indigenous people and the peace process in Guatemala. The book Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia (1987) gives a portrait about her life and fight in favour of indigenous communities. In this work written from the perspective of a Mayan identity and worldview and with commitment to the indigenous peoples, denounces abuses, exclusion, discrimination, repression and death to which they have been subjected for centuries. She writes about this reality after losing her parents and a brother in the context of the civil war which lasted for 36 years. She also points out the position of the Catholic Church as a hierarchy, who according to her perspective ‘went hand in hand with the political regime’, and she denounces the ideological uses of the Bible. From her position as catechist she states, ‘I came to know what role Christians should play in the fight what is the role that Christians should have on earth’. Later she underscores, ‘We have discovered that the Bible has been used as a means to accommodate rather than to bring light for the poor’ (Burgos 1987: 269-271). This criticism about the capricious use of the Bible includes both Catholics and Evangelicals. At that time, other indigenous women such as Rosalina Tuyuc joined forces with Menchú, to defend the communities and the citizen rights of indigenous widows.

In the last decade the indigenous people have obtained certain political spaces and recognition of their cultural identity as a result of their own struggles to get some spaces in the Guatemalan society with special support of the treaty for indigenous rights article 169 of the International Organization Work (OIT). Many of the indigenous young people are university graduates and some have been named as state ministers or have been elected as politicians or mayors in much of the countryside.

CONCLUSIONS

The social thought of the Neo-Pentecostal pastors is complex, not uniform and paradoxical. In spite of this tendency, they do not limit salvation to the things of heaven and are connected to this present world. Simultaneously, they generate in their members an expectation that God can act in their lives as well as in the wider world. They motivate them to believe in God for spiritual and social transformation from their particular Neo-Pentecostal theological standpoint.

The NPS however do not define social action in sociological terms, but in religious categories. They focus their attention on the salvation of the spirit linked to daily living. In other words, most of the NPS do not discuss openly the social problems that Guatemalan society is going through. They seek improvement of life derived from salvation that is not reduced only to the spiritual sphere. Based on this approach, they orient the spiritual life of their membership, and encourage them to participate in their world. Other analysts of NEOP affirm the opposite. Paul Freston affirms that the NPS 'are handling several ideas and that they use in a chaotic way as they do not have an integrated theology. Today they emphasize the spiritual warfare, tomorrow education, and the day after tomorrow evangelization and after that discipleship, among others'.¹¹⁵

The researcher observed that NPS agree with the social responsibility of the church, but they are not investing many resources in social programs. Their aid programmes are more spontaneous and they do not have much infrastructure and economic resources. Aid or social assistance occupies a secondary place. The ESH pastor has given more room for reflection on social issues and development. In practice they give greater attention to evangelism. In one of the analyzed churches the researcher found that the programme of social attendance had been abandoned to give more attention to the numerical growth of the church.

¹¹⁵ Paul Freston, 'Comment chapter IV' pfreston@calvin.edu 10.02.04

The transmission of Christian values could be a substantial contribution for transforming some of the vices of the Guatemalan culture. The Neo-Pentecostal emphasis to change the Guatemalan cultural ethos, could contribute to changing some values and vices of the culture, thus producing a generation of changed people in favour of the country. Of course, the NPS need more theological resources to be able to train differently their churches and leadership. They also need to include in their sermons space dialogue with the problems of the social structures that prevail in the country.

The challenge of the NPS to form new values needs to take root within these groups, especially in view of resistance to change from groups of middle and high classes. Cajas warns that, ‘There is a danger in that Christians easily adopt what we have called “an ideology of the middle-class and, forgetting their vocation for the kingdom God easily become allies of the status quo and where they get stuck”’ (no date: 27). This challenge implies a reformulation of how to interpret social reality, train leadership in these issues and that these ideas should be understood and assumed by all the membership.

The Neo-Pentecostal vision about the educational project has the potential to contribute to the socio-economic and cultural development of the Neo-Pentecostal membership, and in some way, the education of Guatemala. Unfortunately, most of the educative centres do not offer their services to the working and lower income groups. On the other hand, the posture that the NPS have with regard to the indigenous communities has two sides; while they recognize their dignity as persons they reject openly Mayan rites and beliefs.

The NPS think that party politics continue to be a means to reach power in order to promote the changes that the country needs. The failures of the past do not seem to perturb their spirit and they continue to stimulate members of their congregations to become involved in politics. According to the NPS they have still not had the opportunity to govern the country, and they hope for a new opportunity to show their potential.

The Neo-Pentecostals consider however that the way to transform the country is through evangelism. That is to say, they set out to moralise society by means of conversion, through being born again Christians, from whom they expect different forms of thinking and acting. It is important to see how lay people relate the matter of conversion to economic improvement and to what extent they experience social mobility. Do the laity relate beliefs to problems in society, and do they interpret poverty from a different angle than that of it being spiritual warfare? Do they take into account the weight of the structures from their social, economic, political dimensions and history in the Guatemalan context?

Finally their desire to win ‘Guatemala for Christ’ implies a social and political connotation. They are not thinking just about spiritual salvation, but also about the social implications of salvation. Do the NPS promote social change as Neo-Pentecostal churches? The next chapter will outline the social presence and role of the Neo-Pentecostal laity in the Guatemalan society, showing how the lay people of these churches think and assume their Christian commitment in the world.

CHAPTER V

THE SOCIAL ROLE AND PRESENCE OF THE LAY PEOPLE

Before the 1950s there was a clear distinction between the laity and the clergy in the context of the Catholic Church in Latin America. The clergy held all the privileges with regard to liturgy, bible study, and the development of the mission. The Catholic Church also was a rigid institution, subject to the clergy and ecclesiastical structures. Lay people did not know much about the bible; they hardly participated in the liturgy and had no responsibility in missions. Their presence and role almost passed unnoticed. The role of the laity was no more significant than that of acolytes at Sunday mass.

As mass was given in Latin the members could not learn much about their faith. It was only after the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) that the Catholic Church gave more attention to the membership as the people of God. Although certain models are still followed at the institutional, hierarchical doctrinal and liturgical levels, winds of change are blowing especially in their vision of the role of the Catholic laity.

The Jesuit Ricardo Bendaña says that the renewal brought the following changes in Guatemala: they started to give mass in Spanish and some Mayan languages, the liturgy was changed a bit, they stimulated bible reading, they trained catechists, and they launched new communities such as the movement of the 'Delegates of the Word' a group from Honduras which spread to other countries (2001:51-52, 60). Spykman says that they helped rural communities to pray, understand the bible and reflect about social problems (1988:188-189). The new way of doing church and theology took on different features. Among these, the theology of Liberation, the Delegates of the Word and the Base Church communities [CEBs] were the most notorious. These groups played an important role in the processes of training, reflexion and the development of action and thought among Catholic people, in favour of the social liberation of Latin America. The CEBs propelled evangelization, pastoral accompaniment and theological reflexion about the mission of the church, especially among Ladinos in countries like Brazil and Chile (Spykman 1988:190-

91). In the opinion of analysts, the CEBs did not have much effect in Guatemala.¹¹⁶ According to Murga Armas the Catholic Action promoted the emergence of small pastoral groups in indigenous communities in rural areas (2006:6). Garrard-Burnett points out that within a context of persecution and death the Catholic Action group trained the catechists and Delegates of the Word to provide some teaching for the people (1998: 19-21).

Without underestimating the CEBs' role, some authors underline that they did not always penetrate their bases, and they were not always successful in achieving their objectives in favour of the communities (Comblin 1994, Burdick 1993, Berryman 1995; 1996). The Catholic theologian Comblin affirms that in Brazil the Pentecostals had more success in reaching out to the communities and meeting their needs than the CEBs (1994:217-220). According to Cook, Liberation Theology and the leadership of the CEBs was not successful among the poor because they did not speak their language and because of their political ideas (1994a: 220-271).

Cleary shows that the laity emerged in both the Catholic and Pentecostal churches. He quotes the fact that there was a 50,000 strong participation of Guatemalan Catholic lay people in 'Cursillos de Cristiandad' (Courses on Christendom) at the end of the 1990s (1999: 135). According to him, some authors like Martin and others analysts ignore the resurgence of Catholicism in Latin America (1998: 132). Another group who emerged within the Catholic Church is the Charismatic movement (Bendaña 2001: 218-221). The hierarchy did not favour it and they have not always received the support. This movement is moved and led by the laity. In the 2000s this group is accepted by both the middle and working classes.

Cleary in different works recognizes the Pentecostal presence as an essentially lay movement which has taken root in Latin America (1998, 1999). Authors such as Garrad-

¹¹⁶ In the Works of Ricardo Falla Quiche Rebelde (1986) and Masacres de la Selva Ixcán Guatemala (1975-1982) (1992); and the Informe de la Iglesia Católica 'Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica' (REMHI), they describe the abuses that many of the Catholic leaders suffered at the hand of the army and as well the guerrilla groups.

Burnett (1986, 1989a), Martin (1990, 2002), Stoll (1990), Frigerio (1994), Burdik (1993), Droogers (1998) Dario López (2000), Gifford (1998, 2004) and Maxwell (2006) (among others) show the push and development of Protestantism and the Pentecostals who are in essence lay movements, within Latin America and beyond.

The NPCs in Guatemala are a part of this global, lay Christian movement. They follow closely the Pentecostal paradigm of the post reformation concept of the 'priesthood of all believers'. The researcher observed the movement of men and women involved in different church tasks, many of them were receiving training to strengthen their faith and were being sent out in mission. This lay movement in both Catholicism and Protestantism deserves to be studied in more depth in the immediate future.

A. GIVING VOICE TO THE LAY PEOPLE

This part of the thesis focuses on the NPL in order to unravel their vision and social involvement. It is important because there are few studies on Guatemalan Neo-Pentecostals, and those that exist, focus mainly on the pastors' opinions, leaving aside the key role of lay people in the success of NPCs' mission. The researcher chose to analyse the thinking and social role of the NPL as a group in Guatemala because they have not received much attention. Ricardo Mariano in his doctoral thesis, 'Sociological analysis of the growth of Pentecostalism in Brazil' claims that Pentecostal growth is due to the work of both of its religious agents, church leadership and active lay people (2001:10). Wilson's study of Pentecostalism affirms that historians 'should not focus solely on the principal players but also on the cross-section of people and personalities who also shaped the character of the movement; none being more important than the unassuming but able men and women who made up the rank and file of almost every Pentecostal congregation' (cited by Petersen in Dempster *et. al* 1999: 7). The laity as a collective body has the possibility of setting in motion processes which are able to affect the life of a community.

Paul Gifford in his study of new Pentecostal churches in Africa affirms, that ‘for the circumstances of today’s Africa, these Pentecostal churches are something new and important: voluntary associations of true brothers and sisters with a new organizational style (1995: 5). That is why some analysts say that lay people of Evangelical churches could be seen as a potential social capital to contribute to the social and economic development of the country. It is important to listen to lay people first hand, as Terry Ranger emphasizes, because they want to be heard. He asserts that ‘Informants are individuals and their views should not be taken just as evidence for a “traditional” view or the view of the society’.¹¹⁷

It is also important to listen to NPL communities. Cleary highlights the importance of listening carefully to what Latin Americans say about their religion, how they describe their faith and their religion (1999: 132,131-150). It is important to hear, know, and understand what the NPL are thinking and what they are doing about their social role. David Maxwell questions the idea that the charismatic African churches are alienated. He emphasizes that when their stories are heard, when they go beyond the stereotypes, many new things, many interesting initiatives, and more vanguard positions can be seen¹¹⁸. This investigation reveals important information with regard to the social role of the Guatemalan NPL.

The following questions are the basis of the interviews and questionnaires with the aim of understanding what they think about their presence and social role and how they participate in society. Do the NPL show interest in social problems and openness to participate in the different spheres of society? Do the NPL have values and beliefs that help them to face the world that surrounds them? Do these beliefs help the NPL to improve the socio-economic situation? Do these values and beliefs encourage them to participate actively in civil society? Do the NPL confront the structural problems which affect the country? What type of social projects do the churches run and in what way are the NPL

¹¹⁷ Terry Ranger Why and how to do field-work. In: OCMS lecture 7 February 2006. Oxford: OCMS.

¹¹⁸Cited by Paul Freston, Interview, London 19/07/03.

involved in them? Do they represent a movement for social transformation? To what extent are the NPL dependent on the teaching of their pastors? Do they differ from their pastors with regard to their way of thinking?

With these ideas in mind the results and analyses of NPL and their churches can be shown. The same six urban churches of Guatemala City and nearby municipalities will be investigated [ESH, FCG, IFD, LDG, ICV and IVF]. Their level of income shows that they are present in the upper middle, middle and lower middle and working classes (Table 5.1). The following table helps to illustrate the difference of incomes between these churches. Forty-four per cent of the ESH members receive incomes above \$665, while only 7 per cent of the LDG members achieve this. The minimum wage of a worker in Guatemala City until 2007 was Q.1500 per annum [approximately\$200].

The data on total population and incomes according to socio-economic strata of 2004 gave the following facts: 1) 29 per cent of extreme low classes receive 5 per cent, b) 32 per cent of the lower classes acquire 21 per cent c) 20 per cent of the lower middle classes 21 per cent d) 16 per cent of the middle class 31 per cent and, e) 3 per cent of the higher classes get 22 per cent (United Nations ‘Características de la población’ 2005: 97).

Table 5.1 Economic incomes

Economic monthly Income in Quetzals	Churches						
	ICV %	IFCG %	ESH %	LDG	IFD %	IVF %	Total
1 to 1000 = \$132	16=19	24=30	10= 10	29=39	17=22	8=15	104
1001 to 3000=\$398	27=33	31=38	28= 29	29=39	41=53	15=28	171
3001 to 5000=\$664	13=16	8= 10	15= 16	14=19	13=16	8=15	71
5001 or more=\$665	26=32	18=22	42= 44	2=3	6=7	23=42	117
Total surveyed	82	81	77	74	77	54	463

Source: Survey of Neo-Pentecostal lay people 2003

B. ABOUT THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

This section analyses the biblical elements that support the ideas of the NPL about their understanding of the church's mission. The interest here is to discover what the NPL think about missions as this to a great extent defines how they see themselves in the world and the type of presence and action that they assume in society. It is important to know what they think about the church's mission and how do they relate it with social issues.

1. Preaching of the Gospel

Most of NPL share their pastors' opinions on the subject of the mission. The mission of the church is to preach the good news of the gospel for man's salvation. Preaching is understood here to be a verbal or written announcement of the message. This mission is described in terms of 'evangelizing', 'winning souls for Christ', 'making disciples of the nations', 'sharing the word of God', or 'the great commission'. The emphasis falls here on the spiritual dimension and repercussion of the message.

Evangelism or mission (they use both terms interchangeably) has as its aim the conversion of the people through new birth. In their religious language this means 'to redeem the non believing people' and to take them to the feet of Christ, so that they can know the love of God and be converted. For the NPL the unbelievers are all those who have not accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and are therefore not born again.

Conversion implies for the NPL the rejection of beliefs and negative habits of the culture such as alcoholism, adultery and betting which leads believers into debt. Among Evangelicals conversion is fundamental because they consider that all persons are marked by sin and need to repent to get forgiveness from their sins. Entering the new community of faith implies accepting new values and a disposition to follow new models of conduct.

Cantón says that the conversion process in the Pentecostal community includes the following steps: a) the convert is assigned immediately a position where there are rights and duties to carry out, b) once the conversion is sure, the convert must share their

testimony during a service where they describe how God worked in their lives and c) they must assume responsibilities of a member of the community which involves serving and tithing (1998: 131). ‘Conversion implies transformation, and this is translated into a new way of life. But it is not just a new way of life, but also a new manner to represent their own life in a narrative form’ (1998: 132).

The idea of ‘winning Guatemala for Christ’ occupies a fundamental place in their theology. It is the key to transforming the country. The foundation stone of their mission is the belief that a nation can be changed as individuals are changed. This vision simultaneously includes an agenda for church planting in Latin America, the United States, Canada and some parts of Europe and Africa.¹¹⁹ Their resources for mission are found among the leaders of local churches or from immigrants in the United States who are responsible for planting new churches. Charismatic Christianity is a global phenomenon and some critics of Neo-Pentecostalism affirm that it is an expansion company. According to an internal observer this missionary fervour does not necessarily correspond to the biblical concept of mission found in the biblical book of Acts. He thinks rather that ‘it is the projection of globalization to display my product to a greater number of people in the market’ (IO1).

Most of lay people’s opinions reflect in good measure the mission declarations of their churches. The IVF indicate that their vision is ‘to respond to God’s love, keep it, fulfil it and teach his Word, especially the mandate to go and make disciples of all nations’.¹²⁰ The FCG declares that ‘their mission, with Christ at the head, is to go and to teach everyone the gospel’, which includes ‘the salvation of the soul of the listeners and the restoration of the family’.

The doctrinal declaration of IFD emphasizes that their mission is ‘to reconcile Guatemala to God’. From the eschatological optic the ESH note, ‘we live and exist to register Guatemala in the list of nations that will be safe according to the book of

¹¹⁹ For example, El Shaddai has fifty churches in Guatemala and fifty other churches around the world.

¹²⁰ Vision of the Iglesia Visión de Fe Available at [http:// www.visiondefe.com](http://www.visiondefe.com). Accessed 9-12-05

Revelations 21:24'.¹²¹ Their declaration leans towards post-millennial interpretation of the kingdom of God which has spiritual and material implications for the here and now of the present world. The kingdom of God is not a just future reality but an irruption on God's part into the present world and believers take an active part in the building of the kingdom.

In the Neo-Pentecostal context to win the country for Christ is not only a religious statement but also has political overtones as seen in the case of the ESH where political meaning is acquired. Cantón affirms that 'Other churches preach the conversion of entire countries, but they do not express themselves in combat terms neither do they place emphasis on political and economic salvation of Guatemala through prayer as the Neo-Pentecostals do'. She goes on to point out that the ESH Campaign 'Jesus is Lord of Guatemala' which is promoted by Harold Caballeros is proposing salvation which transcends the personal, it includes frontal warfare against spiritual armies, which are entrenched in idolatry and promotes an economic vision of salvation (1998: 16-17). Cantón exposes some critical elements which reveal the socio-political aspirations of some of the Neo-Pentecostal personalities, but she does not give the same amount of attention to other elements which make up their social thinking which are also clothed in religious language.

2. Salvation of soul and body

a. Salvation of the soul

The NPL use the term 'soul' to refer the person as a human being or to refer to the spiritual dimension of people. Although their discourse emphasizes the idea of 'saving the soul' they do not necessarily leave out material needs of daily life. In spite of the criticisms that the NPCs are not interested in social problems, these lay people link the salvation of the soul with the day to day occurrences. Most of the lay people emphasized that the salvation of 'soul' is not separate from 'the other spheres of the life'. In Evangelical conversion the

¹²¹ Declaration of vision ESH church. <http://www.elshaddai.net> .10-12-05

transcendent and the mundane and the need to be born again are part of the meaning of conversion which has both individual as well as social aspects (Cantón 1998: 208-9).

An ICV engineer affirms that ‘evangelistic work involves social promotion and the spiritual and physical well-being of people, even their economic promotion’. He emphasizes, ‘in my experience of eighteen to twenty years of being a Christian, I have seen people arrive in truly precarious conditions and I have seen them progress socially and economically because they put into practice a lively Christian faith’. He concludes later ‘I see evangelism like part of the investment in human capital’ (L6ICV). That is to say, his perception of evangelism shows a relationship between Christian faith and social improvement. It reflects an integral vision of what it means to be human.

According to Chilean theologian Sepúlveda, a Pentecostal theologian, ‘salvation’ brings an experience of God as a result of evangelism, which invades and fills the believer’s life and provides a new meaning which enables him to face his world. He notes that conversion affects the way the convert sees himself, his family and his reality within the context of his community (1994: 68-71). It is important to notice that in general the lay people do not use sociological categories to express their ideas about faith and their world. They express them and their surroundings in religious language.

One of the answers given by an informant when asked to define the difference between evangelism and social issues was particularly interesting. He indicated that, ‘the aim of the church is evangelism and to make disciples [...] No one has ever preached on social issues, only to change the life of the people for the better’. This phrase ‘to change people’s lives for the better’ has a sociological dimension, but it not always seen as such. The social dimension is not described in sociological terms, but in religious language. Depending on the social strata in society the members will make their own interpretations and applications.

b. Wider perception of mission

They maintain the emphasis in the spiritual dimension, but they connect mission with concrete aspects of the social reality. According to another informant, the mission of the church is ‘to restore those that are without Christ’, in order ‘to restore the government institutions to doing God’s will in order to create a nation that is saved and free of corruption’(L2ICV). He does not limit the mission to just the spiritual and personal orders. Rather he links the mission of salvation with the rescue of the State institutions. For a business man, the preaching of ‘the gospel must reach all nations,’ and must ‘lead to a country which has socio-political and economic balance’’ (L3ICV). The notion of a ‘balanced society’ points to a critical issue of Guatemalan society, social and economic inequality. In a similar direction, another informant commented that the mission ‘to make disciples implies that the church has some work at the social level and as well as helping the poor’ (L1IFD). According to this opinion discipleship includes concern for those in need.

A lady of one the churches considers that conversion in mission has to do with ‘the change of attitudes in line with the word of God and the beginning of working laboriously and walking positively in society’ (L1ESH). She adds here a component on work ethics and social responsibility. From a similar perspective another informant notes that church’s mission has to do with ‘the preaching of the gospel which is connected to society because the evangelized person has a better style of life and a healthy mind’ (L2FCG).

These opinions showing an interest in the here and now reflect a change from traditional eschatology. Without leaving to one side some dispensationalist beliefs such as the doctrine that emphasizes that the church is waiting for the rapture, the arrival of the great tribulation and the millennial kingdom of Christ, they assume without much elaboration, a post-millennial perspective, emphasizing the present kingdom of Christ. This eschatological vision helps them to be more open to ‘the things of the world’, and at the same time, it exposes them to the present world’s ideologies.

To summarize, the NPL think about mission in terms of ‘the salvation of the soul’ [spiritual dimension] without separating it from material order [economics dimension] and their concern for the problems of society [social dimension] In some ways, it could be noted that their perception is more open than the vision of some of their pastors with respect to the mission of the church.

3. Relation of the bible and the world

Critics of NEOP indicate, among other things, that their take on society is very spiritual, that they live apart from society, and that they place experience over reason. For example, a study made in Goiana, Brazil, indicates that Neo-Pentecostal religiosity is passive, mythical, and contemplative (Merluza 2002). In other words, they do not relate their faith to their world. Without taking away from the value of these criticisms, the researcher considered it useful to know the opinion of the NPL with respect to the relationship of the bible and the world.

With this idea in mind he asked the NPL if they thought that the bible relates to the totality of human life, or if it only takes care of spiritual problems. Although the question was general, the aim was to see the interest that the NPL have in the things of this present world above all because in sectors of the Evangelical church it is difficult to perceive the relationship between the context of the faith and the context that they live in. Human life here refers to the totality of life in society.

Most of the lay people interviewed responded positively to the question. Their answers show their interest both in spiritual as well as mundane things. The result of the General Survey for Neo-Pentecostal Lay People (GSNPL) showed the same tendency. They believe that the bible is the word of God and that it relates to every area of life. When he introduces the bible the ESH pastor reflects this belief. Every sermon starts with the following phrase which everyone has to repeat in one voice: ‘This is my bible, the word of God, I am what the bible says I am, I have the bible, what the bible says I have and I can

do all that the bible says that I can do. I will read it, I will listen to it, the incorruptible seed, and the word of God will change my life for ever, Amen'. Of course, the opinion of lay people about the bible does not mean that they fully comprehend the bible and its teachings. Their knowledge of the bible mainly depends on the education from the pastors and family groups. In general, the Neo-Pentecostals give little time for the personal bible study and the space for theological reflection is somewhat limited.

a. Relationship between spiritual and material

Some lay people showed that 'the bible has to do with the spiritual and material aspects'. 'It relates to all of life' (L2IFM). They should not be separated. The bible 'has ethical, moral, administrative, financial, social and familiar issues information' (L3ICV). They believe that 'life cannot be lived without the light of the 'Word' and the bible teaches us how to relate to one another, how to make good governance, create policies. It has to do with everything' (L3IVF). The 'Word of God' is for the individual and society. Other lay people consider that there is no separation between the 'Word of God' and 'reality'. From their perspective, 'the bible is integrative in character and restores the relationships of the human being with God, their fellows, themselves and nature. Christ restored all these relations' (L3ESH).

On a similar theme a lady journalist affirmed that bible integrates all of reality 'because from creation man began society. The bible is related to all human endeavours' (L3FCG). Some examples show the way they begin to link their beliefs to the challenges of the present world. These perceptions reflect a worldview that seeks to integrate the things of the spirit with the things of the present world from the stand point of the Christian faith. The opinion of these lay people shows a relationship between the spiritual and mundane things. The results of the Pew Forum Religion and the public Life' in ten countries on Pentecostalism underlines that over 50 per cent of the Guatemalans said that they experimented that God promises material abundance in this world.

b. Relationship between faith and secular knowledge

With regard to the relationship between faith and secular knowledge, representatives of the ESH School affirmed that their lessons are based on a Christian philosophy that integrates the Jewish-Christian biblical foundation with the academic contents that the Ministry of Education demands (L7ESH). Equally, according to the Rector of the Pan-American University of the ICV:

The biblical and secular knowledge is part of a unity. They do not have to be separate. Knowledge and wisdom for example, evolution and creation, scientific method and divine illumination are aspects that from our perspective do not belong to a dual system. That is to say, one thing is this and another thing that, but rather they constitute a unity. This unity allows us, for example, at the level of our own university, to raise shall we say the issue of knowledge through all the existing pedagogical processes, but also allows us to cultivate faith, love and that series of apparently subjective biblical principles but that if they are built into a person. They will feed the interior of the person resulting in moral, ethical, and professional conduct of the person, but I insist that we do not separate these things, for us they are united (L6ICV).

Their affirmation criticizes indirectly some of the dualism which some of their pastors and lay people maintain about the relationship between science and faith. In the past, some Pentecostal pastors considered the university as a threat to faith and as such they look on higher education with some reservation seeing a conflict of faith with scientific knowledge. This opening in the relationship between faith and academics shows an opening that goes hand in hand with modernity. In the Neo-Pentecostal schools they seek to integrate the materials provided by the Ministry of Education with principles of the Christian faith. Further studies could prove up to what measure these schools integrate Christian faith with the scientific task, if they are able to relate to Guatemala's socio-economic challenges, and if the students can assume these challenges for the benefit of the wellbeing of the population within the structure of Christian ethics.

The majority of lay people affirmed that Christians must take note of subjects related to science and other themes. The social science books and instrumental enrichment programme [PEI] are concrete examples of how LDG and ESH schools seek to integrate knowledge and faith into their programmes. This tendency is observed similarly in the result of the GSNPL on the relation faith-science [Table 5.2]. The fact that these books

must be read shows openness to link both mundane and spiritual spheres. When asked the question if they read books by secular authors 30 per cent said they did, and 32 per cent said that they did sometimes. Their answers show some interest in knowledge of other ideas outside their religious world.

c. Secular world versus Christian values

The NPL show certain distrust towards those ideas and theories of the secular world that they think that are against 'Christian values'. The following commentary gives a glimpse of this attitude. The Director of the ESH School affirmed that a principal objective in her institution is 'to enable the students to discern secular humanism and to ensure that they learn values based on the word of God. There are two ways to face the world, one prohibiting everything, and the other teaching the students to see and discern for themselves' (L7ESH). They recognize modernity but reject those values which they consider to be contrary to Christian values. These values have to do with the Neo-Pentecostal theological position that they sustain.

Which secular values do they reject? Among these could be found the following: legalizing abortion, homosexuality, same-sex marriages or the interference of the State in family matters. An example of this can be observed in the fight against the 'Código de la Niñez' (Childrens' Statute proposed by the National Congress of Guatemala) instigated by the Guatemalan Evangelical Alliance who joined efforts with the Catholic Church and others civil institutions –the IVC church wrote its own statement about it.

On the other hand, FCG leaders emphasized that the Christian values and morals are important factors in the orientation of young people. They say this 'because in this modern world there is a grey set of values including situational ethics which dilute our biblical principles and young people often do not know what is good or bad' (J. López Explosión Juvenil 2003). So for them, faith and ethics are in jeopardy. Of course in practice the NPL tending to adopt certain values of the western culture without questioning

them too much. For example, they are attracted by the North American life style, the free market economic system, fashions in dress codes or church growth strategies. On the other hand, their emphasis on personal morality leads them to neglect the ethical challenge to be found in forms or systems which provoke injustice or inequality and militate against human dignity.

To sum up, the NPL show interest in relating their faith to the present world. They do it from the stand point of their Neo-Pentecostal faith within the framework of a postmillennial eschatology. Their approach to the bible shows an open mind to the things of the present world. This approach does not mean necessarily that they know their faith in depth or that they confront ethical challenges about equity in an unjust society. The researcher also observed in their bookstores few books that integrate the Christian faith with social issues or the environment. Most of titles are oriented towards prayer, emotional problems, spiritual warfare, theology of the prosperity, and other similar subjects.

Table 5.2 Do you consider that Christians should get involved with science, technology, art, etc.?

Options	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	405	78.6
Maybe	57	11.1
I don't know	30	5.8
Definitely not	23	4.5
Total	515	100

Sources: Survey of Neo-Pentecostal lay people 2003

4. Christian faith and social problems

In Guatemala a high percentage of the population faces deep social, economic and political deprivations. The country continues to occupy the lowest places in several indices of human and social development in Central America yet they have one of the highest percentages of Evangelical populations in Latin America. Nevertheless, that numerical presence has not had a visible effect on Guatemala's socio-political structures. The ESH

pastor believes that this is a contradiction which true religious revival must oppose. The Evangelical contribution up till now is more visible at the micro-ethical, personal and family levels. It can also be observed that although they are more concerned about evangelism, they are beginning to express their concerns about some of Guatemala's social issues. This section analyzes how the NPL think about social problems and what they do about them.

a. Open attitude to talk about social issues

In the past Evangelicals were afraid to speak about the theme due to the context of repression that predominated during Guatemala's armed conflict. In order to avoid any confusion with people related to the Guatemalan guerrilla they repeated the aphorism 'I can't hear you, I can't see, I'm made of wood'. The result of the interviews shows that most lay people affirmed that the church must contribute to solving social problems. A first group related the church's participation the Christian conversion, based on the premise that religious change brings change in the social ambit. For example, a housewife emphasizes that 'it is important that the church should be heard and speak out in society'. She thinks that this way of seeing mission allows the gospel to be presented so that people and society can be transformed (L1ICV). An engineer emphasizes that only 'the gospel can create a just system. According to him this process of social transformation beginning at the spiritual level' (L5IVF).

According to other lay people social responsibility implies the disposition to 'to testify that if somebody needs aid it must be given without expecting anything in return' (L4ESH). They think that religious change goes hand in hand with changes of life in society, 'If belief in God changes people's lives it will change the life of society'. Other NPL affirm that the church should contribute in solving the problems of the country 'because it is our duty as Christians. We have the responsibility to make sure that the country is doing well. God will heal his people' (L4LDG). They emphasize that Christians

must contribute to the solution of social problems because ‘we have the truth and the Holy Spirit who enables us to make changes’ (L4IFG). This participation should be made by means of ‘preaching, prayer for the country and giving to the poor’ (L6IFD). The result of the GSNPL on the same question showed the same tendency [Table 5.3]. According to these opinions the duty of Christians must take into account the social dimension of the gospel. It shows an emergence of a social conscience in the development processes and commitment to them.

Table 5.3 Should the Church as an institution contribute to solving the problems of education, health and environment, etc.?

Options	Frequency	Valid Percent
It should do so for all	419	80.3
It should do so only for its members	19	3.6
It should not do so, it is not part of its mission	30	5.7
This is the governments’ responsibility	47	9
Did not answer	7	1.4
Total	522	100

Source: survey of Neo-Pentecostal lay people 2003

Some lay people mentioned that ‘the church does not have to shut itself off from the country’s real situation but should be concerned about it. In this way the country can change’ (L2ICV). A lay member from a wealthy family affirms that it is necessary to contribute to solving social problems because ‘we are to be like salt and light, a positive influence. The church must turn the social ambit upside-down like salt’ (L3ESH). A lay people and former member of a trade union affirmed that the church must become involved because ‘God commands us to be involved in the common good including political action. The Christians have power to transform society. Others use the State for their personal goals’ (L1FCG). Other emphases, the church needs ‘to imitate the example of Jesus who took into account social problems’ (L5LDG). Those opinions show an interest and a perception about the social problems which in some cases defers from the posture of their churches and their pastors. In conversations with some of the laity the researcher perceived

openness, enthusiasm and a disposition not only to speak about social problems but also to get involved in some area of service of the local church.

b. Weak social impact

Not all of the laity or pastors have the same openness and vision to talk about social problems. One lay person expressed that their church's interest is more oriented to the task of evangelism. Another informant affirmed that in the FCG the emphasis is 'evangelism and making disciples, the question of social responsibility is not our fundamental objective' (L6FCG). Another lay person recognized that the church must recover its social responsibility because it is called to do so. It is necessary to get involved, 'because we are called to transform society. In the past the church has not kept this commandment' (L2ESH).

On the other hand, a member of the IVF recognized that his church takes little notice of social problems. 'In my church there is only slight preoccupation for this issue. We are in the standard category of churches that do not have much concern about those areas [...] there is a medical clinic that takes care of the members and helps the poor, but there is no real social awareness, social changes or anything like that' (L1IVF). These opinions show that the NPL do not all share the same perspectives and that their interest does not mean that they handle the subject with ease. One of the observers makes an important critical comment about these churches:

They are interested in these fields but they would not necessarily know how to approach them neither do they have defined positions with regard to social, political and economic subjects, and there is no ideological project behind their thinking. They are interested in social issues as simple sociological data, as the people who attend these churches are generally professionals. Many are university graduates, and some are even university students, and as such they are more conscious of these phenomena (IO9).

A Jesuit theologian and philosopher does not give much credit to the Guatemalan Neo-Pentecostalism within and outside of the Catholic Church. He emphasizes that 'There is interest in the changes in private morality but not in the profound problems of society' (IO3). From a different perspective Stoll affirms that Evangelical leaders in Guatemala

found it difficult to respond in political and social terms to the question of how to change the form in which power is exercised in Guatemala (1994: 110). Their answer came through testimonies illustrating the power of the gospel to affect personal transformation through which they await the change of society. Martin affirms that it is crucial to understand religious phenomena within its language and religious categories. Specifically he notes that it is necessary to understand Pentecostalism starting from their narratives (2006: 3).

His point of view emphasizes that Pentecostalism has its own language to express their ideas about social change. According to Martin, 'to speak of moving from the old life to a new life in the Spirit, from degradation to renewal, incapacity to empowerment, dirt to cleanliness does indeed constitute a walk-out' (2006:12). For the Pentecostals and Evangelicals in general, to leave the world does not necessarily mean to leave society to one side, but to be separate from the things of the world (vices, ideas contrary to the Christian faith or worldly styles of life).

Bastian says that Pentecostalism, or any other present form of Protestantism, does not represent a new form of social organization, in other words a Protestant ferment as Stoll and Martin affirm. He believes that their analysis 'amplify and refine but do not modify or transcend the analyses of Lalive D'Epinay, which had already identified Pentecostal movements as vehicles for reform in Latin American popular religion' (1993: 43).

To sum up, it could be said that the opening up of the NPL to social problems reflects a different attitude from the stereotyped image cast against them. Although this way of thinking is incipient and in a gestation process it may show that the NPL are not blocking out social issues as D' Epinay described in the case of Chilean Pentecostalism in the 1970s (1968: 180).

5. Social perspective and participation

To widen the approach to how the NPL think about and are involved in social issues and inquiry was made about the projects they have and how they are involved in them. They debate between their ideas and the struggle to put them into the practice.

a. Social aid projects

Apart from discovering the NPL's vision about the relationship between the church and social problems, an inquiry was made about which social aid projects existed and their participation in these programmes. The idea was to contrast their opinions and commitment with the social problems within and outside of their church. Most of the NPL named some social projects their churches were involved in. The GSNPL reflects the same tendency with some differences. Only a small percentage affirmed that their churches do not have projects and a similar group indicated that they ought to have them [Table 5.4]. Gooren in his study of an LDG church in a marginalized area found that in effect these churches provide social aid although they do not have programmes that stimulate socio-economic development of their members (1999: 95).

The researcher found a similar situation in the central LDG which abandoned a foundation that was trying to promote economic, social and spiritual development of the members. According to the pastors the project was abandoned through lack of resources. However they do provide bags with food supplies to needy families through the family groups (A7LDG). The majority of churches concentrate their resources in favour of evangelism, numerical expansion and the construction of mega-churches. A similar case was found in IFD. The pastor affirmed that he had not been able to establish a centre for the elderly because of the lack of a suitable building. However, even after opening up the mega-church they have not done this.¹²² Other pastors have projected their social vision as

¹²²This church uses most of its resources to help to pay for Channel 27. The aim of this channel is to 'reconcile Guatemala with God'. They believe that this is the way that they can contribute to transforming the nation. Annually this channel raises between four and five million quetzals to sustain the station (about \$600.000).

has been already seen through some social assistance projects and the foundation of schools and universities.

Table 5.4 Does your church have aid projects (education, health, among others)?

Options	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	365	69.9
No	58	11.1
I do not know	71	13.6
No but I think that they should	28	5.4
Total	522	100

Source: Survey of Neo-Pentecostal lay people 2003

Of the existing social programmes, some are permanent whereas others are more temporary. The following table shows a summary of the areas that cover these programmes [Table 5.5]. With the idea of locating the NPL's programme and social participation, Ronald Sider's typology, outlined in the Chapter four on the Neo-Pentecostal pastor (NPS) has been applied (1993: 139-140). The NPCs are located at the first two levels of social responsibility at it was explained before: Social assistance and the proposal of projects which stimulate self propagation. In the light of this proposal, the NPL's thoughts about social presence are analyzed within the Guatemalan society.

The most common projects are in the areas of health, education and the distribution of food, while the rest of the programmes are related to attending families, in the emotional area and visiting needy people. These social programmes are linked to evangelism. Some Central American Pentecostal churches just concentrate on education. Petersen (1995) in his doctoral thesis about the Assemblies of God in El Salvador shows the advances they have made in the area of education. The President of the Costa Rican Evangelical Alliance told the researcher that the NPCs do not intentionally support the solving of national or social problems but rather seek to establish private primary and secondary schools (EO3).

Table 5.5 Programme of social aid and service projects

Programmes of social assistance	Projects
Medical/Evangelistic trips	Casa Bernabé (orphanage)
Collection and distribution of clothes and food	Foundation for Down's syndrome
Visits to prisons and hospitals	Fundación Manos de Amor
Vaccination campaigns	CEIDAL
Provision of student grants	Secondary and primary schools
Ministry of spiritual liberation	The Pan-American University
Support for marriages, couples and families	The San Pablo University
Support through home groups	
Spiritual and material help for widows	
Medical service at clinics and laboratories	
Vacation bible schools	

Source: Survey of Neo-Pentecostal lay people 2003

b. Presence in Church Projects of social aid

From the interviews 34 per cent of the lay people said they had participated in some social project of their church. The rest affirmed that they do not have time or they do not know how to. Although the percentage represents only a third part of the population studied, this participation is very important in the light of the small amount of participation of the lay people of other Neo-Pentecostal churches as well as other evangelical churches. Later this participation will be enlarged on. The opinions expressed by the interviewed lay people are also reflected in the GSNPL made. This survey shows a similar tendency of participation in social projects [Table 5.6]. In percentage terms, this participation is significant because of the size of these churches and because these projects compete with a series of ecclesiastical activities.

Table 5.6 Are you involved in your church's projects?

Options	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	174	33.6
Sometimes	73	14.1
I do not know them	31	6
I am not involved	240	46.3
Total	518	100

Source: Survey of Neo-Pentecostal lay people 2003

The survey that went to the Neo-Pentecostal entrepreneurs and professionals (SNPEP) showed a similar tendency. The survey shows that the 29.4 per cent participate in some project or social foundation. 7.3 per cent participate occasionally, and the 62.7 per cent do not participate in any social project. Of the entrepreneurs and professionals surveyed a third of them participated in some social aid project. This percentage is significant because they are people with busy agendas.

The NPL were also asked if they thought that Christians ought to participate in neighbourhood committees and if they had participated in them. Most of lay people interviewed said that they ought to do so. They indicated that 'for the common benefit', 'we need to work together', 'to show diligence and honesty', 'we must contribute in spiritual and material ways in favour of the neighbourhood', 'Yes, Christians must preach with the example. They must help keep the community tidy to live better, in harmony serve each other', and other such statements. Nevertheless, of those who were interviewed only a third participate in these committees. Those that admitted to not participating said that they had no extra time or because they were busy in other areas of work in the church. These answers reflect in part that the mentality of the Guatemalan middle classes is absorbed by their work agenda and their own interests.

The GSNPL shows similarly that only 16.9 per cent participate and that 15.5 per cent does so sometimes. Although the majority said that they do not participate in neighbourhood committees they said that they would be willing to do so [Table 5.7]. This

result shows conflicting feelings. According to an influential lay person of the IVF it is not due just to a lack of time, but that the members of his church have little interest and participation in these aspects because they are inward looking. Then he added that, they think in this way because their pastors talk more about themes like salvation than how to face the challenges of the society. According to his opinion ‘the top church leaders must understand that we must be open to enter many more fields and not be so closed to the possibility of changing all the structures of society’ (L1IVF). According to him the leadership of these churches does not give due importance to the discussion of social problems.

Once again in spite of the fact that only a third part of the lay people participate in activities in the neighbourhood, it is important in terms of getting closer to the problems and challenges of the community. Gooren affirms that in Guatemala the civil associations and clubs do not prosper, the Evangelical churches of low income appear like some of the most dynamic parts of the civil society (1999: 228).

Table 5.7 Do you participate in a committee for development and quality of life for the population?

Options	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	86	16.9
Sometimes	79	15.5
I have never participated	121	23.7
I do not participate, but I an willing to serve	224	43.9
Total	510	100

Source: Survey of Neo-Pentecostal lay people 2003

c. Presence in civilian society

According to Putnam, voluntary associations are key entities in the formation of human resources and civic culture of a society. He notes ‘that churches in the United States provide an important incubator for developing civil abilities, civic norms, community interests, and civic recruitment’. He emphasizes that, ‘actively religious men and women, learn to give speeches, how to develop meetings, handle disagreements, and to take on

administrative responsibilities'. Because of this he notes that church goers are probably more likely to get involved in secular organizations, they vote and participate politically, and have deeper informal social connections (2000: 66). Some of the elements indicated by Putnam as far as human resources are concerned can be seen among the NPL although in a very incipient stage.

Among the laity, entrepreneurs and professionals surveyed they shared the following testimonies: lay people of the ESH said that they participate in medical trips as a way to contribute to the neediest. Another informant indicated that he supports the rural schools that his church runs because he considers that he ought to share what God had given him and because he believes that education is the way to bring change. Marta Pilón Pacheco who writes a column in the Prensa Libre Newspaper, an environmental activist and member of the ESH, discusses critical environmental issues from the perspective of her faith in dialogue with diverse topics of the moment.¹²³

An ophthalmologist of the FCG said that she and some other people visit the Hospicio San José de Casa Alianza to accompany and pray with patients with AIDS, and to present the gospel to the children of Casa Alianza which is a street children's rehabilitation centre. According to this professional, 'one has to give grace because we receive grace'. Another informant of this church said that he is involved in the North East Association which carries out community health, development and environmental activities. He indicated that the reason he participates 'is the idea that he can influence others and motivate others to follow Christ in areas and activities that are not always related to church programmes'. One of doctors of the FCG said that at least a hundred and fifty people are involved in giving medical consultations, and thirty people visit the jails in a church with eleven thousand members (L6FCG).

Another professional of the FCG works as judge in the judicial system and participates in the Association of Penal Rights to stimulate the other lawyers to update

¹²³ In 2003 M. Pilón finalized her doctoral studies on the theme of the environment with the Universidad de Las Américas.

academically in this branch of the penal rights. A lay entrepreneur of the ICV said that he supports the Casa Bernabé (CB) through fundraising and collecting clothes because of the need this institution has in caring for orphaned children. Finally, an IVF professional said that he participates along side other Christians interested in changing the country through the cultural transformation and institutional change. He participates in a group called 'the church will save the nation'. This group considers that change must be cultural by means of transformation of institutions and reforms of the constitution to create a more egalitarian society. This proposed change is of a structural nature.

Finally, it is also important to note that professionals of other Evangelical churches participate in important civic and government positions in society. For example Eliú Higueros was a magistrate and later was named president of Guatemala's Supreme Court of Justice in 2007. Raymundo Caz is one of the current magistrates of the Electoral Supreme Court. Both are members of churches of Central American Mission. These examples show how Evangelicals are beginning to have a notable presence in spheres of Guatemalan civil society. This presence in civil society begs the question; could leadership spring up from Evangelical and Neo-Pentecostal middle-classes that could bring social change to the country? According to Guatemalan sociologist Guzmán Bockler, the middle-class in Guatemala has lost leadership who could bring about social change. He says that 'the middle-class is totally ambiguous like it has always been and it is as the entire world [...] they follow whichever current is moving. It is not possible to trust the middle-classes for anything. At the moment of difficulty they align themselves to the one who is going to win'.¹²⁴ Among the NPCs one can see people interested in getting involved in social programmes that could stimulate other to do the same among those churches. This analysis also reveals that the middle and high class laity discussed show more interest to discuss social problems than the laity of churches from lower middle and working-class areas.

¹²⁴ In an interview by Francisco Mauricio Martínez, 'Carlos Guzmán Bockler: nunca he pedido chamba a nadie', Revista D frente, Semanario de Prensa Libre, No.30, Guatemala 30 de enero 2005. Available at <http://www.prensalibre.com.gt/pl/domingo/archivo/revistad/2005/enero05/300105/dfrente.shtml> Accessed 26.7.07

Although they were open to talk about social issues their answers were less elaborated than NPL of middle and upper classes. The social aid from their churches also has less infrastructure, organization and economic resources.

Why is it that the NPL of those churches show less interest in the social problems? Perhaps it is due to the lack of teaching from their pastors, their education level or because of their own social position. According to one of the observers 'The poorest people tend to elude these issues and to stay with the simple message of salvation in Christ' (IO9). Cantón notes that there are different grades of passivity according to the distinct denominations, but the differences depend mostly of the social sector to which the convert belongs' (1998: 223). It would seem that a lower level of education and economic income affect the interest and management of social problems. The GSNPL shows that NPL of middle and upper class have higher education and economic income than NPL of lower and working class.

This situation can explain why the NPL of middle and upper classes are more interested in social problems. Also, the openness to social issues depends on the vision and attitude of their pastors. The pastors of LDG, IFG and IVF show less interest to talk about social issues and have less social programmes. One of the senior pastors said to the researcher that his church does not have resources to create social aid programmes because the church members are essentially poor people (P4LDG). One informant of IFG said that his church has little interest in social problems because the pastor's policy with respect to social projects is different (L7IFG).

In spite of this situation it is a positive feature that the NPL of those churches are open to discuss social issues and participate in some social projects or volunteer associations. One of the lay people, who spoke to the researcher several times about his work with 'Manos de Amor', said that his work with people from the countryside had transformed his vision for service and his ideas and vision in favour of the transformation of the nation (L8ESH).

A study made of Brazilian Evangelicals emphasizes that the Brazilians participate little in associations and civic institutions, and that the Evangelicals are not an exception. However, they affirm that according to this study Evangelicals participate with 7 per cent more frequency in the neighbourhood associations compared to the average 4 per cent of the rest of the surveyed population. This is due to the fact that in the local church there are different models of participation in the activities of the church (Instituto de Estudo da Religiao, ISER 1996: 90, 174). Wilson in his study of the Pentecostalism in Guatemala says that in spite of being small, inexperienced, and divided about how much political importance to display, the 'Pentecostal' contribution may lie primarily in the development of human capital, cultivating civic culture among popular groups' (1998:154).

To sum up, most of NPCs have social assistance projects, but not all give them the importance they deserve. Nevertheless, their laity is more open to consider social problems and participate openly in some instances of civil society. This participation does not necessarily result from impulses received from their churches. Some bring along certain enterprise or political experiences they had before conversion or joining their churches. Not all the churches show the same level of interest and participation in social projects. In some ways their social position determines how much they participate. Gifford in his book African Christianity its public role says that the 'question of the political role of churches is more often posed indirectly, in terms of civil society' (1998:342).

6. Their vision of politics

In the past the Evangelical remained outside of party politics cutting themselves off from the political sphere due to the type of theology inherited from some missionaries, and because of the hostility of the Catholic Church. The presence of Ríos Montt as head of State in 1982 opened up the arena for some Evangelicals to start a political career from the 1990s onwards. In spite of the failures of Ríos Montt and Serrano Elías most of NPL surveyed think that in order to change the country party politics must be assumed. They

think that transformational changes will come from the top. Their opinions will now be outlined.

a. Attitude towards politics

The theologian Miguez Bonino points out that those who participate in politics now are those who said that Christians should not get involved in political matters before (1999: 12). Numerical growth in great measure has been one of the factors which have stimulated the Evangelicals to seek political power in Latin America. In the present study, 65 per cent of the laity interviewed affirmed that Christians must participate in politics. Only a smaller percentage thought that Christians should not get involved in politics because it is against 'God's will'.

Although they have certain reserves about participating in politics or to give their vote for an Evangelical candidate, the NPL are encouraged to get involved in the political task. With a slightly different percentage the GSNPL responded to the question affirmatively [Table 5.8]. A survey made by the Pew Forum on Charismatic and Pentecostals at the global level found that the following percentage on political and religious relationships in Guatemala: 72 per cent of the Pentecostals, 73 per cent of Charismatics, and 69 per cent of other Christians, affirmed that religious groups must express their opinions on the political and social subjects of the day.

What motivates this openness of the Guatemalan NPL to participate in politics? The following are some of the reasons given. They said that they think that in doing this 'they will have the opportunity to illuminate things with Christian principles' (L1ICV). Participation is essential 'to take part in the redemption of institutions and to show integrity as a saved nation', (the salvation idea refers to conversion and its effect in the society). Other lay people said, as believers 'we have a role to play in public life' (L2IVF). For those lay people there should not be any political sphere left outside: 'it is necessary to aspire and participate in all political positions: the Presidency of the Republic, government

ministries, congress and local government as mayors'. They say that the country will change as we manage to reach different social spheres, bringing positive change accompanied by good testimony. Above all we must participate 'because honest people are needed in the government who can attack corruption' (L4ICV). They emphasize, 'if it is a call of the Lord we must do it', because 'when a righteous man governs the people will be glad' (L6IFG).

Some NPL affirmed that participation in politics should be done but with certain caution. People should not participate in politics unless 'they have spiritual maturity and know clearly how politics work because Evangelicals can become corrupt' (L7IFG). Equally, a woman journalist emphasized that those who 'participate in politics must be trained as well as understand what it means to be a Christian' (L3FCG). They indicated that the Evangelical politician must 'know the problems and needs of the people' if they want to get involved in politics (L5IGL). These opinions show a more moderate attitude as far as their beliefs on politics. The 1999 elections reflect this attitude. Bianchi, in spite of counting on the endorsement of certain Evangelical leadership, lost the presidential election. Those experiences show that Evangelicals not have a unique opinion about political parties and candidates.

Table 5.8 Do you think that Christians should participate in politics as part of their Christian responsibility?

Options	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	313	59.7
May be	47	9
I do not know	49	9.4
No	115	21.9
Total	524	100

Source: Survey of Neo-Pentecostal lay people 2003

b. Promotion of the democratic processes

On the other hand, the NPL were asked about the emission of votes in the Guatemalan general elections in 2003. The purpose of this question was to try to identify Neo-

Pentecostal behaviour with respect to the Guatemalan electorate and the support of the democratic process of the country. The population in general showed an alarming abstentionist tendency in the general elections of the 2003. According to the National Elections 2003 in the first round of elections only 57.90 per cent voted and this was reduced to 46.78 per cent in the second round (Pulso electoral 2004: 1).

Interestingly, in the results of the interviews and surveys of the NPL a different percentage was reflected. 77.14 per cent of the interviewed people said that they had voted and the rest did not do so for diverse reasons. The Guatemalan Evangelicals as well as those of other Latin American countries have shown the importance that their vote can have in general elections. In the election in Peru, President Fujimori won because of the Evangelical vote (Mondragón 1990: 137). The result of the GSNPL on the same subject demonstrated a similar tendency of voting [Table 5.9]. Amy Sherman in her investigation on the intention of the vote in 1993 between two different indigenous communities in the plateau of Guatemala, found a similar tendency. Two thirds of the votes were emitted by Mayan Evangelicals against half of traditional Mayan people. According to Sherman the Evangelicals in Guatemala seem to appreciate more the democracy and pluralism (1997: 143-145).

The laity does not seem to have the same political preferences. This situation far from being negative can help the country's democratic process. According to Freston there is no monolithic organization playing the corporative game among Evangelicals, but a plurality of organizations competing with each other (2001: 302). He emphasizes that perhaps it is good for democracy that the Evangelicals are divided institutionally. Finally, that difference of opinion and political preference can create a greater tolerance between the different groups and strengthen civil society. According to Sherman democratic theory observes a positive connection between religious pluralism and political pluralism. She refers to the capacity of people to tolerate each other mutually in spite of the differences of principles in both camps (1997: 133). Although this data represents a relatively small

percentage of the Evangelical population, it shows a greater interest in exercising the popular vote, and a more conscious attitude in favour of the country's democracy.

Table 5.9 Have you voted in the Guatemalan General Elections?

Options	Frequency	Valid Per cent
Always	377	70.1
Sometimes	45	8.4
Never	106	19.7
It is not worth while voting	10	1.9
Total	538	100

Source: Survey of Neo-Pentecostal lay people 2003

c. Preference for Evangelical candidates

In the last decade the Guatemala Evangelicals have shown a clear preference for Evangelical candidates. Although this tendency underwent some changes the survey shows that the NPL incline towards these candidates in spite of the failures of Neo-Pentecostal politicians in the past. Half of the NPL interviewed said that they would vote in favour of an Evangelical candidate. Others affirmed that they would with certain reservations. That is to say, they would do it if the candidates fulfilled certain requirements such as the following. They would not vote for a candidate just because he is Evangelical. On the contrary, the candidates have to gain their trust before receiving their vote. The candidates moreover need to show integrity, must be people known in civic and professional contexts and have a plan of government. The GSNPL on the same question gave a similar result. Forty three per cent said that they would vote positively without greater reserve, 37.8 per cent affirmed that it would depend on the programme, 9.1 per cent thought that they would not and only 4.9 per cent said that they would vote for them because they were Christians.

An analysis of religious groups in Rio de Janeiro surveyed Evangelicals as to how they choose candidates; 1) vote for an Evangelical candidate; 2) vote for a candidate with good political ideas, or 3) vote for a candidate who will bring life improvements. They chose the second option (ISER 1996: 91). These economic or political surveys of

Evangelicals show that they are not boxed into a single ideological position. Also, some NPL criticized and showed their disagreement towards General Ríos Montt, for his authoritarianism, and the management of his party in government and his role as President of the Congress (from 1999 to 2003). The Pew Forum found a similar result in his studio of ten countries of the world on the relationship between faith and politics of Charismatics and Pentecostals. The analysis says that the 'Majority of renewalists in every country surveyed say that it is important to them that their political leaders have strong Christian beliefs' (Pew Forum 2006 b).

d. Dreams of the politicians

In spite of severe criticism from his opponents, General Rios Montt continues to play an active part in the politics of the country as a member of Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG). Although his party no longer has the strength it once had, he was re-elected as a deputy to Congress in the 2007 elections. According to journalist M. Rodriguez, during the government of the former President Alfonso Portillo, who won the elections by means of the General's party, four billion quetzals were embezzled [Approximately 522,875 million dollars] (Rodríguez Prensa Libre 17 August 2003). Although the General was not accused of corruption, he did not do major things to sue the officials accused of corruption during the government of President Portillo supported by his party. After Portillo's presidential period several functionaries were jailed including at the former comptroller of the nation former member of one of the churches under study. In spite of these accusations against him and the weakening of the General's party, in the 2007 elections his party won fifteen of the seats in the Congress.

In 1990 Serrano's party gained two other candidates linked to the Neo-Pentecostal churches for President. According to data collected by James Grenfell, Serrano's party managed to get twenty Evangelical seats in the Congress (1995: 95). Cantón notes the following people were part of Serrano Elías' government: the Vice-President Gustavo

Espina, four State Secretaries of the Presidency: Antulio Castillo Barajas (Political Business), Guillermo González (Private Affairs), Marco Antonio Lemus (Particular Affairs) y Manuel Conde (General Secretary); as well as two ministers: Fernando Hurtado Prem (Minister of Governance) and Manuel Bendfelt (Development Ministry); as well as some vice-ministers general directors, among others.’ (1998: 109). As noted before Serrano was relieved of duty in 1993.

In the interior of the country, several lay people and some pastors were elected as Mayors through diverse party contacts. Ríos Montt’s party won the elections by popular vote in 1994 with a majority in the Congress. An Evangelical politician from an independent church said that FRG party has contributed to the moral deterioration of the nation and loss of credibility towards the State due to the high degree of corruption that characterized Portillo’s government (IO7).

Even with these previous antecedents the NPL still maintain the idea that politics will bring the social, political and economic changes that the country needs. Following this goal Francisco Bianchi of the IVC and former advisor of Ríos Montt founded the ARDE party and was their presidential candidate in 1999. In 2003 he changed the name to MPV (Movement for Principles and Values) which united with the UD. He was the candidate for the Vice Presidency. According to Bianchi ‘politics does not have to be an appendix but should be seen more as a ‘ministry’. So the church must take a firm stand with regards to politics’.¹²⁵ This political practice affirms that at the outset there needs to be an ‘adequate understanding of the biblical worldview in order to put into practice the principles and values of the Kingdom of God in all spheres of society’ (Aleluya News 5 no37: 12-13). He places those values within the ‘free market’ system which he considers closest to like the ‘biblical economy’ model. From this option he pleads for the reduction of the role of the State because he considers that ‘from the Biblical perspective, it is a small entity with limited responsibilities’ (Aleluya News año 3 no 16: 28-29).

¹²⁵ ‘Stament’ shared In the Foro sobre Evangélicos y políticos. El Shaddai. Guatemala 08.04.03

According to a Jesuit Philosopher, the Guatemalan Evangelical politicians are not well-prepared to govern. He thinks that ‘They lack critical and analytical sense to face the Latin American reality using slogans of neo-liberalism and the capitalist conservatism’ (IO3). Freston emphasizes this fact when affirming that Bianchi frames his political vision within a North American scheme and his party adheres to three basic premises of the Christian right-wing: The idealization of the history of the United States, the reduction of the state and the negation of the explanation of third world poverty in geopolitical and structural terms (2004: 134). In the 2007 elections Bianchi made an unexpected move with regard to ideological affiliation. He supported the candidacy of Alvaro Colom, a centre-left politician who won the elections from General Otto Pérez of a right-wing party.

Fernando Leal of the IVF notes that Christians must assume politics as a part of the Christian life. For him ‘the bible contains the principles of how to govern a nation’ and for that reason the Christians must get involved in politics (LIIVF). When questioned about what he would do if called to govern the country, he indicated that he would like to push for a vision of ‘a nation that had security, justice, abundance and opportunities for all and excellent international relations’. Alongside this vision he indicated a series of steps which need to be taken to get his political objectives which include global tendencies such as the eradication of poverty, respect of human rights, the freedom of the market and the protection of environment.¹²⁶ His exposition, like those of other Neo-Pentecostal politicians, shows certain influences of some authors like Gary North (1987) who promote the application of the laws of the Old Testament as the basis to govern the nations.

Oscar Recinos of the FCG former candidate for Mayor of Guatemala City representing the CGV (Committee of Neighbourhood Guardian)] party emphasized that politics is an imperative for Christians. With a certain sense of triumphalism he said, ‘if we the saints will be called to govern and to judge even the angels, how much more should we not judge and govern something as simple as the things of this earth’. This position is

¹²⁶ In ¿Cuál es la nación que deseo tener? in *Foro sobre Evangélicos y políticos*, El Shaddai. Guatemala 8-4-03.

also reflected in the mentality of other charismatic politicians in other countries of Latin America. Freston mentions the case of Francisco Rossi of Brazil who says, ‘as born again spiritual beings, we are the cream of society. The church is on to higher level to normal people [...] because the church has the answer politicians are looking for’ (1997: 199).

Hugo del Pozo from ESH and former Mayor of the Antigua City notes that with Christians in the political field things will begin to change in the country. If ‘there is justice in this country and if we fight against corruption in every area, things will change’. Pozo states that changes will come as Evangelicals participate in the existing parties instead of forming their own parties. According to his testimony he managed to establish some substantial changes in his period as mayor of Antigua.¹²⁷

According to Manuel Conde former spokesman for the presidency of Serrano Elías and representative of the government in the dialogue with the guerrilla, the Christians must participate in politics not as Evangelicals, but as ordinary citizens sustained by Christian principles (IO8).¹²⁸ His specific proposal is the transformation of the institutions of the State to stimulate development of the country. Sherman in her study of the Evangelicals in Guatemala indicates that they could contribute to broader cultural changes in the country (1997: 139).

Finally, pastor Harold Caballeros resigned his pastorate to dedicate his time to politics. He founded the VIVA political party (Vision with Values) at the end of 2005. This party after collecting all the necessary signatures was registered as a political party. According to those involved this process of forming the committee had been going on for some time. Sometime later Pastor Caballeros was invited to be part of a group called ‘Prosperous Guatemala’ composed of entrepreneurs from ESH as well as other churches

¹²⁷ According to Pozo his administration shut twenty-five brothels and reduced the hours of public alcohol consumption. Alongside these measures he started some alternative projects for tourism. The city of Antigua is the old colonial capital of Guatemala as has been declared Cultural Patrimony of humanity by the UNESCO.

¹²⁸ Conde grew up in a middle class church close to the Central American Mission and later he moved to a branch of the LDG. He founded the “Cambio Nacional” party with whom he participated as presidential candidate for the 2003 elections. His party was cancelled as they did not have the minimum number of votes required by the Electoral Tribunal. After this experience he became the General Secretary of UD party and will participate as their presidential candidate in the 2007 elections.

and Catholic entrepreneurs. This group soon became the base of the VIVA party. According to members, of the committee the project had the vision to form future politicians, create the generation of ideas and analysis of political-economic projects in order to reach the political power in the long term (L8ESH).

The idea is that VIVA will participate in as many elections as possible to have the greater number of seats in Congress in order to approve laws that facilitate public conduction of the State. What motivated Caballeros to leave the pastorate and dedicate himself full-time to politics? Among other reasons is his concern to relate religious revivals to social transformation, the situation of poverty in the country and the Central American region, his studies and preaching on the transforming role of the gospel, and the development of education and social aid projects. When asked how he started out in politics? He said:

Two years ago I became involved in a study of the subject of the poverty. While doing this study I reached the conclusion that my contribution in the church was peripheral, unless I could arrive at a place where decisions are taken for public policies as tools to change Guatemala. In the 2005 I decided to enter the political arena and on the 31st of October of 2006 I resigned pastoral work to be a Presidential candidate (Castillo, Edición Dominical, Nuestro Diario - Guatemala 3 June 2007: 8-10).¹²⁹

This decision of Pastor Caballeros shows in some way a progression of ideas and commitment of some Neo-Pentecostal leaders who could become a social capital to push for social reform in Guatemala. An analysis needs to be carried out of the real motives and the ideology of Caballeros which moved him to seek political power. In spite of disillusionment with politicians like Ríos Montt and his party, the Neo-Pentecostal politicians dream to see 'Guatemala like the New Jerusalem of the world' (Bianchi Aleluya News Año 5 no. 37:12).

¹²⁹ On the occasion of the II Industrial Fair, the private sector of the country met as a forum with the five possible presidential candidates that were at the top of the electoral opinion polls. Caballeros was invited along with the others. They extracted the following synthesis of his economic policies: 'He would decentralize investment and the promotion of competitiveness. He would impulse micro-financing, public-private alliances. Fight smuggling and fiscal evasion, there would be social development, improvement to health, education and food services; he would develop housing and the local productive infrastructure. He would take advantage of human capital for education and training children and training people in the rural and indigenous areas. He would invest in the natural capital of the country, to protect the environment'. ('Decisión', Prensa Libre: Guatemala Thursday 7 June 2007:3). Caballeros in his government outline made plans on how he hoped to confront the problems described.

Some NPL affirm that Ríos Montt and Serrano Elías do not represent the Evangelicals and that they are still waiting for true representatives of their churches to reach political power. Their perspective on the horizon contemplates the idea of changing the country according to the model of the North American society. According to Wilson the failures of Evangelical politicians during the 1980s, the election of Serrano Elías and the last passage of Ríos Montt in politics, demonstrate how little those personalities have determined the course of the Guatemala Evangelicals (1998: 154, 174). He says that they are not monolithic conservatives and their growth could lead to a more community-based participation which could contribute to a stronger and more coherent civil society. Freston says that Evangelical politicians in Brazil and Guatemala have become presidents, government functionaries or politicians without the assistance of Evangelical parties (2004: 132). In other words they do not necessarily depend on the Evangelical vote. On the other hand, Freston says that theocratic Evangelicals see themselves as a vanguard class, an illuminated minority convinced of its right to govern, and that their proposal of one 'Christian nation', is a return to the territoriality of Christianity, supported by the new charismatic theology of territorial spirits (2001: 306-307).

To sum up, the laity thinks that politics is a part of the Christian dominion which needs to be possessed. At the same time, they expressed greater reserve concerning voting for Evangelical candidates. It is, of course, impossible to know to what extent they will maintain this attitude. Mariz affirms that, in the end, 'a brother votes for a brother' (1995a: 203).

In spite of the failures of NPPs in the past, they think that politics is a means to promote the changes that the country needs. This affirmation does not necessarily mean that they have the political proposals to enable the needed changes. Although the Neo-Pentecostal politicians do not depend on the Evangelical vote, they continue looking for

their support.¹³⁰ Equally, the Neo-Pentecostal politicians assume without reserve the postures of the economic neo-liberals, and are exposed to the temptation of the ecclesiastical cooperativeness.

Finally, it is important to consider the presence of NPL and other members of Evangelical churches in civil society. Their presence in associations whether these are political or not, constitutes a contribution to the political and democratic development of the country. This task needs to be developed not only by the Neo-Pentecostals, but also by all Evangelicals that wish to contribute to the development of the country.

7. Relationship with the State

The Church-State relationship has been a critical situation in Guatemala. The Evangelicals have shown a passive and quiet submission to the State as well as participating in some of the State organizations. This section shows the thoughts and attitude of the NPL with respect to the State. They were asked if Christians ought to demand the government to fulfil their duty in favour of the population, and if they consider that it is correct to protest against the government through marches and if they would be willing to take part in any. What follows shows their response to the questions they were asked.

a. The Government must perform its duty

Most of NPL interviewed consider that they have the right to demand the government to fulfil its obligations in favour of the population because is ‘a constitutional right’. These reasoned their point of view in the following way. They emphasized that Guatemalan citizens have the right to demand the government. They think that it is important to make the government hear the peoples’ voice when they do not do things correctly (L4ICV)). They should be demanded to ‘makes good use of the wealth of the State’ (L8ICV), and when ‘they commit injustices to the population’, or ‘commit in corrupt acts as in the case

¹³⁰ A letter from Bianchi’s party shows this tendency. In that moment they said that they had received ‘the unconditional support of the majority of the most important denominational leaders of the country’. In Carta de Acción Reconciliadora Democrática sent to Guatemalan pastors in June 1999.

of Serrano Elías and Portillo, or when the government shows dictatorial attitudes as in the case of Ríos Montt' (L1ESH).

In interviews the NPL emphasized that the government must be demanded to act 'with transparency in the handling of the public goods' (L5ICV). The government has 'to guard the rights of others and not just their own personal needs' (L6ESH), and they must act in favour of 'the interests of the poor'. They also noted that they demand the government because this way changes in favour of democracy can happen (L5LDG). Their opinions reflect a critical attitude to the State. They indicated that demands should be made with suggestions ready at hand. They also pointed out that, if 'we are going to demand the government we must produce proposals' (L5IVF). They feel that it is important 'to have moral solvency' to make a claim (L4IFD).

These perceptions reflect a conscious attitude about their right to make claims of the government. Their openness is in contrast to the vision of most of the pastors who have a more conservative position. This attitude could generate, in the long term, a vision for a more conscious civic participation to strengthen citizen rights. According to Wilson the Guatemalan Neo-Pentecostals are eager to apply the potential of their movement to a more extensive political and social task in the country (1998:146). A similar result was reflected in the GSNPL on the subject. From the all sample, 57.2 per cent said 'yes' against 20.4 per cent that said 'definitively not' [Table 5.10]. However, as it is mentioned ahead, those who said that Christians should demand the government to fulfil their obligations, do not participate in public demonstrations against the governmental authorities.

Garrard-Burnett in her study of Guatemalan Protestantism notes that the Evangelicals had a presence and important participation in the governments of Juan Jose Arévalo and Jacobo Arbenz, without too many restrictions (1998: 64-79). Unlike the Catholic Church, most of the Evangelical denominations made their contributions to the development of the democratic process during those key periods in the development of the country. This attitude suffered a drastic change during the time of the armed conflict. Most

evangelical missionaries and pastors assumed a conservative posture regarding the presence and participation of their members in political issues. Also, the governments of the time imposed with the force of violence a culture of silence. The voices who dared to speak out for justice were silenced.

Table 5.10 Do you believe that Christians can make the government keep their obligations to serve the population?

Options	Frequency	Valid Per cent
Yes	294	57.2
May be	56	10.9
Sometimes	59	11.5
Definitely not	105	20.4
Total	514	100

Source: Survey of Neo-Pentecostal lay people 2003

b. Non-participation in protest marches

Most of NPL interviewed said that they had not participated in a march against the government. In some ways they reflect the tendency of the Guatemalans who do not express much their discomfort with the government. Of the people interviewed only three said that they had participated in public manifestations. One participated in a ‘march against homosexuals’, and in the ‘Friday of mourning’ march against the corruption of the government of Alfonso Portillo supported by the FRG party. Another one participated in syndicate manifestation for ‘injustices that affect the workers’. The third person said that he participated in a national teachers protest march.

The others said that they did not to do it for practical reasons. They affirmed that marches ‘do not produce anything’ (L3IVF). For some it is useless to demand government ‘because their opinions are not taken into account’ (L4FCG). Another informant said that ‘he does not participate in public marches because they finish in civil disturbances’ (L3IFD); and ‘they are dangerous because of the groups of vandals’ that have infiltrated the marches (L2FCG). Another one commented that ‘Christians do not depend on the

government'. They think that the marches 'create anarchy' and some think that the marches are not the best way to demonstrate claims.

Some adduced that 'it is not correct to demonstrate against the government because the authorities are given by God'. Whoever 'is against the government opposes God' (L8FCG). One informant said that 'it is not right to protest unless the government blasphemes' (L2ICV). Finally, others said that it is not right to protest against the government but rather we should pray for it. God will judge every government (L7IFD). Respect and obedience for government authorities reflects the attitude and traditional thinking of Evangelicals and most of the Guatemalan population. This lack of confrontation has been detrimental to the country and has allowed politicians and their parties to use the State dependencies for their own benefits. So some politicians who have been accused of illicit actions against Guatemalan interests continue to be elected. It appears that the Guatemalan people easily forget the politician's slips in the past.

The results of the GSNPL show that 48 per cent against 18.1 per cent affirmed that they would never participate in a march to demand the rights of the population. The interesting thing of the case is that the 33.7 per cent affirmed that they would do it with some reserve [Table 5.11]. The majority of the laity expressed some practical reasons, as mentioned above, not to participate in this class of marches. Perhaps others do not do so because of their social class position. As long as their interests are not being threatened, they do not protest against the situation, neither do they see any need to push for substantial changes in society. According to Stoll most Neo-Pentecostals belong to social classes whose privileges protect the Guatemalan state (1994: 107-108).

With the exception of leaders linked to CIEDEG and other entities of the ecumenical world, the majority of the Evangelicals including the Neo-Pentecostals did everything to avoid open confrontation with the governments of those times. From his analysis of Guatemalan Pentecostalism, Wilson affirms that although Pentecostals have characteristically avoided direct confrontation with the social and political establishment,

they have often asserted their claims to a better temporal life, and in various institutional ways they have addressed their societies' overwhelming problems' (1991: 69).

It would also be possible to speculate that they avoid any confrontation with the government in order not to lose some privileges. Freston from his analysis of politics notes that religion is being used for political purposes, and often politics are being used for religious purposes (2001: 292). The Evangelicals have walked on a tight rope with regards to yielding to the temptation of giving in to the requirements of politicians and the influence of church governments.

Table 5.11 Do you consider that Christian should participate in public manifestations in favour of the population?

Options	Frequency	Valid Per cent
Yes	92	18.1
Yes, but with reserve	171	33.8
Never	244	48.1
Total	507	100

Source: survey of Neo-Pentecostal lay people 2003

C. PERSPECTIVE ON POVERTY

Poverty in Guatemala as in the rest of Central America is one of the most critical problems of most of the population. In 2006 57 per cent of the population were in poverty and 22 per cent in extreme poverty. According to the report of the United Nations, Guatemala has the lowest index of development compared with the rest of Central America [Table 5.12]. As in the rest of Latin American countries the macro economic growth of the country contrasts with the poverty level in which most of the population live. In some countries, members of Pentecostal churches especially are among the poor population.

Keeping this context in mind, the NPL's opinions were sought on the subject. They were asked what they thought was the cause of poverty, and if the church ought to contribute to solving this problem and how to go about it. The main causes of the poverty that the GSNPS indicate, is the lack of initiative and laziness of the people, unemployment,

economic inequality and sin. All these factors represent the 58.5 per cent of the answers as the main causes of the poverty. The answers given reflect a mix of feelings and ideological approaches to the problem of poverty.

Table 5.12 Comparison of human development with other countries

Indexes (per cent)	Guatemala	El Salvador	Honduras	Nicaragua	Costa Rica
Life Expectancy	64	69	70	68	76
Literacy	67.30	77.80	73.40	67.90	95.30
Human development index	0.62	0.7	0.65	0.63	0.8

Source: Report of Human Development. United Nations system for Guatemala 2000

1. Educational factor

According to the NPL the lack of education is the main cause of the poverty. Lack of education means absence of schooling (primary education essentially). Of those interviewed 43 per cent said that this it is the greatest problem in the country. ‘Illiteracy is a huge evil’ that must be eradicated. The lack of education ‘does not allow people to progress’. In Guatemala this is one of the factors that keep the country in poverty. Guatemala occupies the penultimate place in illiteracy in Latin America. According to the report of the World Bank on education approximately 31 per cent of the population does not know how to read or write. Of that population especially the indigenous people and women are at a disadvantage. Children are excluded from education because of the deficiency of schools and teachers, low schooling of the parents or their illiteracy, delayed entrance of the children to the educative system, the high rates of repetition in both of the first two years of the primary education, desertion of the children from school because they must work, and for other economic and social reasons (‘Capítulo 7: Educación y pobreza 2003: 69-73).¹³¹

¹³¹ According to the report ‘Guatemala: la fuerza incluyente del desarrollo humano’ desertion which is highest in the first year of primary is highest in the rural areas. The causes of desertion are: the parents take the children with them to work, temporary emigration, lack of basic school supplies, they do not understand the teacher or the school, is too far away. In this context of exclusion the indigenous women are the most excluded (United Nation Informe de Desarrollo Humano 2000: 137).

They also think that it is not only the absence of schooling but a lack of courage to change their context. They consider that poverty is also due to the Guatemalan mentality of ‘accepting things, the incapacity to make decisions, mediocrity, and not giving the best one can, which are part of the culture (L1IFG). One lay man of a middle class family said that the Guatemalans ‘are culturally programmed to have limitations’ (L4ESH9), which is translated, into a ‘lack of desire to improve, laziness, and down heartedness’ (L3FCG) The NPL affirm that this attitude is deep rooted and is part of the idiosyncrasy which prevents their development in different directions. According to Casaus Arzú these opinions reflect in some way the Guatemalan’s elite point of view on the indigenous people (1995: 21-25). On other hand, the NPL emphasis the way in which the absence of Christian values affects the manner in which one looks at life and faces its problems. The negative paradigms inherited from the Catholic Iberian culture do not help people to improve their socio-economic level. For that reason they ask for a Christian education that will change those values.

The survey that went to the SNPEP emphasized the role of education to eradicate poverty [Table 5.13]. According to NPL education must ‘create a mentality of development and progress for all’ (L5ESH). This position has led them to promote the foundation of schools in urban and rural areas. Of course, a more egalitarian distribution of education is not a guarantee of raising incomes for everyone equally (Ferranti 2004: 178). The educational factor in reality cannot be separated from the other socio-economic problems that affect Guatemalans.

Table 5.13 Educational ideas of Neo-Pentecostal professionals and entrepreneurs

Education and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setting up schools and literacy programmes - The formation of Christian values: work, vision, change of mentality, among others. - Paradigm changes to transform cultural vices
Aid programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of projects: health centres, agriculture programmes among others. - Medical day trips to improve the health condition among the poor - Creation of businesses to provide work
Evangelization and prayer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preaching the gospel to transform people - Teach people to give to others as a part of the love of God - Intercession for the country and the ministry of liberation (exorcism)

Source: Survey of Neopentecostal entrepreneurs and professionals 2003

2. Spiritual factor

The spiritual factor has pre-eminence in the Neo-Pentecostal world. Spiritual warfare is a belief and a tool to explain the evils that surround and afflict them. It is warfare that has been brought from the heavens to earth. Firstly, some lay people think that poverty must result from the fact that people ‘do not fear God’, ‘do not have faith’, or it comes as a ‘consequence of sin’, and ‘bonds’ that limit their economy (L3FCG). This last element occupies a considerable space in Neo-Pentecostal theology.

From their worldview poverty is a curse as according to their teachings ‘a person can be bound’, by a generational curse. This refers to a diabolic force that weighs on a person, family, and community by means of curses or through the presence of demonic spirits. These forces affect negatively all the being of a person, including their social, political and economic surroundings.

The liberation of the curse of poverty is got by means of Spiritual Warfare. According to Wynarczyk and Seman (1995), Sik Hong (2000) and Ocaña (2002), this warfare is the central axis of the Neo-Pentecostal teachings. The NPL believe in the need to transform curses into blessings through spiritual warfare. According to their pastors, ‘God created a system of blessing and the devil corrupted it’. From their perspective

‘poverty is a curse’ from which the believer needs to be released.¹³² The exorcism of the curses and demons who bind finances is an imperative. Ocaña mentions Rita Cabezas who affirms that if somebody wants to prosper then ‘the demons of lack of prosperity, ruin, poverty and misery must be expelled (Cabezas in Ocaña 2002: 92). In some way this manner of interpreting the origin of poverty undermines human responsibility and minimizes the existence of unjust structures which increases the difficulties for people to have more opportunities and generates more poverty.

Secondly several NPL indicated that the way to face up poverty and bring changes to the nation is through the prayer. Prayer is a fundamental part in their ideology and strategy of spiritual warfare. The NPL affirm that prayer is not a passive element, but a powerful tool to ask the intervention of God in a personal life of the nation. The NPS and their churches give priority to prayer and feasting. But prayer is also part of the Protestantism around the world. For example, the Baptist Times published a news article entitled, ‘Prayer is an effective weapon in the fight against the crime’. According to this bulletin, the British Evangelical Alliance organized a forum for 200 police officials in London under the slogan of ‘Hope for London’ which illustrates the interest in the subject of prayer for the inner city communities.¹³³ The NPL challenge the rationalism of modernity that rejected the supernatural world and all belief in demonic forces. In the GSNPL most thought that both praying for a nation as well as providing solutions is necessary.

Thirdly, the NPCs give special attention to wonders and miracles. They believe that the Holy Spirit empowers, heals and provides gifts to transform the life of the born again and will bring a spiritual revival that will transform the country. For them this action is not a reality for the future, but is happening now starting at a personal level. This perspective is not taken into account in sociology or political studies because it seem somewhat irrational

¹³² Harold Caballeros, ‘Redimidos de la maldición de la pobreza’, ESH, Guatemala, Cassette (n.d).

¹³³ Hazel Southam. ‘Prayer is an Effective Weapon in the Fight Against Crime.’ in Baptist Times, London, August 7, 2003. No. 7982.

or subjective. Garrard-Burnett says ‘It is important not overlook the emphasis the NPCs place on miraculous cures to poverty. She underlines ‘That is the way some pastors address the question of poverty, ‘God wants you to be rich’.¹³⁴ According to Sik Hong spiritual warfare is strengthened ‘by the crisis of modernity and with the post-modern proposals, where people feel unable to correct and to reformulate the modern model of life where social inequalities’ persist and get worse’ (2001: 110). Later the subject of the theology of the prosperity will be tackled.

3. Bad state administration

As well as their belief in spiritual warfare, some lay people affirm that the State is responsible for poverty. Just a few of the interviewed NPL said that the corruption in the administration of the State also generates poverty. These indicated that the rural population do not always have ‘political of support’. There are people who do not have ‘opportunities to progress’, do not have ‘jobs’, the correct support is not given ‘to the poor communities’, and the country suffers from a ‘deficient judicial system’. This same tendency is reflected in the GSNPL. 23.6 per cent of the lay people surveyed gave the same answer. Only one informant refers poverty to structural problems based on sociological theory. He said that poverty comes from ‘bad distribution of resources, because wealth is in the hands of too few people’ (L3ICV).

Most of NPL do not mention structural and geopolitical causes of the Guatemalan context. According to the analyses of the UNDP poverty results from a series of exclusions that have their origin in colonial times. These have to do with the exclusion of certain sectors from the labour market, access to land, education, and political exclusion (2000: 27-37). Among these exclusions, the lack of access to land and technological resources for rural people continues to be Guatemala’s ‘Achilles’ heel’. Sixty per cent of cultivable land

¹³⁴ Garrard-Burnett ‘Comment thesis chapter 5.’ Garrard@mail.utexas.edu 24.09.07.

is in the hands of 2 per cent of the population, whereas 80 per cent only have 2 per cent of the land.

The fact that they do not mention the structural problems does not necessarily come from ignorance as many of the interviewees have either secondary or graduate education. It is possible that they say this because of their social class. Freston says that possibly their status or position in the middle and high classes prevents them from seeing these causes. However, the working and lower middle class NPL did not mention the geopolitical dimension either. Perhaps in their case the low economic condition influences them to have less interest or access to education.¹³⁵ Both possibilities are feasible. They probably do not consider poverty from a sociological perspective because they interpret their context in the light of their religious beliefs. Gooren's thesis allows this possibility. He shows this perspective in his doctoral thesis on members of a Neo-Pentecostal church in a marginal zone of Guatemala. Their understanding of poverty arises from the religious perspective,

The Lluvias de Gracia Church has a discourse on poverty that is very implicit. Only one page in the church's Constitutive Charter and Study Guide directly addresses the theme 'most common financial problems', after a section of four pages detailing the virtue, obligation, execution, and biblical foundation of the practice of tithing. Which financial problems can cause members to deny God his rightful part? First, pride, can give them an aversion to work. Second, they spend more than they earn. Third, they try to acquire 'easy money' by gambling, participating in lotteries, or even stealing. Fourth, they borrow too much. Fifth, they want to have what other people have. Sixth, they do not pay their debts. Seventh, they take on responsibility for others people's debts. Eighth, they are afraid to give. What stands out here is how poverty is traced back to individual moral lapses such as pride, theft, jealousy, or lack of discipline [...] Rather than talking about poverty, it is the themes of wealth and excessive dedication to material goods that are addressed, and usually inexplicit terms (1999: 94).

Gooren's analysis throws light on how these churches use religious language to express these ideas about the economy. The result of the GSNPL affirms that the majority of NPL from the Neo-Pentecostal perspective are in agreement with the idea that the church can contribute to eradicate the poverty, violence and corruption [Table 5.14].

To sum up, it is possible to affirm that the NPL are aware of certain problems of poverty and articulate their thinking from their Neo-Pentecostal viewpoint. Nevertheless, they do not talk much about Guatemala's social, economic and political contradictions or

¹³⁵ Interview, Paul Freston, Grand Rapids, 16.01.06.

put it on their agendas, whether from an inability to explain them in their own language or an avoidance of the topic. The majority of the NPL state that the evils of the country need to be confronted through spiritual warfare. This tool helps them to understand and to exorcise the country's problems. However, their emphasis on spiritual forces gives less importance to the human responsibility about the ills of society.

The case of Almolonga is for the NPL a classic example to affirm the place of spiritual warfare as a factor of economic and social development of communities whether they are indigenous groups or not. They pay more attention to the spiritual factor, but they do not give the due importance to the principles of Protestant ethics, and to the positive values of the indigenous culture, which have also been important in their economic and social development. According to Canton their explication of the situations which are affected depends on their social position. She states that how believers explain catastrophes, corruption, violence or poverty, from their biblical perspective, assumes a double function whether they are poor or marginalized people or people from better off areas or folk who participate in the political or economic power (1998: 3).

Table 5.14 Do you consider that the church can contribute to solving the problems such as poverty, violence, corruption?

Options	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	418	81.2
Maybe	32	6.2
Sometimes	28	5.4
They should not get involved with those problems	37	7.2
Total	515	100

Source: Survey of Neo-Pentecostal lay people 2003

4. Change of values

According to the NPL Christian education is the key to change values and to help people to leave poverty. They say that the non desirable values are part of the legacy of the Catholic, Iberian culture. They affirm that 'the culture of mediocrity, ambiguity, pessimism, with no

moral limits, the division of intellectual and manual work needs to be transformed'.¹³⁶ The co-pastor of the ESH in its book 40 Virtudes que lo Harán Triunfar (2002) analyzes the necessity to change the Guatemalan mentality. He thinks that a change of values is fundamental so that Christians and all of the Guatemalans can leave poverty. He affirms that it is important to strengthen the good virtues and to identify and eliminate bad habits for healthy development of a society. He indicates that the class of values and inherited habits determines the type of people and societies. He asks,

Many have asked why there is a great difference in well-being between the countries that were colonized by the English and the countries conquered by the Spaniards and Portuguese. Well among the most important causes of these differences are the cultural factors that characterize the actions of the people: The individuals' and societies' habits, customs, principles, and values and beliefs make them more or less productive beings, in integral sense of word (2002: 12).

Throughout his work he specially contrasts the values of the Ladino cultural legacy with the Anglo-Saxon one in the United States. He emphasizes that values like excellence in work, the frugality, order, hard work, the rational use of time, integrity, and the value of work, among others, must be cultivated and spread among the people to transform their mentality. Finally he claims, 'We must all allow the word of God, the ethics and the morals of these virtues to help us change voluntarily the social paradigm in which we live so that we can leave our children a better future' (2002:12).

It is not just about changing some values but a paradigm shift needs to occur (Caballeros 2002: 131-134). Some NPL insist on the necessity of 'teaching people to be just' (L3IVF) and 'changing ideas through the gospel' (L3ESH). They emphasize the urgent need of 'transferring the biblical principles society' and 'teaching good principles to children such as purity and ethics'. The Evangelical Christians can emerge to compete within the sphere of culture. For them the bible is the starting point. It is through 'preaching that people and families can be transformed'. For that reason the laity link value changes with conversion.

¹³⁶ '¿Cómo Alcanzar el Éxito Integral?' conference given by Lic. Magda de Garrido in a seminar run by the iglesia la Familia de Dios church. Hotel Tikal Futura, June 14th 2003.

On the other hand, lay people underline the need to make attitude changes at a personal level. They said that ‘as Christians we must assume personal responsibility as well as corporate responsibility as the church in the society’, ‘we need to clear the ego and begin to give’, ‘we need to change personally to change the country’. It is urgent ‘to change our mentality as Guatemalans’. We will not go forward unless ‘each one does their part beginning to make changes where we are. In this way we can develop and attack corruption’. Every Christian ‘should be a moral support where he lives providing effective ideas in the economic field’, and ‘give good testimony at work, open to change and be a good leader’. The demand of personal responsibility is a key element in the Neo-Pentecostal and Protestantism contexts. Although this is required especially in the religious field, it can be transferred afterwards to the secular world.

Gifford emphasizes that this element is key in the Protestant world. In his study of the Pentecostalism in Africa, he found that ‘The emphasis on personal decision certainly serves to develop the notion of individualism’ among the people (1998: 347). He emphasizes that without this notion the emergence of a middle-class among them is impossible. Personal initiative is a characteristic of the NPL both within the church context and outside it. It is, of course, important to note that emphasis on the individual can degenerate and turn into individualism which damages the sense of brotherhood and solidarity.

Some studies of communities of the interior show how religious conversion provided them with new values that replaced habits and customs that did not help them in their personal and family life. For example, the studies of Annis (1987), and Paul (1987) Garrard-Burnett (2007) among others, show this positive effect of conversion of the believers in Guatemalan indigenous communities. Protestant indigenous leaders say that they suffered lack of respect, imposition and lack of being understood personally, culturally and in their communities. Cantón says that the NPCs and other Evangelical churches attack and seek to destroy idolatry because they think that it is the main source of

the “curse” upon the country. She boldly points out that the urban elite and those who are near sources of power link prosperity to repenting of sin, and in this case the sin of the Mayan tradition, and so prosperity: a) implies destroying Mayan traditions’. Later she adds, ‘b) this also excludes the Mayans from prosperity [...], as they are the indigenous people who are responsible for the “curse” which has been placed over the country (1998: 282). The NPL emphasize that in order to be able to develop they have to abandon certain values, thought patterns and conduct which they learned from indigenous worldview and the Iberian Catholic culture.

The NPL seek for a sort of reformation of the culture as was observed in the posture of the pastors in the previous Chapter. They are trying to attack the curse of some vices within the Guatemalan culture which flourishes in a context where ethical and moral values are in disarray. Martín states that the Pentecostals do not openly confront political issues. They work slowly and subtly transforming culture in areas such as power and gender issues. Later he underscores, ‘In societies where politics is carried on by corrupt clienteles, a reform of culture through religion may well be the best option the populace has’ (cited in Gifford 2004:181)

Other studies of the religious world like Burdik (1993), Garrard-Burnett (1998), as well as Latin American writers like Octavio Paz (1976) and some Evangelical missionaries like John A. Mackay (1988) and some leaders of the Catholic Church like Monsignor Rodriguez of Honduras (2002) have emphasized the cultural element in their analyses of Latin American problems. These examples show that the opinions of the Neo-Pentecostals, although they may be deficient and incomplete, are not necessarily disconnected from, or outside of the discussion of analysis of the religious phenomenon from the academic world. The NPL have before them the challenge of evaluating if the values, doctrine and life styles of the adherents adjust to the values of the Kingdom of God found in the gospel.

5. Impulse of social programmes

What the NPL suggest to do in favour of development? Some of them say that is necessary to create different social programmes to face poverty and to contribute to the development of the country. They indicated that ‘what we must do to change this country is to take the church to society through projects of social aid’. This implies for some ‘committed and organized participation in society’. They also pointed to the need to develop ‘health programmes’, ‘education projects’, programmes of ‘aid to families who need food’, and ‘the provision of psychological aid to families who are affected by violence in the country’. One informant commented that ‘self sustainable projects need to be promoted based on the providence of God’, such as ‘producing vegetables’, ‘or small businesses created diminish unemployment’. According to them poverty will be diminished with the ‘establishment of small companies to generate jobs’, as well as an improved social conscience among entrepreneurs who need to pay just wages.

These opinions in certain cases have taken form and spirit in small projects which some people are developing. For example a young couple from the IVF church shared with the researcher two projects which emerged for two different routes. They started a small yoghurt firm in order to support their family and to provide work for others. The second project came about due to family needs. They founded a centre for children with Down’s syndrome because they have a son with this condition. The researcher was able to see them on several occasions leading the worship and encouraging others to find and rest in the power of God. For them this experience of God is what changes and transforms the mind and behaviour of believers to help others in need. Miller & Yamamori (2007) point out that this phenomenon extends to different parts of the world. They found several Pentecostal churches where revival has also touched the social sphere of mission.

The opinions of NPL about social programmes show a proactive vision in society which is part of their religious experience. They and their families have managed to move up in the workforce. Gooren in his study among a small sample of Guatemalan

entrepreneurs shows, that religious experience and values helped them gain enterprise vision as well as to develop as people (1999: 99-148).

According to the survey that went to the SNPEP, when asked the question ‘Does your church encourage its members to participate in the activities of the national life of the country?’ The majority responded that ‘yes’ it does (Table 5.15). Some interviewed entrepreneurs expressed the idea of promoting businesses for personal development and the possibility of generating jobs. Some pastors have their own businesses that according to them help them to generate self support in order to give their time to the pastorate. The studies of Amy Sherman (1997) and Gooren (1999) describe the contribution of Protestantism to the spreading of small entrepreneurs.

Table 5.15 Does your churches encourage its members to participate in the activities of the national life of the country?

Options	Frequency	Valid Per cent
Yes	43	81.2
Sometimes	6	11.3
No	4	7.5
Total	53	100

Source: Survey of entrepreneurs and professionals 2003 (SNPEP)

D. SOCIETY AND DEMOCRACY

The development of the democracy in Guatemala has faced diverse obstacles throughout its history. The construction of the social structure and the conformation of their national identity have been critical in this process, especially because the contradiction ladino/indigenous people in good measure structured the Guatemalan society. Racist attitudes towards the indigenous peoples since colonial times have hindered their development as persons and communities.

On the other hand, the role of women has been subordinated to that of men. Machismo attitude has resulted in male domination over women who have been relegated to the background. Indigenous people and women have emerged with many difficulties in

the context of present society. For that reason it is important to know the thinking of the Neo-Pentecostal with regard to indigenous people and women as they are the principle actors in the construction of the Guatemalan community and the development of democracy and the socioeconomic advance of the country.

1. Perspective on indigenous people

As has already been mentioned the subject of race in Guatemala is critical because it is a multiethnic country. In their passage through history the indigenous people have suffered the worse part. Although things have changed, they continue to face serious social, political and economic deprivations. Although the Constitution grants them equal rights, they suffer from diverse forms of exclusion. The Ladino maintains a sense of superiority over the indigenous people. The racism continues to be a problem in the country.

Casaus Arzú in her study Guatemala: Linaje y racismo analyzes how the oligarchy in Guatemala perceives indigenous culture. When asked, ‘Do you consider that the indigenous people have their own culture?’ They answered in the following way: 65 per cent responded affirmatively and 35 per cent said ‘no’. Some said ‘no, it is not a culture only customs or beliefs’. When asked, ‘do you consider that the indigenous people could contribute some elements to western culture?’ they responded as follows. Sixty per cent said that they could not contribute anything and 40 per cent answered something. When asked, if the indigenous people are integrated in the economic and social development of the country, they responded thus. Eighty per cent said that they are not and only 17 per cent affirmed that they are integrated (Casaus Arzú 1995: 249-251). Their answers reflect the feeling of rejection, lack of being valued and an attitude of superiority towards the indigenous peoples.

Some Guatemalan journalists look for ways of solving the problem of racism. For example, a director of one of the well known newspapers of the country says that ‘This task must include the identification of racist or discriminatory attitudes, thoughts and

feelings, which are often considered almost natural, both by those who discriminate as well as by those who undergo discrimination'.¹³⁷

What do the NPL think about the indigenous people? In order to gather their opinions, they were asked the following question, 'do the indigenous people contribute to the development of the country or are they an obstacle in this process?' This question was asked to perceive their understanding and attitude towards the indigenous person and his communities. Especially because the majority of the population of the NPCs interviewed recognize themselves as Ladinos.

The researcher discovered in their opinions a double tension and an open attitude towards the indigenous people. They affirmed that the indigenous people contribute positively to the development of the country, but on the other hand, they displayed some prejudices in their opinions towards the indigenous people and their role in society. The GSNPL was asked the same question which gave a positive result as far as their participation in the society (Table 5.16).

Table 5.16 According to your opinion, the culture and indigenous communities contribute to the development of the country?

Options	Frequency	Valid Per cent
Yes	361	71.3
May be	60	11.9
I do not know	36	7.1
No	49	9.7
Total	506	100

Source: Survey of Neo-Pentecostal lay people 2003

a. Recognition of dignity

Most of NPL thought that the indigenous person is a hard worker with a spirit of initiative. Some commented that 'they work hard', they 'always have contributed to the development of the country'. The indigenous people 'produce food for all through their work'. 'All the people who live in the capital city depend on them as far as agriculture is concerned'

¹³⁷ Prensa Libre. Editorial, En el día de los pueblos indígenas. Guatemala, 09/08/2003.

because ‘they have are responsible for agricultural production’. Others said that they contribute to the development of the country through their ‘arduous work and intelligence in all the areas’ of the social and economic life of the country. Although many ‘do not have education they work hard’, and ‘they are a productive people’. One informant affirmed that ‘they are better organized and they are entering in the national sphere’. Another one commented that the ‘indigenous people are doing better than many ladinos’.

Two lay people made positive comments about Rigoberta Menchú, the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize winner, as a good example of how to make a contribution to the country.¹³⁸ Other informants mentioned the indigenous town of Almolonga to illustrate the same idea. This western town of the Quiche ethnic group has been promoted as ‘miracle city’ within the Neo-Pentecostal world. They exhibit this town as a sample of spiritual, social and economic transformation for the nations. According to Winger this population experienced a dramatic change as a result of a religious revival in the 1980s (1998: 29-240). People left a series of vices, customs, habits and pagan beliefs. Their conversion brought a new ‘work ethic’ that produced economic renovation and community transformation. The studies of Amy Sherman (1997) and Virginia Garrard-Burnett (2007) in San Antonio Aguas Calientes, San Pedro la Laguna, Quiche and Almolonga, show this same result, but they put the values of religious conversion alongside the contribution of the culture and the indigenous community.

b. Prejudices

A smaller group thought differently from the rest. Their perspective reflects certain prejudices that prevail in the general context of Guatemalan society. They expressed that

¹³⁸ During the last decade the indigenous people have entered some new spaces. Some have occupied key seats in government and other leadership positions within the Guatemalan society. This advancement has come through their initiative as well as a concession of the system. Above all, the peace treaty signed in 1996, and the recognition of the Nobel Peace prize for Rigoberta Menchu Tum. Women like Rosalina Tuyuc are leading the committee for widows CONOVIGUA, challenged the army with their marches through the streets of the Capital asking for explanations with regard to the way that their husbands disappeared and in their struggle for the indigenous woman. The Ministers of Education and Culture in the FRG government were occupied by indigenous people from the Quiche and Cakchiquel ethnic groups. In the same way there are several indigenous deputies sitting in Congress.

the 'social resentment' of the indigenous people demonstrates that they 'do not contribute to the development' of the country. According to them the indigenous people 'contribute only partially, because they cannot wait for solutions'. They 'want things to change by force'. Their 'racism and disorganization do not help development'. These perceptions leave to one side the history of marginalization of the indigenous people who fight for their vindication and social, economic and political development.

Others said that the indigenous people who arrive in Guatemala City 'do not contribute because they soil the city, squat in slums, and do not worry about education' (L4IFG), 'preventing development through ignorance'. Obviously the fact is that young indigenous people do not study because they must work from very early in life or because the parents cannot maintain their studies. Another informant said that 'they contribute very little. It would be better if they kept outside. They make almost no contributions. It is sad to see so much potential and so little fruit. The indigenous town must change their mentality of poverty and paternalism' (L3EHS).

Some lay people commented that the indigenous people 'do contribute to development', but 'their protests do not help'. Some commented that 'to be a multilingual country divides us too much'. At the heart of this idea lies the thought that it would be better to assimilate the indigenous people into the Spanish speaking culture to integrate their development. In general, the pastors expressed open rejection of their pagan customs because they are distant from the Christian message.

These opinions do not take into account the good things that come from indigenous culture and communities, nor the lack of economic opportunities, resources and land which many indigenous people suffer. Without trying to generalize, these opinions do seem to reflect the unpleasant ways of the traditional elite of the country. According to Casaus Arzú 'The stereotype of the "Indian" of the present oligarchy does not differ much from that of colonial times' (1995: 206-207). Severo Martínez (1973) says that this attitude is not only to be found among the elite, but within the ladino population in general.

Only a few of the lay people shared the opposite view and touched slightly the structural problem that affects the indigenous communities. One lay person emphasized the indigenous people rather than being ‘obstacles to their development have been oppressed, marginalized, and rejected’ (L5ESH). The indigenous people ‘contribute to the country. They are our roots’ and affirmed that far from their languages being a disadvantage, ‘it is an advantage’ (L1LDG). They note that ‘there are many things that we can learn from them, very good things’ (L2ICV). Finally, another informant emphasized that ‘their request for land is valid’ (L5LDG). They have a right to demand this. These perceptions show an attitude which is more conscious of the indigenous context and an opening towards them and their right of vindication.

c. Community of fellowship

In spite of differences of opinion the NPL show a more open attitude towards indigenous communities. A good number of lay people expressed with all naturalness, that they ‘are our brothers and sisters’. The researcher in visits to these churches observed the presence of people and indigenous families within these communities. Women dressed in their typical clothes accompanied by husband and children participate in the services, activities and projects. In the ESH Pastor Mariano Rixkajché the Calvario church of Almolonga was greeted and welcome from the platform by the senior pastor, and his wife was seated at the front of the altar.

The researcher observed a similar situation in the Rhema Ministries, founded at the beginning of the 1980s, in the city of Johannesburg. He travelled to South Africa to attend an International Congress there, and took advantage of this opportunity to learn what was happening in that church as a point of interest for the research of NPCs in Guatemala. When he visited the church in 1999 the pastors was Ray McCuley. The church was flourishing and housed some 8,000 people. The researcher entered the church building with an image of everything that Apartheid had done to damage the South African nation:

Discrimination and exploitation in their own country marked the life of millions of Africans for many decades. However, the scene that he was able to observe in this visit was surprising. A multitude of believers both black and white were sitting together singing, worshipping, and listening to the message in the Afrikaans. It was possible to feel in the atmosphere the sharing together of brothers and sisters. This church was combining charismatic revival with a vision of holistic service. This church has various ministries serving the communities around and about.¹³⁹

The following experience was enjoyed by the researcher in the one of the congresses of the ESH the researcher observed the joyful participation of a group indigenous men and women with their children from the ESH church of Santiago Atitlán in the department of Sololá. With their colourful clothing the Zutuhil ethnic group danced and sang next to the rest of the congregation. The men too used their ethnic dress, which could imply that they were believers with some resources [Among the Guatemalan indigenous communities different social strata can be observed. The majority live in poverty or extreme poverty]. They were hugged with the same enthusiasm as the other members of the church. This image is repeated in other Evangelical churches in the urban and rural areas and they are all called brothers and sisters. As was indicated in Chapter three most of NPCs have indigenous churches inside the country. Indigenous men and women now have more opportunities to exert leadership in indigenous and Ladino churches. For example, the senior pastor of Miel church Gaspar Sapalu come from a Zutuhil ethnic group [a division of the original Elim Church in Guatemala City].

The term ‘brother and sister’ is fundamental in the religious language and Evangelical theology. The example that the Apostle Paul gives in the New Testament of Philemon and his slave Onesimus shows the radical change from slavery to a ‘brotherhood in Christ’. It indicates the new relationship that the person who has been born again

¹³⁹ Among the projects which the Church magazine shares is ‘Operation Mercy’ which the pastor of the Church Ray McCauley coordinated in response to the genocide which took place in Rwanda in 1986, also the ‘Rhema Paradise’ Project for Street Children and a Children’s Home where approximately 250 attend each year.

acquires when introduced to God's people. This community helps him to develop to a new identity and a sense of belonging in spite of social and racial differences. It provides a sense of brotherhood for him that opens up the possibility of relationships and a process of integration at the individual and community levels. A woman, a high middle class professional and director of one of the ESH School shared her perceptions along this line. When asked her opinion about the indigenous people and their culture in the country she said,

God made all the men of the same blood, of a single race. This is my position as far as the different ethnic groups. We are all equal. The circumstances are different, some are urban others rural, some grew up in good homes with different beliefs. There are Protestants, Catholics, and Muslims, all types of classes, indigenous people and Ladinos. We are men and women created in the image and likeness of God. All of us are equal. The school in no way vetoes the entrance of indigenous people neither is it going to happen. What do I think about their contributions and ideas? I have great and wonderful memories of indigenous teachers in the school where I studied. No problem, zero, and the same with people and university professors. Every one is equal in the university. There are no differences between the men. What there is, are different opportunities. (L7ESH).

Her perception shows a clear understanding of the theological basis with regard to the dignity of the indigenous people and other groups of people which contrasts with the opinion commonly found among the rest of the population. At the same time, she indirectly states that the critical situation of the indigenous people is due to the difference in opportunities; but she does not mention the socio-economic problems, which the Guatemalan indigenous population has lived through for decades. Steigenga in his study on gender equality in conservative Christian churches, note that it is not the religious connection that generates the change of perspective and treatment of woman, but their belief that all human beings are created in the image of God, among other doctrines (1999: 174-186). Of course, this opening, brotherhood and space for leadership towards the Guatemalan indigenous people, does not mean that the social differences between ladino and native are being overcome in these churches. In spite of this situation it is possible to say that the position and attitude of the NPCs as well as that of the rest of Evangelicals could contribute in the creation of a more tolerant society.

Gifford when commenting on the public role of the African Pentecostal churches notes that they can play a role in breaking down the ethnic barriers as the intensity of 'conversion' confers a new identity which transcends other identities. Later he emphasizes that this identity can help to promote democratic virtues like tolerance, respect, moderation, cooperation and commitment (1998: 347). In this same line of thought Freston says that Evangelical conversion 'involves making a profound break with cultural patterns of relationships between the sexes' which is an important dimension of democratization (2001: 304).

This effect can also be transferred to overcoming certain racial barriers in the Guatemalan context. It can also be said however that the rejection of the NPL of 'indigenous customs and idolatries' could harm their appreciation about their culture, and could create in the future, a certain amount of conflict with the indigenous communities. This could be true especially in the light of the indigenous claims to their ancestral rights that imply the preservation of places, cults and customs that the Neo-Pentecostals resist. Gifford sees the same danger in the African Pentecostals that demonize Islam (1998: 347).

Cantón affirms that idolatry places the indigenous people under fire of the Evangelicals and the military. She underlines that Evangelicals centre their attack on idolatry attacking both the Catholics and specially the Mayan traditions. The middle class NPL say that the indigenous people are responsible for the curse which weighs over the country because of their idolatry. She affirms, 'It is the great paradox that the underdogs who as the principle victims are seen as those who are largely responsible' (1998: 233).

Similox from a different angle states about the Evangelicals that Protestantism has been in conflict with and destroyed Mayan traditions (cited in Solares, 1993:120-21). The supposition behind evangelism is to take them out of idolatry and convert them to the new faith. He emphasizes the damages caused by Protestantism to the indigenous communities, but he does not mention its contribution. Other Evangelicals from different indigenous communities, as has been already stated, testify to the benefits they have received from the

Evangelicals in spite of their limitations (Paredes 2000, Gutiérrez 1997). Suazo points to a process which is open and conciliatory. He says: 'It is certain that in the past the indigenous forms of expression were rejected as being 'pagan' but little by little the Evangelicals are learning to understand and respect these expressions and to accept them as a natural, and completely compatible with the Christian faith' (2006: 284).

Summarizing, the NPL express a similar tension that which can be observed inside the Guatemalan social context with respect to indigenous communities. Nevertheless, the opening and spaces for brotherhood among them could help to promote their dignity and development in benefit of the communities and the development of a plural and multiethnic identity. Both the indigenous culture and the western or ladino culture have good points, neither is totally wrong.

2. Dignity, promotion and role of the woman

The matter of gender subject is often controversial in the Third World countries, mainly because women do not always receive the respect they deserve or have equality of opportunities. The attitude of 'machismo' has been an obstacle hindering the development of women in different ways.¹⁴⁰ In the Guatemalan social structure most women face this problem which affects their dignity, development and human promotion. Gooren notes that Guatemalan 'machismo', with poverty and alcoholism, has contributed to the deterioration of the family and has forced many women to work for the survival of their families (1999: 72).

The situation of the indigenous women of the rural area exemplifies how this limits women. They undergo the deepest deprivations of social marginalization. The report of the World Bank indicates that 63 per cent are illiterate, and that literacy progress in the case of women is twenty years behind the men ('Capítulo 7: Educación y pobreza' 2003: 69).

¹⁴⁰ Elaine Storkey (1985) gives a detailed analysis of the pros and contras of feminism and a critique of the way in which the role of women is handled in Protestant churches in What's Right with Feminism London: SPCK, 1985. Olive Bank (1989) has written a historical study of how evangelicals have contributed to the movement in favour of women in Faces of Feminism.

Another problem related to 'machismo' is domestic violence. The women suffer this in silence as they do not demand their rights often from fear of the retaliation from their husbands and through shame. In Guatemala hundreds of women have been assassinated in last the three years without their murderers being discovered or judged.¹⁴¹ Most these deaths are related to the violence of the drug traffic, gangs of youths and sexual abuse.

What produces his lack of equality and the exclusion of women from public life and the making of decisions? According to 'Indicators of gender analysis 2006' it is due to 'gender motives which have strong roots in the division of the work force, family relations, perceptions, the roles of men and women, in expectancies and the daily practices within the homes and the communities, in other words in the culture' (INE 2006 Guatemala).

Other analyses affirm that the Protestantism in America has contributed to the vindication and promotion of the woman. Flora's early study on Colombian Pentecostalism among lower and working class women states that Pentecostalism strengthens the traditional status of women with accompanying benefits and penalties. Later she points out that the Pentecostals and their organizations 'have the potential for infusing in women the self-confidence and skills to act to bring about social change' (1976: 202). Brusco (1995) in a study made in Colombia, notes that conversion has been the key to change 'macho' attitudes in favour of the woman.

Equally, Tarducci (1994) in her study of Pentecostal women in Argentina affirms that Pentecostalism serves the practical interests of women in popular sectors although it legitimizes the power and authority of the men. Sherman in a study made in Guatemala points to the fact that the Evangelicals, as an alternative community, elevate the status of the women (1997: 156).

What happens within the context of the Neo-Pentecostal churches about women? Which is the perspective of the NPL of dignity, role and promotion of women? In order to

¹⁴¹ Violent death of women in the last years in Guatemala points to lack of appreciation and respect of legal rights and personal dignity. From January to June 2003, 770 women were murdered in Guatemala. Gabriela Barrios notes that to leave criminals unpunished shows contempt towards women ('Indiferencia, el peor crimen contra la mujer' in Revista Domingo, Prensa Libre, 24 de agosto de 2003).

get their opinion on the matter both lay men and women were asked what they thought was the role of women? Must they just work in their homes or can they develop as other women outside their homes? The following is a summary of their answers.

a. Freedom in the exercise of gender/sex

The perspective of the lay men

According to the NPL interviewed women must take care of the home and also have the opportunity to exert a profession. During the surveys the researcher talked to several ESH and LDG couples about social issues as well as the roles of women. In the three instances they showed freedom and respect mutually while discussing the issues. In the GSNPL the surveys showed similar results [Table 5.17]. The men showed a positive and open attitude towards women. A male informant expressed emphatically that woman ‘was created in the image and likeness of God and must have the same opportunities’ (L5IVF). This perception places a theological foundation on which to base the principle of equality between man and woman. It raises implicitly the idea that women have certain intrinsic personal rights according with the universal declaration of the human rights.

Another male informant said that ‘God does have a call for them’. This means that women have a role in developing the church’s mission as well as a personal call as women. Here their rights are not considered to be a human concession, but a vocation that God grants to the woman to develop their human potential: ‘Women have a role to play at home and in society’ (FCG). That is why some of the male informants commented that the women must do well like the Nobel Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú (IFG). The mention of her name is very significant as she is an indigenous woman in a context where racism is present in different expressions of the social and political life of the country. On other hand, another male ICV informant said that ‘there are some very capable women’. His posture reflects a certain attitude of superiority as it shows that so there are some but not

all are capable. On the contrary, another lay man emphasized that women ‘have more capacity than men’.

Table 5.17 Role of women: according to their point of view

Options	Frequency	Valid Per cent
Dedicate themselves only to their husband and home	28	5.4
Serve in their homes and have a profession	45	8.6
Work outside home and serve in the church	20	3.8
The three options	423	80.8
They did not answer	7	1.4
Total	523	100

Source: Survey of Neo-Pentecostal lay people 2003

At the same time, they also shared certain fears about the idea that the wife assumes both responsibilities simultaneously. A certain concern is perceived about the results of feminism which overemphasizes the role of women outside the house. A male informant points out, ‘Perhaps’ they said ‘it would be better than she remains in house to raise the children’ (ICV). It would be good that that ‘she can train in something if she does not have obligations in the home’. Another male informant said, there is no problem that ‘she is involved with a profession, as long as she does not neglect her home’ (FCG). A woman informant stress, women ‘should have as a profession being a housewife and take care of the children. If there is need then they may go to work’. According to the Neo-Pentecostal and Evangelical mentality, the man must work to maintain the home and the woman must be dedicated to the home and the care of the children. They emphasize with these statements the idea that she is the mother, the one that takes care of the education of the children. Of course this posture has been modified due to the need in society for both partners to work to complete the family budget. In Guatemala and the rest of Latin America many women must work to help support the home because the wage of the husband is not sufficient or on account of the husband’s irresponsibility in maintaining the home. In other cases, unmarried mothers must work to maintain their children and must

assume the role of mother and father. In some cases, the money received from the fathers is not enough or the fathers refuse to recognize their paternity. One of the male informants showed certain resistance to the idea of women performing a double role. He said that 'in spiritual realm the woman is to be the ideal helper. The woman must work in house to administer it. Women's liberation is not a biblical concept for society' (IFG). A male informant from the ICV noted that in his church 'women being in subjection to men are almost a doctrine'. Nevertheless, he said women are respected and are leaders the church.

A balance in the roles is needed. He reasons his position in the following way,

The woman was created by God and if the woman is acting against the design that God has established then there is an overload and eventually the situation is not sustainable and men need to react. I believe that it is not discrimination, in the case of decisions that men delegate partially to women. But there comes a time in which we men must say to our wives 'look my love, excellent, now I have to take responsibility as head of the home'. This should not be confused with enslaving women or denying them their development or participation. This is how this doctrine must be handled with talent, criteria, discernment and based on principles of the word of God and in this sense the development of women is valid and is necessary. They need to be given their participation but not in a way contrary to what they were designed for (L6ICV).

Cantón says that formally the patriarchal model is a reality, but in fact in practical terms Evangelical women play an important active role in their religious communities and they are not excluded from any function within the church, except in some cases from being pastors (1998: 123).

The perspective of Lay women

The women interviewed think that both men and women 'have the right to develop intellectually and have a job. They underscored that if the woman is able then 'she must have a profession, and must be developed in all the areas of life'. A housewife says the woman must take care of her home, but due to the difficult situation 'she often must work' (IFG). One woman informant points out, the woman must 'contribute to the budget as part of being an ideal helper' (IFG). A Bilingual Secretary of Shaddai church affirmed, 'I believe that women can develop, 'but the children are her priority' (ESH). She underlines, that 'it is a blessing to take care of the home' and not to neglect it. Then, emphasized that

‘society is as it is because mothers do not instruct their children’. Another lay woman comments, although women can assume both roles, ‘their main task is the home’ (ICV).

For women it is evident that they recognize the role that they have at home, but they are also conscious that they ought to participate in society. A mother said, ‘I dedicate my time to my children, but I believe that women can contribute to society’ (ESH). A woman journalist by profession said, women must be involved in society because ‘they are able to run the home, study and work’ (FCG). According to a housewife ‘women are worth the same as men’ and for that reason they can assume both roles (FCG). A wife points out that the woman can play a role of wife as a professional. Later with a certain sense of complaint she emphasizes in front of her husband that the wife needs to ‘stop being the maid of the house’ (LDG).

These opinions show a somewhat balanced criterion with regard to the diverse roles which they play in and out the home. In the foundation is their new identity with Christ which provides dignity as a being created in the image and likeness of God.

b. Care and spaces for leadership

Spaces for women

The women in the Neo-Pentecostal context have different spaces to exert certain amount of leadership. In these churches, the pastor’s wife is recognized as pastor although the husband has the authority. Women in general develop different roles leading education projects, social aid programmes and pastoral ministry. One lady is the present senior pastor of the ESH church. There is another lady pastor who coordinates the prayer ministry. The associate pastors’ wives are recognized in the churches as pastors who develop their ministries alongside their husbands. This also occurs with the founding pastors with the exception of Verbo church. The wife of the former senior pastor of ESH comments

We thank the Lord because my husband has given a lot of space to women. He has raised us up and given us a place to serve. And, we try to share this with all our churches. We have discovered that we have many openings [...] It is important to give woman their place. We do not think that God came to exclude people, but to include [...] God is now raising women, allowing them to be seen. It is important that women

realize this, and also then men need to be aware of what God wants of us, and where we can arrive to. [...] The spiritual authority is very important for us. Under these limits, here we say the woman can preach and minister. My husband has ordained my mother and me as pastors (A9ESH).

In ESH the lady pastor is in charge of the preaching which she shares with other members of the pastoral team. Some women preach from the platform like the men in these churches. Two other lady leaders who have assumed distinct ministries in the church preach also in this church. They also allow visiting women speakers to use the pulpit. On two different occasions the researcher heard women preaching from the pulpit. But he did not observe any woman in any of the other churches visited preaching.

The researcher observed that in churches like 'Fuente de Agua Viva' in Carolina in Puerto Rico, the Rhema church in South Africa or some of the NPCs in Guatemala, women also have a pastoral ministry alongside the men. From the Pentecostal context, Janet Everts notes that it is rare to see Pentecostal women in the pulpit in the Assemblies of God. She states, 'Despite the large numbers of women ordained in the history of Pentecostalism, the current picture is not necessarily encouraging for Pentecostal women (1999: 314). A similar situation happens among churches belonging to the mainline denominations in Guatemala. Most of the pastors are men.

IVC Churches do not usually provide spaces for women to become pastors and they may not preach. According to some informants of this church, 'women are to support their spouses, they can do many things but they are not allowed to preach from the platform' (L7ICV). There they do not receive title of pastor either. The ICV have organizations for the woman like one called 'the New Woman' which provides training, education in the bible and development of manual abilities. The ministry 'Sígueme' [follow Christ] of FCG promote activities of evangelism for women and as well as gaol visitation. A survey led for Pew Forum found in Pentecostal churches that,

Pentecostals in six of the countries surveyed are more willing than the public overall to allow women to serve as pastors or church leaders. This pattern, however, does not generally extend to other gender issues; where there is no consistent pattern differentiating Pentecostals from others (The Pew Forum 2006b).

The testimonies of the NPL and the data of the survey show the openness that the women have to fill roles previously occupied by men. In 2004 the LDG church started a series of three monthly encounters aimed at motivating a 'change of mentality in Guatemalan women' so that they could achieve more. In the event held in March 2004 1300 women participated (Ramírez Prensa Libre 2004: 10).

Care for women and wives

These churches dignify and promote women through their programmes related to family issues. The woman is promoted as a person, housewife, wife and professional through the family. Family disintegration through divorce or abandonment, infidelity of the men, and the emergence of unmarried mothers are acute problems that affect women and their families. This situation impels the NPCs to provide programmes for marriages, parents and young people. For example, 'Marriage is for Always', or 'Marriage in Victory' programmes promote the spiritual, emotional and family development of the couple. They comprise an important part of their ecclesiastical agenda. Vinay and Colleen Samuel affirm that the reconstruction of families is an essential part of holistic mission, and not only a palliative assistance type of measure that does not resolve their issues into transforming action (1993: 5-7).

In his visits to NPCs the researcher found several articles and announcements that promote good relations between couples and the family development. In FCG an announcement had the motto 'Refresh your relationship as a couple!' They invited the couples to participate in a reasonably priced retreat which they could pay back during a period of three months. A bulletin of ICV had as the central article Let's take care of our spouses whose content encouraged the couples to look after each other in times of disease. In LDG also take care of marriages from their own perspective. Their senior pastor developed a series of subjects to give orientation to couples within the marriage.¹⁴² Although he emphasizes the authority of the husband and the subordination of women, he

¹⁴² Pastor Edmundo Madrid in 'Seminario para Matrimonios' (n.db.) Instituto Bíblico Lluvias de Gracia

notes that that authority does not mean authoritarianism, and emphasizes that the man must win it with love, and that violence disqualifies his authority. Although the demand that the wife and children should be submissive may appear to be domineering, it does not necessarily reflect the patriarchy that David Maxwell observes in the context of Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe (2006:156).

Martin within this context affirms that the atmosphere generated by the Evangelical religion helps break the vices of 'machismo' (1990: 182). This brings a more tranquil atmosphere, and nourishes non-violence, education, and is against the aggressive exploitation of women. By assumption, he notes that all the Evangelical groups are not always successful in promoting women or stopping 'machismo'. Steigenga in his analysis carried out among Catholics and conservative Protestants in Costa Rica, Guatemala and Venezuela, show that Christians start off from biblical convictions related to the woman, which could form the foundation to support equality of gender in the political sphere (1999: 173,174,183).

Change of perspective of men

The conversion of the man reframes his vision and role in the home benefiting his wife and family. Both men and women are willing to take roles which previously were delimited for one or other sex. When a lay man was asked about the role women he shared that his conversion helped him to stimulate the development of his wife. He commented that 'everything changed after my conversion to Christianity, since then I have always encouraged her to be successful in her work as a secretary and then later as management assistant. She is going to be very successful in whatever field she is in'. Later he emphasized, 'Each person's potential should be realized when there is mutual agreement'. Later he shared with the researcher with tear in his eyes about the change that had operated in his life since his conversion:

[He indicated that] 'I was a disordered man, surrounded by the vice of alcohol and I gave my wife many problems. I attended the church invited by her and some time later God changed my life'. [Then he said] 'In spite of my bad conduct and lack of support for my

family, my wife did not leave me and always supported to me. Today I am a different, responsible person and who takes care of his family' (L8LDG).

To sum up, it can be affirmed that the NPS promotes women's dignity and provides certain spaces for them to exert leadership. Their belief in male authority over women does not necessarily prevent them from encouraging the role of women, but it does not mean either that while recognizing their role they would transfer this immediately to the widest contexts of society. Also, this new perspective for women does not mean necessarily that all wives are treated well, that men assume roles that women usually carry out, or that women are never abused. A deeper study is needed in order to know more about these issues.

E. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPROVEMENT

Bernardo Kliksberg affirms that religions have an impact on the present social agenda around the world. He indicates that, 'Beyond any theoretical hypothesis on the matter, important sectors of the religious world are acting every day in a very concrete way to confront problems'.¹⁴³ Mariz from the analysis of poverty in Brazil emphasizes that 'Pentecostalism has been efficient in supporting individuals in situations of extreme deprivation or family crisis', and for that reason, he affirms that the analysis of their role 'in the daily fight of confrontation with poverty can contribute to understanding the process of cultural and social change in the poor classes' (In Benjamín Gutiérrez 1995: 204- 218).

Martin maintains that the Evangelical religion and economic advance often go together and when they do it seems that they mutually lean and reinforce one another (1990: 206, 219). He underlines that Pentecostalism, whose central axis constitutes a network of brothers and sisters, especially causes social and economic advance between the poor. Gooren in his study on Pentecostal lower class entrepreneurs (as well as some

¹⁴³ 'El impacto de las religiones sobre la agenda social actual', in *Instituciones y Desarrollo Institucional para una Gobernabilidad Democrática*. Edición 19. 10/1/ 2006. Available at <http://www.iigov.org/id/article.drt?edi=305110&art=305169> Accessed on 10/1/06.

from other religious groups) in Guatemala, shows a similar approach. Based on the Weber's theory of Protestant ethics he emphasizes that key elements in Protestantism exist that influence in the economic actions of small entrepreneurs using categories like arduous work, sobriety, honesty, careful handling of money, education, an enterprising attitude, and the direction towards the future (1999: 6-11).

How do the NPCs participate in this process? From their perspective the idea acquires another profile. They do not speak about leaving poverty, but about getting economic prosperity. That is to say, they think that a Christian does not have to be poor, but prosperous. From this premise they inculcate in their members the idea of fighting to reach economic development. From the point of view of Neo-Pentecostal theology poverty is not part of the plan of God for his children, but spiritual and material prosperity. So they encourage all the social classes to look for the prosperity as a gift of God and as a human profit. This section explores what the NPL think on the matter. They were asked two questions, related to the type of teaching that they receive in socio-economic issues and how these help them to improve their economical life.

1. Education on the economic life

Most of the interviewed people responded that they receive lessons that help them to face life and to improve their socio-economic situation. Some responded in the following way. 'In my church I have learned principles of financial administration and good use of the time'. This has helped me 'to administer money and make a budget for the home (L1ICV). Other lay people say that 'They taught me how to make a budget' and in practice 'I am learning to save and to administer better starting with small amounts'. 'I also learned to tithe' (L2ICv). Another informant said 'I received financial principles and this helped me not only to be a good worker but to have entrepreneurial vision. My husband and I started a mini-firm to make yogurt' (L3IVF). Another one said that in his church he received principles on 'the foundations for economic life' which has helped her to be 'a better

citizen'. One of the informants indicated that in his church they have taught him how to handle credit cards. He underlined that 'this helped me to consult with God and my wife before making financial decisions' (L2LDG).

They indicated that the materials of The Crown Financial Ministries have helped in their finances. This organization founded by the Argentinean Andres Panasiuk has as its objective, the equipping of believers so that they learn, apply and teach biblical financial principles. The informants indicated that the lessons of their pastors have been useful in handling their budgets, taking initiatives in enterprise, thriftiness, not to become indebted and the use of time in a beneficial way. The researcher has observed for the space of a decade how some families of the NPCs have improved their economic situations as a result of their faith, religious activities, and arduous work as employees or small commercial businessmen.

The result of the GSNPL showed a similar tendency to the data of the lay people interviewed. The questionnaire put the following question: Does the education of the church and familiar groups help you in the search for social and economic welfare? The GSNPL gave the following results: 86.5 per cent said 'yes', 6.6 per cent affirmed that sometimes, 2.3 per cent noted that on rare occasions, and 4.5 per cent expressed that the lessons are not related to material aspects. The survey sample that went to the SNPEP emphasizes the role of their church and the lessons were key factors for their enterprise development. For the question if their church played a key role in their socio-economic development, 79.2 per cent responded affirmatively. 7.3 per cent said that partly and 13.2 per cent said 'no'. A second question inquired about which forms the church helped them improve in business. The majority wrote down that they were the lessons of their church [Table 5.18]. All of those who received the survey shared that they had received at least one teaching session which had helped their personal life and work situation. One professional said that who had helped him in reality was God. The teaching received plays a role in this process.

Table 5.18 The teaching of the church which has helped raise the economic position

Numbered according to importance and frequency
1. Teaching about economic themes: Giving, tithing, offerings and management of finances
2. Exhortation to live according to the Word of God
3. Teaching to reach for professional, spiritual and material success
4. Formation of moral values: speak the truth, how to relate to others, pay taxes
5. Teaching about the position in Christ: 'I am a son of the King who is the owner of everything that exists'.
6. Teaching to transform the way people think: paradigm change and new ways of thinking
7. Faith in God and his supernatural work

Source: Survey of Neo-Pentecostal entrepreneurs and professionals 2003

These perceptions are expressed in religious terms that later transfer to the social and economic planes. According to the believer's 'position in Christ' he is placed in a privileged situation which allows him to reach all the blessings that come from conversion. These lessons, as will be mentioned ahead, rest on a series of rationalizations that justify their understanding of economic issues. Although predestination and the call from the Weber's ethical point of view are not present explicitly in their teaching, some similar characteristics can be perceived with regard to their attitude about work, discipline, saving, rational use of money, and an entrepreneurial sense, among others. According to Martin they must understand the language and religious categories in order to apply them in the economic context. He specifies that in the atmosphere of religion 'economics' is not a different category,

But is woven into a comprehensive fabric and subsumed within such moral rubrics as prudence. A word which could evoke that fabric is 'betterment'. 'Betterment' includes moral recovery and restitution of previous wrong; it suggests a reversal of old ways and wasteful and destructive priorities. To seek 'betterment' is adopt personal disciplines and restraints, to be reliable and punctual, to accept regimes of health, wholeness and holiness, and conduct transactions in a spirit of integrity and trustworthiness. Underlying the notion of 'betterment' is a broad search for 'wealth' rather than 'wealth', for worth rather than worthlessness, for a clean future rather than the dirt of the past. In this way, the economic category of 'good' is part of the moral category of the good. It is the seamless web or living which forces academic research to abandon the idea of a separate 'economic' aspect and, to treat goods and gods together (1992: 11, 12).

For Martin 'conversion' turns on a dramatic rearrangement of the key elements in the symbolic universe, altering the way gods evoke the 'good'. From a different view it

could be said that NPL directly transfer their religious experience and lessons received to the economic field. Indeed some of them interpret biblical promises in more economic terms rather than in their true biblical sense. This could be seen clearly in the opinion of several of the lay people.

2. Conversion and social mobility

According to testimonies gathered among NPL a good number of them reached some type of social mobility. Their conversion operated a change of life that was translated into improvement in different directions. According to Martín 'The governing category of betterment includes moral recovery, the righting of previous wrongs and it suggested a reversal of old ways and wasteful or destructive priorities' (2006, 29).¹⁴⁴ According to the lay people, their conversion reshaped their inner world which also had effects on their world. That is to say, the churches are a means where the people have an encounter with God by means of conversion that places in their agenda the possibility of becoming a new sort of person, professional, citizen, which can lead them to establish changes in their social status.

Recio Adrados affirms that 'a consequence normally not sought after of conversion is social mobility especially if the origin of the converts low or lower middle class'. He points out that 'the socio-economic ascent is obtained normally through a more methodical lifestyle and working life that is adopted through contact with the informal access to groups or networks of association' (1993: 83-84). Martín observes the social changes that David Maxwell comments among Pentecostal churches of Zimbabwe. He comments that it 'is clear that concern for betterment has deep African roots and that prosperity teaching is focused on local concerns. He says that for some they have engendered social mobility, for others provided a code helpful in avoiding destitution and for yet others a pattern for dealing with modernity and benefiting from it' (2002: 146, 151). Gerhard Lenski in his

¹⁴⁴ See article of Martín 'Undermining the old paradigms', Paper for the Conference of the European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism (GLOPENT) on What is Pentecostalism? 'Constructing and Representing Global Pentecostalism in Academic Discourse'. Birmingham, January 19-20, 2006.

study between workers of the district of Detroit found that ‘the Protestant churches tend to give their followers a series of beliefs, values and guidelines of conduct that facilitate ascending mobility’ (1967: 303). Droogers says that literature about Pentecostalism shows that it promotes upward social mobility as well (1998: 9).

The process of economic improvement was translated into a type of social mobility. The process of change starts with their attitudes and thinking about life. An accountant of IVC commented, ‘I received the first two seminaries on leadership. They gave me a vision about how to invest in high priority things’ (L5ICV). A farmer said, ‘I learned how to fix goals. It helped me to make more effort and to save money applying the Biblical principles’ (L2IFG). An Electronics Engineer said that in his church they taught to him to ‘to be diligent at work. This helped me to improve my self esteem, to have a good image about myself’ (L5IVF). An Accountant points out that from the lessons he has received he remembers how to improve as a professional and live better: ‘These principles helped me to work for God and not for my bosses and to be more conscientious about my work schedule’ (L3IFG). I took ‘the seminar on the Victorious Life that takes into account spiritual, social, family and work issues. It has helped me to administer better and to be successful in life’ (L7IFG).

Another informant affirmed that ‘the study of analogies between the Bible, the providence of God and human needs’ helped him to have a better understanding of the spirituality of the family. At the same time it helped him to get a good wage in his job’ (L1FCG). These answers show the success reached in the area of work, business or in their relationships with their spouses. Of course, among the laity interviewed many of them already had prosperous businesses or companies and were developing. Hallum comments about this: ‘The Neo-Pentecostals are the most upwardly mobile of the three [among mainline churches, Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal], to the extent that the Guatemalan economy allows socio-economic mobility. But it should also be noted that the majority of

these Neo-Pentecostal were already in the middle and upper classes when they converted' (1993: 6).

For the NPL ideas on economic improvements do not just help them with their economic situation, but also gives the orientation about how to give to others. One of the entrepreneurs said, 'the courses on finances and the book Transforming Nations taught me to give because the one who lends to the poor lends to God. They have freed me from dependence on money and have helped me to be just with the personnel so that they can grow as people' (L4ESH). A system Engineer expressed 'I have learned how to handle to finances and investments, be integral, work hard, and about social responsibility', and later he added, 'they have helped me to expand my companies, to save, and to give' (L2ESH). Hard work and values go hand in hand. An Industrial Mechanic indicated that they taught him 'to change the form of thinking to one more based on biblical principles, to change the way he acts and to live according to the wisdom that comes above'. He emphasized that 'people do not only need money, but thoughts, knowledge and an attitude open to change. I have changed in how I work, how I use money, and how I help others' (L2IFCG). It is interesting to observe how the NPL interweave in their comments an ethic of work that does not look for the accumulation of capital necessarily as Weber underscored.

Gooren in his study on small entrepreneurs in three congregations of the Mormon, Neo-Pentecostal and Catholic churches in a poor zone in Guatemala observed a similar phenomenon. He found a relation of causality between certain ethical values and economic development. He says that the influence of the church in the development of its businesses was indirect. It came about by means of the networks of support, the preaching of the church on poverty and wealth, values and norms that the church demands, and by the allocations and obligations to pay tithes. He emphasizes that the 'Entrepreneur in both churches (Neo-Pentecostal and Mormon) strives to apply gospel principle to their work, and to do it well' (1999: 219, 221).

3. Prosperity Theology

The study shows that the NPCs promote the idea of economic improvement in the context of prosperity theology. Pastors and preachers at a local and international level promote prosperity and finances as a symbol of God's blessing and faith in action. Gifford (2004) in his study of the charismatic churches in Ghana states that these churches adopted the prosperity gospel from the Kenneth Copeland Ministries and from other authors but then adapted it to African culture (2004:140-160). Palacios mentions that one of the laws of prosperity is 'sowing and reaping'; to achieve something one has to sow the seed.¹⁴⁵ This sowing will make something of the same type grow. He emphasizes the fact that 'if we want to harvest money, we should 'sow' or give money where it is used in the benefit of someone in need as it is only a question of time and patience' (Aleluya News año 4 no. 27: 36). The central idea is to 'give' in order to 'receive'.

The response of the NPL reflects this emphasis and the rationalization that justifies it. A housewife noted that 'tithing and offering opens the door so that the economy can be healed and blessed'. The emphasis is to give in order to receive. Then she added, 'I have proved it in my personal experience. I have no debts and my basic economy is supplied' (L4IFG). Another informant shows the strong influence of some promoters of about Gospel of prosperity. He underlines, 'I have seen that the bible speaks more often of business than love. Therefore I depend on God's promises and work as if for God and so the tithes from my business go to the church and I also provide training for my employees and treat them well' (L3ESH).

Prosperity theology reaches its maximum expression with the so called alliances with God. Some Neo-Pentecostal pastors have made these alliances the central theme of their preaching. The church members use this as a form of trade. Tithing or offering commits God to give back one hundred per cent. Another important teaching among them

¹⁴⁵ He writes his ideas, principles and financial strategies in the 'Aleluya News' a Neo-Pentecostal magazine and as a column writer of the, Prensa Libre, one of the most influential newspapers in Guatemala. Although he writes for all the public, his audience comes from the middle and high classes.

has to do with the affirmation that Christians are sons of the King and therefore have the right to claim the blessings of God owner of all things. Following their interpretation of Deuteronomy 28, Christians are the 'head', not the 'tail'. In other words, a Christian has to be a successful and prosperous individual. Garrard-Burnett notes that Neo-Pentecostals join the beliefs of traditional Pentecostalism with their own focus,

Place great emphasis on "healing in the atonement," which roughly translates into empowerment on earth through proper faith in God. Closely related is the belief that material prosperity is the entitlement of the faithful; money, good health, and security are all tangible evidence of God's blessing. The believer is thus right to demand such things from God for personal prosperity is a witness to His power and grace (1998:164).

The way some of the NPL understand the issue of giving or making an alliance with God in order to receive, demonstrates an interpretation which distorts what the bible says about material blessings. Some of those who promote this prosperity theology convert this search in a type of exchange with God, 'I give, you give'. This perspective of "giving in order to get" distorts the biblical teaching that we should give and receive through grace.

Other people who have studied Neo-Pentecostalism, state that the central premise of prosperity theology is the concept of spiritual warfare. From their perspective, humanity wages a war between God and the forces of evil. Christians not only have to engage in spiritual warfare to clear the skies and territories to spread the gospel, they also have to wage spiritual warfare against the devil and his agents that are stealing the blessings of God. Spiritual warfare is thus moved from the cosmic and personal level to all aspects of human life. According to Ocaña, amongst Neo-Pentecostals prosperity is seen as the fruit of victory in spiritual warfare and the keeping of a certain Christian ethic. He later states that Prosperity Theology is a 'social and economic discourse that seeks to base itself on the bible' (2002: 95, 25, 101). From his perspective, it is in effect a new theology 'oriented from the centres of power'. Garrard-Burnett says that the Neo-Pentecostal churches not only affirm the impulse to accumulate and imitate riches, but also made this project holy (1998: 165). In his analysis of prosperity and positive thought in these churches, William concludes that, without omitting the influence of the latter, prosperity has another source

which is related to the gifts of the Spirit and experience in the emotional life which later translated to material benefits (1987: 197-208).

On other hand, the writings of Palacios and other pastors show a calling to take the biblical principles on work ethics seriously. Without using Weberian terminology, he points to certain elements that are in some way connected to these principles. He signals that to prosper the following are necessary: 1) responsible administration of resources, 2) life planning, 3) responsible management of family budget in order to avoid debt, 4) the persistency of goals, 5) hard work, 6) tenacity to not abandon ones principles, 7) reducing unnecessary expenses, 8) the danger of consumerism, 9) excellence and responsibility at work, 10) the need of saving, 11) fidelity in the care and control of what is trusted upon one, 12) perseverance with goals, and 13) productive work and high yield (Aleluya News año 3 No.16: 43).

These principles draw close to a work ethic, and are interchanged with the teachings of prosperity theology, which generally applies much more to the personal field. These ways of achieving economic improvement differs from the practice of the 'Comunidad del Espíritu' churches that are linked to Brazil's 'Iglesia Universal del Reino de Dios'. Their motto which is 'stop your suffering' promotes a magical way of resolving the believers' problems. The researcher observed one of these churches in Managua, which was known there as the Community of the Spirit. The pastor made the faithful come forward to deposit their offering on a huge bible, and later they received from him holy water which was supposed to have come from Israel. These churches and similar groups sell goods for salvation and faith gets relegated to a form of knowing how to ask in order to receive.

Finally, observers of Neo-Pentecostalism affirm that their emphasis on material prosperity is the greatest attraction for their followers. This attracts specially people of the middle and upper classes, but also to the poor and working classes. Garrard-Burnett states that the elite and middle class of Guatemala in the 1980s came to these churches attracted

by their economic emphasis, the refuge and values that they were offered, their disenchantment with the Catholic Church and because these churches offered them the means and rationality to achieve social mobility and a moral justification for their member that sought status without social reforms (1998: 165-166). Alonso signals that these teachings attract 'because they adapt perfectly to the expectations of those who wish to be happy without changing their status which comes from economic power' (EO3). Stoll found this same tendency, but states that only a small percentage of the Guatemalan elite (large farm or business owners) became Evangelicals. (1994: 107-8).

Freston, from his analysis of Pentecostalism, affirms that it has to be tied with the economic crisis. The gospel of health and wealth offers a 'religion of results'. At the same time, he notes that it is also necessary to see a cause of chronological coincidence that mediates the process of relating to these churches (1998a: 335-358). He mentions a study made in Rio de Janeiro in 1996 on motivation for conversion, which indicates that only 4 per cent of new converts said that financial difficulties were the cause of their conversion (1998a: 347).

In the GSNPL the reason for assistance to these churches and what conversion signifies was asked. The majority responded to the first question by saying they assist because they feel good there, get to know other church members and are allowed to participate. Meanwhile, when asked about their conversion, the majority of lay people chose various reasons and only 7 per cent indicated that it had to do with a change in spiritual and material life [Table 5.19].

Table 5.19 According to your personal experience, your conversion to Christianity has to do with:

Options	Frequency	Valid Per cent
A change of relationship with God and your neighbour.	113	22.1
Acquiring values for life	4	0.8
A change of spiritual and material life	36	7
All the aspects mentioned above	345	67.4
Did not answer	14	2.7
Total	512	100

Source: Neo-Pentecostal lay people survey 2003

The discussion on socio-economic development must also be tied with the values of the receptive culture, which interacts with the religious principles. Sexton, who investigated indigenous communities in western Guatemala, affirms that religious values have not made a great impact as a driving force of socio-economic change; on the contrary they operate after the conversion of the believer exposed to certain traits of the ladino culture such as western clothing and housing types (cited in Martin, 1990: 216). These believers are more successful, educated, and live in modern houses, often work in the non-agricultural sector, and are more inclined to sobriety and less fatalist.

In that sense Martin concludes, ‘Thus, all main elements of ‘achievement’ motivation are present and Protestantism cooperates with others elements in a complicated dance of mutual reinforcement helping along with modernization’ (1990: 206). In short, the NPCs provide teachings to their members that help them confront socio-economic challenges at a personal, family, and work level. Their emphasis on prosperity theology is combined with values that draw close in some ways to Weberian ethics. In addition, their economic perspective shows identification with the values of market economics that expose them to the exacerbated individualism promoted by consumer society. In the same way, the idea of giving in order to receive can distort the true motivation for giving and foster the ambition to accumulate wealth. The challenge presented by Cox for the

Pentecostal is essential for the Neo-Pentecostals and the rest of the Christians: ‘we will to expose the false claim of the “gods that are no gods”, in the debased ethic of the global market’ (1999: 395).

CONCLUSIONS

According to the result of the work of field, the NPL of these churches show a social vision in different levels. Their openness toward social concern is a new finding among those lay people. Especially because some authors think that NPL are not interested at all in social issues. The analysis shows that they are more open to those social issues than their pastors. They interpret the context and participate within it from their particular Neo-Pentecostal theology standpoint. They concentrate especially on problems at micro level and give little attention to the country’s structural problems.

This first part of the NPL shows the way in which they think about their role and presence in society. They reflect a variety of ideas which come from lay people who represent the different social classes in these churches. They reveal a different picture from that of some stereotyped ways of thinking about how they understand the world and take up social challenges. At the least the result shows that they do not live with their backs to the world and that they are open to discuss and think about the social problems that afflict the population. As has been shown, in several cases their opinions go beyond the declarations or discourses of their pastors. In several aspects they coincide with the ideas of their pastors, as we saw in Chapter four, but at the same time it is plain that their ideas go beyond the position held by their pastors on social affairs.

Of course it must be emphasized that the NPL do not all think alike nor do all have a well defined social conscience. Rather, in the majority of cases they show signs of an awakening awareness, springing from their religious idea. In the same way, the researcher observed that lay people in the middle and upper classes show a little bit more interest in social, economic and political affairs and are more able to articulate their ideas about them.

In spite of that they do not have an articulated social thinking; they show a balanced opinion about some social issues.

Also, their concern for social problems does not necessarily mean that they know how to approach them or face them. The study reveals also that their openness to discuss social issues does not go hand in hand with an agenda of commitment. There does not appear to be, especially among NPL of the members of the higher classes, a vision or movement that could be a vehicle for social change from the structural point of view politics and economics. The NPL show certain potential for social change in the sphere of political culture.

In the future the NPL could achieve a greater social vision inside and outside their churches. But, in part it depends on the vision and commitment of their pastors with the social issues. For this to happen the pastors need to show more openness with social issues, and they need to think through their theology in order to respond to the country's challenges in an integral way. The study also shows that their vision on development and sustainability is limited and in a process of growth. Their education projects are a contribution to the education of the country. Nevertheless, the schools in the Guatemala City are inaccessible to most of the population and accentuate the process of exclusion of the lower middle and working classes. The schools among the middle classes and in the rural areas are an alternative which needs to be observed in further analyses.

According to the results of the study most of NPL receive some type of teachings that helps them in their development and socio-economic promotion. Some have obtained certain social mobility in economic terms unlike members of Pentecostal churches that are fighting for survival. Joseph Suico found a similar relation in churches in the Philippines. He emphasizes that these churches from the Evangelical traditional perspective on evangelism, prayer and the support groups, influence positively in political and socioeconomic activities of their members (2003: 232-257). On the other hand, the NPL are exposed to certain emphases, like prosperity theology, that expose them to the criteria

of consumer society. Especially because some of their pastors and political leaders openly embrace market economy postulates.

The promotion of values although just beginning, could help to change the mentality with respect to the vices of the culture. The socio-economic problem of the country is not only due to the problems of the social structure and politics, but also the lack social capital to strengthen political and social democracy. The education of values, habits and attitudes that the NPCs provide can help their members to face the challenges of their cultural ethos. The problem of corruption rooted in different levels of society, shows the need to promote ethics and morality to produce changes in all of the society. The promotion of the person inside of their communities helps to strengthen civil society and the advance democracy.

The treatment, recognition and promotion in favour of women and indigenous people are a valuable contribution to the construction of a participative and inclusive democracy. At the same time the NPCs ought to have programmes to develop women in the church and in society, as well as assume the challenge of promoting the people, the communities, development and culture of the indigenous people.

The analysis shows that in the future the NPCs have in their laity a potential for social capital which could contribute in a more intentional and committed way to the development of democracy and the push for development from the local churches. The generation of social capital is essential for the strengthening of the civil society and their role in future of the communities. This is especially true because there is a top and middle level leadership crisis, so they need to serve with a sense of solidarity, justice and integrity in a context where corruption has made its nest. The NPCs and other Evangelical churches have seen the possibility of incidence which goes far beyond party politics.

Finally critics of the NPCs such as Alonso affirm that there is no difference between the perspective of the NPL and their pastors (IO3). The results do show however, that generally they display some differences with the social thought of their pastors. The

lay people are more open to treat social problems and participate independently of the position of their pastors and the doctrinal bases of their churches serving in several spheres of the civil society. Equally, the NPL of the lower middle and working class churches are interested less in social problems. Of course, the influence of their position of class and the vision of their pastors influences the NPL of these churches in a positive or negative way. In the future, the presence of Neo-Pentecostal professionals and other Evangelical churches in instances of the civil society, could promote a more open agenda about the social theme in their churches and in society. The next Chapter will concentrate on the conclusions of the thesis and the discussion of relevant aspects of the study of the churches in question.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION OF THE ROLE AND SOCIAL PRESENCE OF THE NEO-PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

This Chapter presents a synthesis of the discoveries made in the investigation in the light of the analysis of the NPCs in previous chapters. Finally, some recommendations for future studies are proposed.

A. REVIEW

Keeping in mind Stoll's hypothesis, the thesis sets out to analyse the role and religious presence of the NPCs within the Guatemalan context. Specifically the thesis analyses the articulation and function of their social vision in Guatemalan society. The first Chapter presents introductory aspects including the theoretical framework of the problem and the methodology to follow in the investigation. The work began with the presentation of the investigation proposal, bibliographical analyses, and the interaction with the supervisors and the exposition of the process to follow in the field work. Questionnaires for interviews and surveys were prepared and applied as field work in different periods of time. Why the churches under discussion were chosen, the way in which the samples were selected, and the procedures followed with the interviewees and surveyed laity and professionals were stated.

Later a profile of the NPCs, drawn from their own stories, was presented in chapter two. As far as possible they were allowed to draw a photograph of themselves in order to understand their ideas, beliefs and practices of faith with respect to their role and social presence. Pastors and lay people were interviewed. To understand their situation, the researcher visited churches, attended services and diverse events as well as gathered material from his sources and external bibliography. The visits were made over three periods of time, although the researcher returned to the field work as required. The survey was conducted after explaining its content and obtaining authorization from the pastors.

Chapter three describes the way the NPL see themselves with regard to their presence and role in society. It describes the social programmes these churches run and analyzes their proposals. Attention was especially paid to educational centres and two projects that represent their proposal as to how they understand and carry out their social task. To this end, some of their establishments were visited, and key project leaders were interviewed.

The purpose of Chapter four was to analyse the beliefs of the pastors with regard to social presence and the social role of their churches. This was important as their ideas are key issues in the training of the thinking and behaviour of their members. Although they believe that the bible is the ultimate authority for faith, they depend a lot on the pastors' sermons and teaching. The founding pastors were interviewed as well as some of the members of their teams. Documents and sermons were also analysed and some opinions of external informants were sought. As was shown previously, these churches do not have a lot of documentation about mission and experience.

Chapter five focuses on the Neo-Pentecostal laity. Most studies have given more importance to the opinion of the pastors or political leaders of these churches. This thesis gives more attention to the way that the lay people understand their social role and presence in Guatemalan society. Often the laity has an opinion which differs from that of the pastors. With this idea in mind a sample of laymen and women were interviewed as well as a small group of entrepreneurs and a larger survey of the lay people in these churches was carried out. The chapter shows that the laity is open to talking about the topics of this research, a third part of those surveyed is involved in some social programmes or civil associations, and is willing to share their ideas about the social problems that affect the country.

B. CONTRIBUTIONS AND CHALLENGES

The conclusions discuss the more relevant discoveries of Neo-Pentecostalism with regard to the role and presence in society. In the course of the study the researcher observed some changes as far as emphases and projects that are extending the initial perspectives of these churches. In spite of a short time since their foundation they have obtained significant advances about some social issues. The NPCs need to change or delve deeper into some key issues of their theology and praxis, and some questions are raised for future investigations, as this phenomenon is recent and it is still developing.

1. Social thought of Neo-Pentecostals

The analysis shows that pastors and laity have some ways of expressing their ideas about their social role and presence. Although it may seem obvious, this fact is noteworthy, for some scholars attribute no thinking to them in terms of their social concern. As shown in chapters four and five, both groups expressed their understanding of their social role in the world, based on their Neo-Pentecostal beliefs. They essentially weave these ideas on society in religious language.

They do not use sociological terms to express or to elaborate their ideas on the topic. Terms such as ‘restoring the government institutions’, ‘reconciling Guatemala to God’, or ‘to seek the salvation of souls so that society follows the ways of righteousness’, among others, refer to the mission and social roles of believers in the world. In general, they base their ideas on a literal reading of the bible, which they believe in and embrace as a manual for life.

Their vision, handling of society’s problems and involvement depend on their social position, which determines how they read, interpret, and apply the bible or their Evangelical heritage. For example, while middle and high class NPSs pay more attention to the social heritage of Calvin of the social presence in the world, lower middle and working class NPSs emphasize the soteriological dimension that salvation cannot be lost.

In a study on conversion, Cantón found among her informants two different postures regarding the world and politics. To the Pentecostal lay people she attributes a 'Lutheran vision' on politics, concerned with the Gospel and centred on the religious character of church unity. To the Neo-Pentecostal lay people she attributes a 'Calvinist vision' on politics, centred on the problem of reconstructing political order, which fosters an active participation and firm leadership (1998: 257). This situation largely explains why middle and high class NPL are more interested in social problems and politics than lower middle and working class NPL. The laity of LDG, IVF and IFD showed a lesser grasp of social problems and appeared more conservative in their responses.

In the same manner, the study reveals that a pastor's preaching and leadership exerts an important influence on the way of thinking, the way of living, and the Christian mission of the laity. They depend on the preaching ministry of their pastors for their growth. The interviews and surveys reflect a certain similarity among the responses of the laity. It was observed that most pastors avoid preaching on the structural problems of the country. Poverty, injustice, impunity, and land problems receive no attention at all. Some state that they do not do this because they have been called to give good news. One of the pastors indicated that it is difficult to speak about those problems in a society such as that of Guatemala. The ESH senior pastor, in a more open and systematic manner, preaches on social transformation, poverty, or education, from his particular Neo-Pentecostal interpretation. At the same time, the study reveals that a third of the laity show greater freedom in expressing their ideas on the national problems and, participate in some projects in favour of civil society independently of the opinion, teaching, or endorsement of their pastors. Of course, their social vision is incipient, unstructured, and developing. Their willingness to deal with social affairs does not necessarily mean that they assume a greater commitment with the development and socio-political transformation of the country, or that they will assume leadership favouring social change.

2. Faith and social issues

Another of the objectives was to find how NPL relate their Neo-Pentecostal faith or beliefs to the social problems around them. According to the data from the analysis, pastors and NPL do not separate their faith, understood as the Evangelical Christian belief system, from their day-to-day living.¹⁴⁶ That is, they do not live with their backs turned to the world. Of course, field work shows that not all NPL bridge faith with the social issues around them, nor are all interested in relating to them. It was also observed that for most believers, this approach is of a more informal nature. The relationship between faith and social problems takes shape especially in the proposal of changing values. Why do NPL insist on changing values? According to the NPS certain negative values exist in the cultures which need to be changed. That is why they believe that to change the institutions they have to change the way people think.

The secular analyst Kliksberg emphasizes that corruption and lack of transparency have intangibly damaged society creating the deep erosion in the sharing of capital. In the light of this fact he indicates the need to emphasize again, among other things, the place of values in society and in culture.¹⁴⁷ The scourge of corruption is now a matter of great concern among academicians and religious groups around the world. Garrard-Burnett points out that the first missionaries, who came to the country in the last century, would have agreed that the solution to Guatemala's problems resided in the ethics and morals which were the mark of the Protestant beliefs (Garrard-Burnett, 1998:125).

According to NPL the change of values is most important for the 'moral reformation' of society. They insist in the change of cultural values which according to

¹⁴⁶The essential elements of the evangelical faith are: affirmation of the triune God, the person and expiatory work of Jesus Christ, universal sin, the need for being born again –conversion-, the universal church, the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the second coming of Christ. These are the key elements of what it means to be evangelical. Other elements are added according to what makes each denomination distinctive.

¹⁴⁷ In 'El papel que puede desempeñar la cultura y los valores éticos en la lucha por la transparencia'. In *Ética y Gobernabilidad Guatemala* 26 y 27 de mayo 2005 Available at <http://www.iigov.org/eg/attachment.drt?art=242111> Accessed 20.03.08

them affect the Guatemalan mentality. In this fight they openly oppose certain values from the Iberian-Catholic heritage as well as the Mayan world which they say contributes to form pessimist and negative attitudes towards the world. Members from these churches say that their way of thinking changed positively after their conversion and after adopting a code of values that they learnt in church. The NPL say that both aspects have been key factors in the development of their personal, family and work situations.

On this basis, NPL affirm that changing the country must include paradigm shifts [changes in mentality]. The change proposed by NPCs is questioned and rejected alike by Catholics and Mayan groups, who consider NPCs as ‘fundamentalist sects’ that destroy national culture. The NPL do not always value the contributions of the Mayan peoples such as their positive traits seen in the sense of communality, respect for the elderly, skills in handicrafts or their disposition to cooperate for a cause which they share together. Also while the NPCs and other evangelical churches seek changes in some of the Guatemalan cultural values they have also neglected discussing the great problems that afflict the country. Their voice is weak and occasional.

The analysis shows that most of the NPSs and NPLs give little importance to the discussion of the structural problems of the country. They focus their attention on the problems of personal micro-ethics. The NPCs cannot overlook the high index of social inequality, injustice, impunity, and poverty that affects most of the population. Some recent changes among Pentecostals pastors suggest that they might in the future tackle these issues more directly. For example, the pastor of the Elim church, their largest church in El Salvador surprised everyone by declaring in a public evangelistic activity, that the church must assume a more integrated mission, and must point to the deepest causes of the social problems (Vega ‘Carta de Liderazgo Cristiano’ World Vision 2003).

A similar example in Charismatic churches of Africa can be seen throughout the case of the pastor Mensa Otabil of Ghana that pleads for change in the social structures that generate poverty (Gifford 1998: 236-243). In the context of NPCs in Guatemala,

Caballeros of El Shaddai focuses his attention on discussing poverty and the country's need for social transformation. Despite this situation the data of this thesis shows that NPL relate their Christian faith with some social issues and they are pushing for social transformation in the political culture.

3. New orientation towards the world

Where do NPL get their ideas on life and their willingness to face its challenges? According to information gathered, they emerge from their new eschatological orientation. In practical terms, they have left behind the dispensationalist eschatological framework and have embraced the ideas of Post-Millennialism that assume the kingdom of God as a 'here and now' reality in the world. The more open orientation that the NPL show towards the world helps them to battle less with those dichotomies, especially in the middle and higher classes. This openness to the world is seen mainly in their entry into the world of politics, and their incipient participation in civil society, whether as a common citizen or as government officers.

With regard to party politics, from the data received on the theme the following aspects can be deduced: In the first place, NPL believe in, and support the exercise of, voting rights. This attitude favours the development of political democracy. On the other hand, NPL display a more cautious attitude as far as choosing their candidate and the emission of their votes is concerned. They think that politics are a part of Christian business and that Christians can choose to be elected. Nevertheless, they do not think that they must give their vote to a presidential candidate just because he is an Evangelical. The 1999 and 2003 elections may illustrate this attitude. Bianchi and Rios Montt lost the elections at that time. They were not voted for just because they were Evangelicals. It is possible to affirm that the Evangelicals, including the NPL, show a more prudent attitude and that they are not merely conservatives or followers of the Evangelical politician. Of course, this posture is not always predictable. Freston notes that the opinions of the leaders

of those churches should not be confused with that of the lay people at the grass roots (2001: 3).

Secondly, as it was mentioned the NPPs are consenting more to work with other parties than to establish Evangelical parties as can be seen on the case of Bianchi of the ICV church, Conde from a extension of LDG church and del Pozo from ESH church are working with no evangelical political parties. In 2007 Bianchi decided to support the candidacy of Social Democrat Alvaro Colom, who won the 2007 presidential elections.

Finally, the emergence of new parties and Evangelical organizations within civil society could generate new contributions in the field of politics. For example, the launching of the VIVA Party and the leadership of Pastor Caballeros has caught the attention of Evangelicals and Catholics. His government plans attracted the attention of several circles of Guatemalan society.¹⁴⁸ In 2006 Caballeros proposed to the left and right-wing parties of the country to make an alliance to build a Vision Plan for Guatemala. His proposal was supported by people like Jaime Arimany, former President of CACIF (Coordinating Committee of Agriculture, Commerce, Industry, and Finance Associations); Adrián Zapata, with a past in the guerrillas, and Alvaro Pop, an indigenous leader. On that occasion, all the parties signed the agreement (Naveda 2006).¹⁴⁹ Caballeros was not able to postulate for the 2007 electoral campaign because his party arrived too late to be included.¹⁵⁰ Without going into details about why the party was not properly registered and their claims before the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, the fact reveals some lack of provision by the team of advisors of the Party.

The examples above mentioned show an opening between NPPs and Catholics to work together in politics. Perhaps these new attitudes could contribute to strengthen

¹⁴⁸See details of Agenda Nacional de Desarrollo y plan de Gobierno Proyecto Político Viva: Visión con valores party in http://www.vivaguatemala.org/portal/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1

¹⁴⁹ 'Harold Caballeros sale en busca del País de las Maravillas', by Enrique Navega, Guatemala, domingo 19 de noviembre de 2006. <http://www.elperiodico.com.gt/es/20061119/actualidad/34114/> Accessed 14/8/07

¹⁵⁰: Álvaro Colom busca atraer voto joven Presidenciable charla en programa radial con Harold Caballeros' by Luisa F. Rodríguez. Prensa Libre Guatemala, <http://www.prensalibre.com/pl/2007/octubre/11/184778.html> Accessed 12/10/07

democracy in the country and the citizens' political participation. Of course, these alliances do not assure that they are going to either work or that are they of a permanent character. It could respond more to a desire on both sides to reach the power. Critics of NEOP affirm that NPPs are guided by a corporative view of the State. Alonso points out that they 'Desire a new theocracy in which the State is made up of an increasing number of "Christian" civil employees and from which the capitalist conservative values for all society prevail' (IO3). There are some examples of Pentecostal politicians in Brazil showing a change from a corporative view to a vision favouring democracy and development. According to A. Brasil, those politicians assume a more independent political commitment today, they are more inclined to the parties on the left, and are producing speeches that emphasize the need for greater social justice and condemn the current economic model. They are a new performance in the new electoral, legislative processes and of the public administration (2002: 255)

Finally, will the NPPs be able to confront the structures of power taking into account the fact that according to Casaus Arzú some of the NPPs comprise the elite of the country? (1995: 169). The country needs profound changes in social, economic and political structures in favour of the poor and to serve the national project. Some critics affirm that the NPPs in Guatemala 'do not have the critical and analytical sense to face the Latin American reality beyond the use of neo-liberal slogans and conservative capitalism' (IO3). The new generation of the NPPs need to impulse a more interdisciplinary task, and work out a theology of politics of power, of social ethics and sustainable development, in order to propose solutions large enough to counteract the ambition of power and corruption.

The second example that illustrates the orientation of NPL toward the world is their participation in civil society. Some NPL, along with other Evangelicals, are in areas where they have not entered previously. A journalist of Shaddai founded and coordinated the Institute of Government of the Party Democratic Union (UD), which has as its main

objective the formation of leadership for the empowering of local governments. Bianchi as well as other NPL have recently founded the Christian Centre of Political Studies (CEP).¹⁵¹ The presence of some Neo-Pentecostal politicians and other Evangelicals in political forums or organizations of government contribute in some way to the discussion in favour of the country's problems. Of course, 'Neo-Pentecostal vision is not necessarily equal to democracy'.¹⁵² This implies a serious analysis of their proposals and leadership, Neo-Pentecostal or not.

At the institutional level a new approach between Neo-Pentecostal Apostolic Council and the Evangelical Alliance of Guatemala is observed. Together they coordinated a forum with presidential candidates in 2007 emphasizing the themes of abortion and marriage of homosexuals. In this forum they expressed their concern to guard the rights and property of the State, fight against the lack of values in society and promote the fortification of the family.¹⁵³

On the other hand, the Evangelicals including the NPCs need to find how they will confront the local authorities in favour of the citizens' rights. In general, the NPL give more attention to prayers and spiritual warfare than to face up to the challenges of society and government. According to Cantón the call to prayers of warfare within the Neo-Pentecostal world is not passive but rather it demonstrates political connotations. She

¹⁵¹ See details in 'Por mi nación Centro de Estudios Políticos' (CEP) Available at <http://www.porminacion.com/index.php?ID=801> Accessed 04.08.07.

¹⁵² Garrard-Burnet, 'Comment Chapter VI Ortiz' thesis' Garrard@mail.utexas.edu 13/09/07.

¹⁵³ 'Presidenciables contra el aborto y matrimonio de homosexuales' by Francisco González Arrecis. Diario Prensa Libre Ciudad de Guatemala 25/07/2007. <http://www.prensalibre.com/pl/2007/julio/25/178047.html> Accessed 04.08.07. From the amplest scope of the Evangelical circle other lay people participate in similar instances. Guillermo Méndez former professor of the Central American Theological Seminary founded in the 2000 the Institute for Services to the Nation (ISN). Its objective is to try to change the tradition of Civil Right in Guatemala. According to Méndez the laws in Latin America are of prohibitive character. He emphasizes the need to establish a constitution that facilitates the fulfilment of the law instead of obstructing it. In Wikipedia. http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instituto_de_Servicios_a_la_Naci%C3%B3n Accessed 04.08.07 Méndez with others professionals and business men from different evangelical and Neo-Pentecostal churches met once a week to discuss economical and social issues of the Guatemalan society since 2002. Interview, Guatemala, 14/10/02. From the Evangelical ecumenical circle the work of the CIEDEG stands out. From 1987 they have specially promoted the development and democratic processes of the country among the Presbyterian churches of the rural area. As of the 2003 they offer a Graduate programme in Political Studies with the support of the Lutheran University of El Salvador. The Evangelical Alliance of Guatemala by means of COSIPE promotes the analysis of the national situation of the country and participates in new instances of national dialogue. They constitute a part of Guatemala Forum which promotes the analysis and research of solutions for the country's problems, and where the members come from the financial, religious, political, syndicate sector, and other associations of the civil society.

points out that the 'Jesus is Lord of Guatemala' project in the 1990s sought to save the country from total destruction by means of prayer [Cantón points out that Serrano Elías was behind the project, seeking support for his candidacy and government-to-be] (1998: 249). Some NPS tend to identify these spiritual forces with ideologies and groups from the political left wing.

Of course, the NPL's participation is new and does not have all the resources to confront the specific challenges of the world around them. Also, they do not have an articulate and solid Christian worldview which could help them to confront the ideologies and practices within the professional field and in the wider ambit of society. Their new faith in Christ, enthusiasm and in some cases political or entrepreneurial experience that they bring with them from before their new birth experience encourages them.

4. Social projects and development

¿What is the contribution of the NPCs towards the poor and for development? According to the analysis presented the NPCs channel their social vision through social aid and education projects. They provide help in health and distribution of food, clothes and medicines on their medical trips in the rural area. In Guatemala City three churches offer specialized medical campaigns of every year, and members of two churches visit hospitals and prisons. Only a third part of the sample affirmed that they participate in these projects. Although the percentage is low compared to the whole population, it shows the human potential that these churches have for greater participation in the future. Other churches from within the evangelical world also have programmes of social aid. In the last decade a new intentional interest has emerged to meet needs such as health concerns as part of the evangelistic strategies.

Unfortunately, those programmes among NPCs have little economic infrastructure, equipment or human resources. In most cases it is not due to lack resources necessarily, but due to a certain resistance to invest proper human and economic resources. The amount of

resources invested in the construction of their church buildings or evangelistic projects cannot be compared with the resources invested in the social needs. This tendency is more marked among the lower middle and working classes. They give less attention to social assistance. Most of pastors emphasize that the investment in evangelism is justified because it brings spiritual and social change to the lives of people. Also, some leaders say that what people need is to be empowered by the Spirit of God and with values to develop as leaders.

On the other hand, projects such as Fundación Manos de Amor (FMA) and Casa Bernabé (CB) go beyond social assistance. They promote a more integral vision of the person and community development, and count on resources, infrastructure, organization, and work teams. Support from CB is significant in a context where street children are condemned to abandonment, hunger, sexual abuse, drug addiction, persecution, and death. Its offering of substitute families in the context of a community provides the opportunity of restoring dignity and hope to children with no future. As indicated in chapter three, this project is mainly funded by believers in the United States, and supported by foreign missionaries. The question remains: Why is the participation of local church lay people low? And why do the Verbo churches invest so little in the project?

Development of the FMA from the ecclesiastical base shows an advance in social matters within the Neo-Pentecostal world. It integrates the spiritual component with sociological and economic elements to promote development of communities in the rural areas. According to the founders of FMA, 'true spiritual revival produces a social effect, a transformation' (Caballeros 1998: 22). The goal of FMA is spread out around the country the concept of 'communities of transformation' [related with the case of Almolonga, called "the miracle city", were the religious revival brought economic prosperity, family integration, and social development].

Two things must be pointed out: first, as long as the Almolonga project is presented as an example of development within the structure of spiritual warfare, it does not give

importance to key elements of the indigenous culture, such as hard work and community solidarity, found in Almolongans. Garrard-Burnett, without leaving out the spiritual dimension, affirms that it would rather seem that the change has to do with the disposition of the Almolongans to adopt the Protestant values, like working hard, saving, faithfulness, the entrepreneurial spirit and temperance, rather than a celestial confrontation (Garrard-Burnett 2007: 22). According to the researcher's observations, the social transformation of Almolonga derives from the following causes: religious revival, values of Protestant ethic and elements of the indigenous culture within the framework of capitalist economic development. Some NPS try to apply the Almolonga model in other countries without taking into account the socio-historic differences. That is, there are cultural elements, as is the case with the Almolongans, which must be taken into account.

The enrolment of high class professionals and believers in social projects might encourage a vision of service to arise in professionals, within and without the NPCs. A similar result is happening in some Pentecostal and Charismatic churches around the world. For example, believers of wealthy families, after making contact with people who live in the poverty belts of Cairo, started to serve the poor and founded institutions of service in their favour (Miller 2006).¹⁵⁴ Also, their proposals could drive the future sprouting of similar projects in other churches in favour of the development of the rural areas, especially because indigenous communities, as indicated in chapters two and three, live in poverty and extreme poverty. It will also be important to verify, by future studies, if FMA values, integrates, and promotes indigenous culture values. Local and foreign analysts criticize Evangelicals in general and NPCs in particular, for their frontal attack on

¹⁵⁴Of course, beyond the NPCs there is a greater and more structured contribution among the Evangelical churches. The Evangelicals have made a social contribution in spite of the discontinuity of their projection in the historical development of the country. In 1983, La Comisión Coordinadora de la Iglesia Evangélica de Guatemala (The Coordinating Commission of the Evangelical Church of Guatemala, COCIEG) affirmed that the Evangelical church had 300 programmes of a social, economic and cultural nature (Declaration COCIEG, Guatemala August of 1983). According to T. Gutierrez in the first decade of the twenty-first century the Evangelical service agencies have increased in Peru. In the decade of the 1990s the evangelical programme of social action in Latin America grew a 100 per cent in relation with those of the previous decades. (1997:24).

idolatry in the Mayan peoples, whom they call pagans (Cantón, 1998, Similox 2005, and others).

Also, the study shows that NPCs are giving a new impulse to the educational process of the country. Although not all churches are involved in this field, the NPCs contribute to the cultural and economic development of the nation with their schools and universities [although they do not directly favour the population that is illiterate and lives mostly in the countryside]. Unfortunately the ESH schools in zones 16, 14, and 11 of Guatemala City, an FCG school and one ICV schools are not affordable to the working and poor classes. The rest of the ICV schools are available to working class people, and the ESH schools in the countryside are available for poor people and indigenous communities. All those churches have the challenge of establishing schools to take care of the low income population or provide scholarship for students of poor families. It will be very difficult for those people to improve their economical situation unless they have access to education. There is a close relationship between education and economic advancement. The NPCs have the opportunity to contribute to overcome the great challenge of illiteracy in the country.

On the other hand, the idea of enabling leaders for the nation will need to be analyzed later in order to verify if they will favour the development of the majorities, or simply, they will perpetuate the privileges of the middle class and elite of the country. Finally, those schools need to give more attention and space to the discussion and promotion of the rights and values of the indigenous culture. This is true because these communities compose half of the population of the country, and because the extensive populations of the interior are excluded from the socio-economic benefits that the rest of the population enjoys. In a context of ethnic pluralism the NPCs need to take into account the challenges from the indigenous communities in order to contribute to their development and human dignity, especially in the light of criticism made by Evangelical or

Catholic Indians against evangelism projects that do not respect or recognize the value of indigenous beliefs and ways of life.

5. Conversion and social mobility

Conversion is the central event in the Evangelical world, for it lays the foundation for the new convert. Social mobility, to which they do not refer directly, is understood as economic improvement, as shown in Chapter five. The meaning of social mobility, as used in this work, was taken from the second typology on social mobility proposed by Haralambos & Holborn. It has to do with ‘intra-generational’ mobility, which takes place in a simple generation and can be measured by occupational status (1995: 101). With limitations, this typology was used for NPLs who, as observed in the thesis, testify to progress in the form of a better job, starting a micro-business, among others, resulting in social and economic improvement. These declarations need to be verified in studies of fieldwork beyond the scope of his thesis.

A good portion of the NPLs interviewed affirmed that their economic situation got better after their conversion; they were able to reach some type of social mobility. They assume prosperity like a component of the package of salvation. For that reason they affirm that evangelism brings with it ‘economic and social promotion, the principle of solidarity, a sense of community, and the well-being of the families’. For them salvation is not limited to the spiritual sphere; it has repercussions in the social and economic life. Prosperity is part of the blessing of God and for that reason they have a right to demand it. Their conversion operated a change¹⁵⁵ of life that was translated into improvement in different directions. It reshaped their inner world which also had effects on their world. That is to say, the churches are a means where the people have an encounter with God by means of conversion that places in their agenda the possibility of becoming a new sort of

¹⁵⁵According to Tito Paredes change is ‘any modification of the ideas, society, technology, economy, and ecology of a people due to factors working from within or without’. He notes that change does not finish where it starts, but it can also modify structures (2003:73).

person, professional or citizen which can lead them to establish changes in their social status. In general, the Protestant churches tend to give their followers a series of beliefs, values and guidelines of conduct that facilitate ascending mobility (Lenski 1967: 303).

On the other hand, the NPL emphasize that God blesses, but they need to work hard. The calling to work is part of the teachings they receive from their pastors. The survey shows that 79.2 per cent of the entrepreneurs and professionals affirmed that the teachings of their church helped them to promote their economic improvement. Prosperity does not arrive in a magical way. Faith in the promises of God and obedience to His Word goes hand in hand with the exercise of the values of Neo-Pentecostal theology. These positive visions of the world, punctuality, honesty or the habit of the saving are keys to opening the door to their prosperity.

In the process of interviews the existence of several companies that generate resources for themselves and for others was observed. Half of entrepreneurs affirmed that they had initiated their company after starting to go the church, whereas the other half already had the company on conversion. The economic advances include the religious element and the culture of work.¹⁵⁶ The researcher learned about a travel agency, a construction firm, a paint distributorship, a dental clinic, and an accounting firm. The examples of entrepreneurs and Neo-Pentecostal professionals are also observed in circles of the Evangelical world including within indigenous families. These contribute in favour of promotion of the informal sector of the economy and the middle sized company in a context of restrictions and economic uncertainty.

Educational level is another indicator that shows social mobility, achieved over a longer period of time. The GSNPL shows that all the NPL have a high degree of education.

¹⁵⁶ Freston does not believe that Pentecostalism will image this model in Latin-America. He affirms that any improvement of the economy is usually restricted to a modest advance for absolute poverty to the dignification of poverty with maybe significant change of social mobility in the next generation. See his article 'Religious Change and Economy Development in Latin America'. Available at www.religionanddevelopment.nl Accessed 27.8. 07: 9-11).

Sixteen per cent have completed primary school, 42.6 per cent secondary education, 37.1 per cent are college graduates, and 4.3 per cent have completed postgraduate studies.

Although this is a very small sample, it illustrates that the laity of all churches possess a good educational level. Studies conducted among Pentecostals, Charismatics, and other Christian groups affirm that they have a greater level of schooling than the rest of the population (Pew Forum, 2006b). This data contrasts with the following information. A 2004 study on the proportion of Guatemalans with higher education to those without any schooling, by socio-economic stratum, yields the following data: Of the high class, 1.4 per cent has no schooling, while 38.2 per cent has higher education. In contrast, 47 per cent of the extreme low stratum has no schooling at all, and only 0.6 per cent has higher education (United Nations, Guatemala 2005: 97)

Meanwhile, it is important to note the following data, 50 per cent of the surveyed professionals affirmed that they already had a business when they joined the church. This means that they already had some degree of social mobility. In the same manner, the study shows that not all the laity has achieved great changes in their economic status. A good proportion of them have one job that satisfies their fundamental needs. The promises of prosperity theology do not reach everyone, and not all of the NPL achieve the opportunity for social mobility, especially those who belong to churches whose members are from the lower middle and working classes. Finally, the NPL also need to evaluate their understanding of prosperity. Some attribute to it a value that is not in the bible and some see material abundance as the ultimate goal. They are also in danger of making sacred the free market economic projects which some of their pastors are accepting with open arms.

Harvey Cox warns that Christians ought to be careful not to fall down before the god of the market. He underlines that the first century Christians said both 'yes' and 'no' to the global culture, but today's Christians just say 'yes'. He emphasizes that 'Christianity need not become a mere acolyte in the temple of the Global Market God' (Cox 1999: 391, 393). Padilla writes, 'In the current circumstances, it is urgent that we Christians recover a

Biblical vision of material goods; that we examine the motivations that move us in all that is related to the economic aspect of human existence' (1997: 145).

6. Democracy and inclusiveness

The emergence of the Evangelicals in the last century helped to break the hegemonic power of the Catholic Church and promoted the ideas of the progress and freedom of worship. For Jose Casanova, the 'religious freedom' in the sense of 'freedom of conscience' is chronologically 'the first liberty as much as precondition of all liberties (1994: 40).¹⁵⁷ From this perspective the freedom of worship conceded to the Protestants resulted in strengthening of the democratic process. The NPCs see themselves within this legal framework and they promote along with the other Evangelical churches the idea of freedom of conscience observed in some declarations of faith. They contribute to strengthen the democratic process through the following actions.

The first contribution is the freedom of worship. Church goers have free access to the gifts of the Spirit. They are not the property of the leadership; they are available to all. The laity has the freedom to exert leadership, despite the autocratic profile shown by some of their pastors. The universal priesthood of believers fosters the participation of the laity. This freedom of being part of a team opens spaces that can then be transferred to secular society. Although the members of the Evangelical churches give priority to issues of a more spiritual character, their ecclesiastical leadership becomes a tool to overcome the day to day challenges and to serve en private or State entities.

Second, women have a place, opportunities, and recognition that promote their person, role, and leadership. As observed in Chapter five, both men and women affirmed that women have intrinsic rights because they were created in the image and likeness of God. This fact is the basis for the treatment and place they try to afford to women. Freston

¹⁵⁷ Casanova in his analysis about the public and private role of religious institutions affirms that often these resist accepting their marginal role assigned in the private sphere, and seek to assume public important roles. He underscores that the Christian church can enter the public sphere and assumes a public form only if they accept the inviolable right to privacy, and the inviolable principles of freedom of conscience (1994: 41, 57-58).

says that Evangelical conversion ‘involves making a profound break with cultural patterns of relationships between the sexes’ which is an important dimension of democratization (2001: 304). On other hand, their belief in male authority over women does not necessarily prevent them from encouraging the role of women, but it does not mean either that, while recognizing their role, they would transfer this immediately to the widest contexts of society. In the same manner, recognition that women are to be treated well does not exclude problems they might have at home, especially in a context where women are the object of domestic violence. Later studies could analyze the relationship of couples among Neo-Pentecostal families regarding this topic.

Thirdly the neo-Pentecostal vote and presence in civic society needs to be taken into account. As has been already stated the Neo-Pentecostal laity has a high level of participation in the Guatemalan electoral processes. Independent of their political affiliation, alongside other evangelicals, they constitute a considerable electoral force and participate on different political parties for different political positions. In the same way, the NPL are beginning to get involved in the different areas of civic society. Whether it be a functionaries or members of voluntary associations, they participate filled with Neo-Pentecostal beliefs and personal motivations. Future studies could reveal the failures of some Neo-Pentecostal politicians, where the new one concentrate their activities, the type of contributions they offer and the challenges that they have to confront.

Fourthly, in the same manner, it was observed that NPL are open to recognizing the personhood and dignity of Mayans, and that more and more these churches are also growing within Mayan communities. At this time, few families attend these churches: new studies will be needed on Neo-Pentecostal communities to learn about their nature, relations, and roles. Also, it will be necessary to analyse if the critical relations of exclusion, oppression or marginality of the Guatemalan context affect the relationship among indigenous and ladino Neopentecostal membership. Gifford when commenting on the public role of the African Pentecostal churches notes that they can play a role in

breaking down the ethnic barriers as the intensity of ‘conversion’ confers a new identity which transcends other identities. Later he emphasizes that this identity can help to create democratic virtues like tolerance, respect, moderation, cooperation and commitment (1998: 347). This effect can also be transferred to overcoming certain racial barriers in the Guatemalan context. Cajas says that ‘This presence in society is the contribution of Protestantism in favour of democracy that has happened for a hundred years already and which has brought political consequences to the country’ (1985: 10).

Finally, they support building up and integrating families. Generally this contribution of the evangelical churches goes unnoticed. However, the building up and permanence of integrated families is essential for society. It is just this absence of integrity in Guatemalan and Central American families which has contributed to the rise of the “maras” (youth gangs) that are looking for a sense of belonging and community. The preoccupation of the NPCs for matrimonial enrichment and healthy families is an important contribution to build up society and also to strengthen the democratic process.

C. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

What is the final result of the investigation? As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the study concentrates its attention on the role and its social presence of the NPCs in order to verify if these churches contribute to promote social reform in Guatemala. According to Stoll the reform must have social, economic, political and cultural repercussions at the national level. From that perspective, the study shows that the NPCs do not generate a movement of social reform.

According to the pattern of reference used on the social responsibility of Sider, these churches essentially provide social aid to the needy, and some of these churches stimulate the social development, but they do not form a movement of social reform that includes structural change. On the other hand, the study shows that these churches contribute in favour of the social change in the sphere of the values discussed before. It is

much easier to see how Protestantism has contributed to help individuals and families improve the spiritual and social dimension of their lives than to confront the structural problems of society.

1. They do not lead a movement of social change

The NPCs do not have an agenda for social transformation. Their centre of mission is the proclamation of the gospel of salvation. Evangelism occupies the centre of their mission with a call to conversion. The Evangelical motto is ‘change the life of the people and you change the country’. According to the Evangelicals this insistence on conversion and personal ethics is due to the deeper problem, the sinful nature of the human being and its consequent effects in the society. For the NPS the social change is part of conversion that provides the possibility transforming the personal life of believers, and their communities. The NPS emphasis on the change of spiritual and moral life makes sense in a context of corruption which is eroding the society in different ways. But in the end the **individual vision** of the conversion undermines the **social dimension** of the gospel. Its social impact cannot be seen at the level of the structures of the country. Among these churches, according to the El Shaddai church’s leadership, salvation of the country is not limited to the spiritual sphere. As noted before, from the El Shaddai eschatological worldview, the conversion of the country has political and economic implications. The big question for the Neo-Pentecostal politicians is that of how they will use political power and if they are willing or not to confront the socio-political structures which have made society unequal.

Most pastors of NPCs and other evangelical pastors do not face the structural problems that affect the country. The treatment of poverty, the social and economic inequality almost does not have space in their agendas of preaching, with the exception of the case of Caballeros as was mentioned in Chapter four. In general, the pastor’s emphasis is on individual sin and the social dimension has less importance. They emphasize the

announcement of the good news, but neglect the prophetic denunciation against the social sins of society.

The reconstruction of the country is threatened by the gradual growth of social decomposition, poverty, maintaining social inequality, exclusion, discrimination, and social political and economic social polarization and the growth of common violence and organized crime (Reyes 2004: 69). The NPPs need to consider seriously these problems and challenges in their work agenda. The church does not have to forget 'the call to contribute to the creation of worthier structures for human society (Yoder in Padilla 1998: 41). Evangelical revivalism should affect in some way the social structures exoste in the country.

Finally, NPCs do not seem to promote a support network among churches to facilitate social transformation from within. In general, their ecclesiastical agenda is based on their local projects. The rest of Evangelical churches reflect a similar pattern. There does not exist between NPCs and the other churches a network of cooperation for mutual support that could stimulate a vision in favour of social transformation. The NPCs of middle and high classes almost have little relationships with the NPCs of the working classes. The existing approaches occur through congresses, evangelistic campaigns, concerts or events like the annual March for Jesus. Nevertheless, these encounters are more informal and temporary. The NPCs and other Evangelical churches have the challenge to promote an agenda of more deliberate inter-ecclesiastical approach in the search of cooperation in a wider sense. If the church tries to be an alternative community it must incarnate the values of the kingdom in its own patio.

The church must be a model of class humanity within where, for example, economic and racial differences have been surpassed (Yoder 1998: 36). Finally, social reform that contributes towards the transformation of the country will, according to Stoll, be possible by a conglomerate of Evangelical churches. That is, NPCs could arrive at a part of this social reform movement. But, one of the weaknesses of NEOP is its sense of self-

sufficiency and independence. They think that the others are wrong, and that it is the others, not themselves, who must learn.

2. Lay people: a potential for social capital

The study shows that even though the NPCs do not lead a movement for social transformation, they do contribute in some way to social transformation of the Guatemalan society. Their participation in the society can be seen from the level of culture and not only from the political dimension. The laity of the NPCs is at the heart of their congregations and conform an active potential of social capital in different spheres of society, which in the future could contribute to a movement being born in favour of social transformation. Of data previously analyzed three levels of participation are deduced. Mostly the laity and other Evangelical churches contribute at individual levels in favour of the development of the country. They are present in the field of health, education, commerce, industry, media companies and other spheres. This presence has not received a lot of attention. This is an area for future investigations: the contribution of NPL and all other Evangelicals to social development, as Guatemalan citizens, on the basis of their calling and daily work.

According to the analysis, a second group of NPL participate in existing social programmes. This is a considerable percentage, taking into account the apathy of the population to contributing through volunteer associations. Some of them occupy key positions in government or in a private company. This presence could contribute a wider level of influence in the context of the civil society.

The third and smallest group is involved in party politics. In spite of the failures of the past, the new politicians have to their favour the benefit of the doubt. Mainly if they are open to learn from the political errors of the past and arrange work arm in arm with other lay people in society whether they are evangelicals or not. The 'Protestant movement makes it clear that radically new social and cultural capital, is being created at the level of

the person as well as at the level of church and communal life within the protected enclaves of the believers' (Martin 2002: 74-75).

This amalgam of social capital could constitute next alongside the other Evangelical lay people a movement for social change that is to say, the change does not necessarily have to come from above. The social change could push from the grass root instead from the politician class. These churches can have power to call together people that the parties or unions do not have. In the history of Protestantism the laity has had an essential role in its development and expansion. They have a sense of militancy which comes from the Protestant Reformation which rescued the Biblical principle of the 'priesthood' of all believers. Although the social role of the NPL is incipient, and despite not having an articulated theology of social responsibility, they are contributing as members of civil society in their respective spheres of influence, and could in the future cooperate in the search for social transformation favouring the country.

3. Warnings and challenges for Neo-Pentecostal churches

a. The challenge for Neo-Pentecostal pastors

In the analysis it was noted that similarities and differences of opinion exist among pastors and laity regarding their understanding of their role and social presence. First, the way NPL think and live out their faith depends to a great degree on the teachings of their pastors. Their relationship to the world also depends on those teachings. In general, they follow the way that their pastors think. Secondly, at the same time the analysis shows that the opinion and position of the laity differs somewhat from the opinion of their pastors in certain social topics. The laity appear a little bit more open to discussion and to facing social-political problems of the country. But, the openness of the NPL could be neutralized by the conservative posture which the majority of the pastors display with regard to social problems.

Questions that arise here are: Could the laity change their ideological position if their pastors do not? What attitudes must these pastors assume to stimulate their laity to more integral thinking as to their role in society and social presence? How can the majority of the laity who at the moment are more concerned about their personal interests and well-being, be stimulated and enrolled? These and other related questions remain as challenges for future studies. It will be important to observe to what degree pastors can introduce changes in the understanding and practice of the social role of the church. This topic remains for future field studies, to deeper analyse the social thinking among pastors and laity.

The study also shows that the participation of NPL in some instances of the civil society do not necessarily depend on the teachings and doctrinal positions of their churches. Some of them bring along certain enterprise or political experiences they had before conversion or joining their churches. This is an advantage, and at the same time, a hazard. It is advantageous if they have training and support for any activity they might assume. At the same time, it is a hazard if they act without any guidance and relevant, solid training. They need a more training that will make them aware of their commitment with the holistic Gospel, and social equity of the country, and the challenges to get involved in solving social problems. This depends of course on whether the pastors are open to consider the church's mission from a holistic perspective. In the same way, the NPS have the challenge to open up key spaces of leadership and decision making on the life of the church. In other words they need to meet the challenge of assuming a more democratic style of leadership.

b. Towards a more holistic worship

Worship in the NPCs is an integral part of the service and it opens up a space for an experience of the divine. The experience of the Spirit provides the worshippers with a deep sense of joy, conviction, peace and power of God which transforms their lives. In these

worship experiences many members renew their faith and make commitments to live their lives according to what God and the church require of them. Worship plays a powerful role to mobilize the people to meet the challenges that come from personal life, work, family sphere, and the church's mission.

At the same time, some excesses or the reduction of the experience to the private sphere, have been criticised by pastors and members of other churches. The non-integration of worship into all spheres of human life reduces the nature of worship and the so-called anointing of the Spirit to consumer goods that do not get out into day-to-day living in the world: worshipers on Sunday, but business persons throughout the week. The challenge for these churches is to move this charismatic experience every day from life to all the spheres of the society. They have the challenge to transfer the life of the Spirit to the fields of art, human sciences, literature, environmental concerns, the use of the power and the politics, (among others). They need to stimulate the creation of structured social development programmes to favour the poorest of the poor, from a holistic understanding of their mission. It has to be a holistic worship which must develop a spirituality of work, business, politics, social responsibility, family, social relationships, among others. Otherwise, worship remains a liturgy that separates theology and ethics from Christian being and doing.

c. Be aware about the influences of market's proposals and the danger of falling prey to power

Some kind of Pentecostalization is observed in the Catholic and Evangelicals churches in different ways. It breaks and renews old bureaucratic schemes of some historical and Catholic churches. Their worship experience, form of administering the church and its projects, the way they work as a team, the use and handling of mass media, and other areas of ministry, are elements that have brought a new perspective to others churches. At the same time, the NPCs need to take care that the way they think about and do mission is

within the framework of the values of the Kingdom of God and be careful that their missionary vision is not trapped in an entrepreneurial scheme of the globalized world. The influence of the global market is a threat to the nature of the church and the sense of community. NPCs and the rest of evangelicals have to face the challenge of globalization and market demands which prefer ‘a uniform, homogenised world culture with as few inconvenient particularities as possible’ (Cox in Dempster1999: 393). Otherwise the life and mission of the church runs the risk of being tied to the economic system of the moment.

On the other hand, it is necessary to say that some NPLs have worked in positions in the government and in private enterprise, with little social relevance. They have been mostly occupied with their own political interests, and some have succumbed to the temptation of power. Some of the NPPs thought that they were going to change the world, but they weren’t able to face the corruption and they did not contribute to change the prevalent unequal society (they do not have a solid theological and ethical foundation to do so). In spite of the failures of NPPs in the past, they think that politics is a means to promote the changes that the country needs. This affirmation does not necessarily mean that they have the political proposals to enable the needed changes. If these NPLs are going to make a social impact in their respective spheres of action, training in Christian character and thinking, and in social ethics, needs to be strengthened. Also, the NPPS need to be aware of the pressures of the neo-liberal system, and that they are exposed to the temptation of the ecclesiastical cooperativeness.

d. The danger of independence

The sense of autonomy of the NPCs is part of their strength which has allowed them to develop a vision, strategy and missionary outreach outside of traditional and denominational historic structures. At the same time, this autonomy could affect the development of the social capital that they generate. They tend to be very independent

among themselves and they almost have no cooperation links with churches of the low and working middle class. The isolation between the groups does not help the generation of social capital: 'A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital' (Putnam 2000: 19). In the same way the NPCs will have to deal with the challenge of individualism which tends to erode a sense of community. That is why the NPL will have to open themselves to work with other Evangelicals and to learn from their history and experience. This opening up to others is needed because the NPCs tend to be self-sufficient and do not to recognize that they are mistaken: 'Although Charismatic Renewal has had a substantial effect on traditional denominations, it has largely failed to transform the structures in which it finds itself operating' (Percy in Hunt *et. al.* 1997: 231).

Another challenge has to do with their need to consolidate the permanence of their membership and transition in the future. This warning is very important in the context of the growth of the mega-churches in Guatemala. As it was observed previously the NPCs experience certain rotation of members that could in the long term be detrimental, especially because those churches do not demand membership at all. Therefore, people do not feel a greater commitment with the congregation which they attend. When they do not find what they are looking for they transfer to another church (IO1). The sprouting of voluntary associations can be affected by the weakening of the churches. In the United States 'More people are "surfing" from congregation to congregation more frequently, so that while they may still be "religious", they are less committed to a particular community of believers' (Putnam 2000: 72, 74).

Finally, although the NPCs are new churches, some are in the process of changing their leadership. The founding pastors need to pass the baton to the new generation of pastors and these transitions always bring tensions. These changes could also be beneficial in other churches as new leaders emerge. This is especially true in churches where there are young pastors who are more open to think about social issues. These could in the future provide a greater push for social projection in the churches.

e. Incarnational theology

They urgently need the training and theological articulation that should accompany their charismatic experience. In general the NPCs have a more pragmatic attitude with regard to how they use the Bible. They are more interested in action than in reflection. This theology is very important in a context of poverty in order to develop a holistic mission. Theological reflection and the analysis of reality are not a symbol in the agenda of Neo-Pentecostal pastors and laity. The criticism that Mark Noll has of the Evangelical North Americans is applicable to the Guatemalan context. The Evangelical ethos is activism, popularism, pragmatism and utilitarianism. This allows little space for a wider and deeper effort, because they are dominated by the urgencies of the moment (1994: 12).

The NPCs need to develop a theology which incarnates in the Guatemalan reality to respond to the challenges. Guatemala's pluristic culture and multi-ethnic context requires an incarnational theology for this situation. For this to occur it is essential that the entities responsible for teaching and training Neo-Pentecostals include in their contents and sermons a biblical approach with regard to the reality and challenges of the indigenous people especially as almost half of the population is indigenous. The following elements need to be taken seriously into account to achieve a more incarnational missiological task: 1) an incarnational life-style and cultural sensitivity; 2) a sense of history and the need for the development of strategies and 3) an Evangelical and contextual posture (Escobar 1998: 58-62).

On the other hand, it is fundamental that Neo- Pentecostal politicians and laypeople give due attention to the problems and challenges of poverty. It is necessary to promote social action projects in the churches in favour of the poor, but also to provide training to the believers and to the community on social responsibility and develop a commitment with the country and its needs. The biblical concept of shalom is integral in character, including emotional, spiritual and material needs. The conditions of poverty which some NPCs in the interior of Guatemala, are a challenge to start to change from inside. Finally,

the incarnational theology is important because of the poverty in the country. The NPS interpret this as essentially a problem of a spiritual order, but they fail to give the necessary attention to the structures that generate poverty. It is essential to face the problem of poverty in a context where the breach between rich and poor is a reality that cannot be ignored. To turn spiritual powers into the main cause of poverty is to avoid the truth of human responsibility in the face of injustice and other similar evils.

4. A further theological understanding of Neo-Pentecostalism

Whereas the Neo-Pentecostal phenomenon is recent, few studies exist from the theological field. It is important to carry out a wider analysis to throw more light on its nature and social role. At present more importance has been given to what they do than to who they are. It is essential to deepen the theological base in order to see what should be expected of the church. Some authors notice some dangers that should be taken into account with respect to the analysis of these churches. Vazquez says that ‘Martin limits himself to examining the social effects of Pentecostal practice and organization. In other words, he describes what Pentecostalism does but not what it is’ (1998:82). In a similar direction, Kessler affirms that Martin mentions the gifts of the Spirit and persons who experienced the baptism of the Spirit, but does not explore their meaning or their effect on the Pentecostal world. He considers that Martin does not understand the motivations or the most important reasons behind Evangelical growth in Latin American (1993: 51-52).

It is also important to deepen the analysis of the church’s nature so as to distinguish the role and mission of the NPCs. For example, some authors see the NPCs only as salesmen of goods for salvation. The study by Cantón cited in this thesis reduces the laity to sales persons of goods symbolic of salvation. She underlines, the salvation offered by Pentecostalism speaks of what it is, while the demands to which it responds speak of what it does (1998: 172). She affirms that supply and demand are not the same for different social sectors: the dominated (Pentecostals) accept their social position regarding the crisis;

the dominators (Neo-Pentecostal) re-affirm their position regarding the crisis (1998:273). Without detracting from the sociological implications, this approach obscures the wider picture as well as the church's task whether the church is a Neo-Pentecostal one or not.

Andrew Walls notes that many investigating today assume that the political and social effects of a religious movement comprise their original intention, when in fact they are indirect effects (1993: 35). In this same line Jeffrey Klaider affirms that the social and cultural changes are the context but not the reason for the remarkable religious transformation that nowadays is occurring in the Continent (in Padilla 1999: 14). It is important then to have in mind the theological and sociological nature of the church. This task implies an open theological and sociological attitude in order to approach correctly the churches, and their role and mission in the world.

According to some scholars of the religious phenomenon in Guatemala the effect of these churches as far as changes of values and attitudes is indirect (Velázquez 1998:11). This perspective underlines that the role of the church is not in the political trenches, but at the heart of civil society. This means that the NPCs and the other Evangelicals need to forge and articulate a Christian worldview that is pertinent to both the gospel and society. It also places certain boundaries expected of the church in its political role. On other hand, the NPCs also need to revise their theology because they have the tendency to add new things to their beliefs and praxis without the needed biblical filter. With a sense of urgency there is a need to deepen the significance, nature and outreach of the church as a 'Kingdom of God community' within the social context of the country. Numeric growth and the building of mega churches, tends to deviate attention and the feeling of what it means to be a fraternal community ready to share with the world.

The NPCCS and all the Evangelicals will be able to have a major impact if the social capital that they possess is qualified and can take part from different angles in the civil society in favour of social change: 'The contribution of the Protestant Church to forge a national project must basically be seen in the area of definition, promotion and interjection

of values and not in the formulation of ideologies or the creation of political institutions' (Miguez Bonino in Campos 1997: 68). The final results of the thesis shows that the NPCs have the road ahead open before reframing key areas of their life and mission so as to make a greater and more integral impact in all spheres of society. The lay people from all evangelical churches have the opportunity to impulse a spiritual and social transformation from different spaces of the Guatemalan society.

APPENDIX : Questionnaires and surveys

A. Questionnaire for Neo-Pentecostal lay people

General Data:

Name
Age
Profession
Church
Position
Date

In your opinion, what is the mission of the church?

Do you believe that the Bible has something to say about social problems?

If yes, why?

If not, why not?

Do you consider that the church should contribute to the solution of the country's social problems?

If yes, why?

If not, why not?

Does your church have social assistance projects? What are they?

Do you participate in some of them?

If yes, why?

If not, why not?

Do you believe that Christians should participate in committees for the improvement of the neighbourhood?

If yes, why?

If not, why not?

Have you participated or are you participating in some committee?

Do you believe Christians can participate in politics?

If yes, why?

If not, why not?

Did you vote in the last elections in the country?

If yes, why?

If not, why not?

Would you vote for a Christian candidate for the presidency?

If yes, why?

If not, why not?

In your opinion, what is the cause of poverty in the country? How can the church contribute to the solution of this problem?

Do you believe that Christians should insist that the government fulfil its obligations to the people?

If yes, why?

If not, why not?

Have you participated in some manifestation against the government on behalf of the population?

If yes, why?

If not, why not?

In your opinion, do the indigenous peoples contribute or hinder the development of the country?

If yes, why?

If not, why not?

Should a woman dedicate herself to the home or can she develop herself outside the home?

Do you receive teaching in your church that helps you improve your social and economic life?

If yes, why?

If not, why not?

Could you mention a teaching that has been useful to you?

Has your economic situation improved as a result of this teaching?

If yes, in what areas?

If not, why not?

Does your church have family groups?

Do you participate in them?

Why do you attend those groups?

Do they provide some help in facing economic or family problems?

If yes, why?

If not, why not?

What type of help do they provide?

In what way can Christians contribute to the changes that the country needs?

Investigation of Neo-Pentecostal Churches, Guatemala City, on behalf of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies 2005

B. Survey for Neo-Pentecostal lay people

INSTRUCTIONS

Please fill out the form according to the questions asked in the respective areas. Please only mark one of the options presented. Thank you very much for your valuable contribution.

I. Personal Information

Age_____

Sex: Male 1 / Female 2

Marital Status:

Single 1 / Living Together 2 / Married 3 / Divorced 4 / Widow/er 5

Church_____

Education: Elementary 1 / High School 2 / College 3 / Master 4

Monthly income (Equivalent in American dollars) From \$13-\$133 1 / \$133- \$395 2 / \$396-\$658 3 / +\$659 4

Do you rent a house: Yes 1 / No 2

Date of the interview_____

II. The Christian and the Church

1. What religion do your parents practice?

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Catholic | 1 |
| Evangelical | 2 |
| Mixed (Catholic-Evangelical) | 3 |
| Other religious group_____ | 4 |

2. Did you accept Christ in the church you attend at the moment?

- | | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

3. If you attended another church before, why did you decide to join the church you're attending now?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| The distance | 1 |
| It didn't fulfil my expectations | 2 |
| I didn't agree with the teaching | 3 |
| Other reasons_____ | 4 |

4. Is there a chance for the members of your church to participate in any of the church ministries?

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| In all of them | 1 |
| In some of them | 2 |
| In none of them | 3 |
| It's hard to get involved | 4 |

5. At the time, do you have any responsibility (ministry) in your church?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| Temporarily | 2 |
| No | 3 |
| I just go to church every Sunday | 4 |

6. How is the relationship between the pastor(s) and the members of your church?
- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Very close | 1 |
| Average | 2 |
| Weak | 3 |
| There is no relationship | 4 |
7. Do you contribute financially to your church?
- | | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
8. How do you contribute financially to your church?
- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Monthly | 1 |
| Single offerings | 2 |
| Sunday's offering | 3 |
| Other ways_____ | 4 |
9. Why do you go to your actual church?
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Because I feel comfortable there | 1 |
| Because I know the people | 2 |
| Because they allow me to participate | 3 |
| All of the above | 4 |
10. What opinion do you have about other Christian churches, especially the Catholic?
- | | |
|---|---|
| I don't know about them | 1 |
| I don't have any contact with them | 2 |
| I assist when I'm invited | 3 |
| We must not relate to the Catholic Church as an institution | 4 |
| Other reasons_____ | 5 |

III. VISION OF SOCIETY

11. Do you believe that the Bible relates to all areas of human life?
- | | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| Maybe | 2 |
| I do not know | 3 |
| To all of them | 4 |
| It has to do only with spiritual things | 5 |
12. Should the church as an institution contribute to solving the problems of education, health and environment, among others?
- | | |
|---|---|
| It should do it for everyone | 1 |
| It should do it for their members only | 2 |
| It shouldn't because it's not part of its mission | 3 |
| It's the government's responsibility | 4 |
13. Does your church have aid projects (education, health, among others)?
- | | |
|--|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| I don't know | 3 |
| It doesn't have, but I think it should | 4 |
14. If your church has a project, describe what type?
-
15. Are you involved in your church's projects?
- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| Sometimes | 2 |
| I don't know about them | 3 |
| I'm not involved | 4 |

16. If your answer is no, why aren't you involved?
- | | |
|--|---|
| It's not a Christian responsibility | 1 |
| Material things are temporary | 2 |
| The mission of the church is to evangelize | 3 |
| I don't participate, because I don't know how to | 4 |
17. Do you consider that being a teacher, a doctor or a politician is equally important than being a pastor?
- | | |
|--|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| Maybe | 2 |
| Definitely not | 3 |
| Every profession should be at the service of God | 4 |
18. Do you believe that Christians should participate in committees to improve their community?
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| Maybe | 2 |
| I don't know | 3 |
| Definitely not | 4 |
19. Do you participate in a committee to develop and improve the quality of life of the population?
- | | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| Sometimes | 2 |
| I have never participated | 3 |
| I don't participate, but I'm willing to serve | 4 |
20. Should Christians be worried about the issues of society if Christ is coming again soon?
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| Maybe | 2 |
| I don't know | 3 |
| Definitely not | 4 |

IV. POLITICAL VISION

21. Do you think that political participation is part of the Christian responsibility?
- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| Maybe | 2 |
| I don't know | 3 |
| No | 4 |
22. Have you voted in the Guatemalan General Elections?
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Always | 1 |
| Sometimes | 2 |
| Never | 3 |
| I don't think voting is important | 4 |
23. ¿Do you consider that Christians should establish their own political parties and affiliate to them?
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| Maybe | 2 |
| I don't know | 3 |
| Definitely not | 4 |
24. If a member of your church or other Christian church was running for president, would you vote for him/her?
- | | |
|--|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| It depends of their government programme | 2 |
| Yes, because he/she is Christian | 3 |
| I wouldn't vote for him/her | 4 |
25. Do you consider that the government is responsible for the poverty in the country?
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| Maybe | 2 |
| I don't know | 3 |
| Definitely not | 4 |

26. In your opinion the poverty that affects the country is a result of:
- | | |
|---|---|
| Lack of initiative and laziness of the people | 1 |
| Unemployment | 2 |
| Economic inequality | 3 |
| Consequence of sin | 4 |
| All of the above | 5 |
27. Do you believe that Christians can make the government keep their obligations to serve the population?
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| Maybe | 2 |
| Sometimes | 3 |
| Definitely not | 4 |
28. Do you consider that Christians should participate in public manifestations in favour of the population?
- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| Yes, but with some exceptions | 2 |
| Never | 3 |
29. If you were nominated for director of a parent, worker, or teacher committee, or any other position, would you accept to be selected?
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| Maybe | 2 |
| I don't know | 3 |
| I don't think this issues concern me | 4 |
30. Do you consider that the church can contribute to solving the problems such as poverty, violence, corruption, among others?
- | | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| Maybe | 2 |
| Sometimes | 3 |
| It shouldn't get involved in these issues | 4 |

V. CULTURAL VISION

31. Do you think the Bible has something to say to Guatemalan culture or any other?
- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| I don't know | 3 |
32. According to your opinion, the culture and indigenous communities contribute to the development of the country?
- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| Maybe | 2 |
| I don't know | 3 |
| No | 4 |
33. Role of women: according to your point of view women should:
- | | |
|---|---|
| Dedicate to husband and to house chores | 1 |
| Help at home and practise a profession | 2 |
| Work and help at church | 3 |
| All of the above are valid answers | 4 |
34. Do you consider that Christians should get involved with science, technology, art?
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| Maybe | 2 |
| I don't know | 3 |
| Definitely not | 4 |

35. Do you read any non-Christian literature?	
Yes	1
Sometimes	2
No	3
I read Christian books only	4

36. Do you participate in cultural activities promoted by the government, your neighbourhood or school?	
Yes	1
Sometimes	2
Christians shouldn't waste their time in these activities	3
Definitely not	4

VI. PARTICIPATION IN FAMILY GROUPS

37. Does your church have family groups?	
Yes	1
No	2

38. Do you attend any of these family groups?	
Yes	1
Sometimes	2
Seldom	3
I don't attend any	4

39. What is the main objective of these groups according to what you know?	
The growth of the church	1
The study of the Bible	2
Provide spiritual and material aid to the members of the group	3
Bring other people to the knowledge of Christ	4
All of the above	5

40. Are these groups open to everyone?	
Yes	1
I don't know	2
They're just for Christians	3
No	4

41. Do these groups provide help in terms of clothing, food, medicines, or job search to any of their members?	
Yes	1
Sometimes	2
Seldom	3
No	4

42. Does the church and family group's teaching help you in your search of social and economic welfare?	
Yes	1
Sometimes	2
Seldom	3
They don't relate to economic issues	4

43. Does the church or do the family groups provide any kind of marriage counselling to their members?	
Yes	1
Sometimes	2
Seldom	3
None of the church's or family group's business	4

44. What draws you to the family groups' meetings?	
The feeling of belonging to a group	1
The values to face life with learnt through the teachings	2
Help provided to people in need	3
All of the above	4
Any other reason_____	5

45. According to your personal experience, your conversion to Christianity has to do with:
- | | |
|---|---|
| A change in my relationship with God and my neighbour | 1 |
| Acquiring values to face life in a better way | 2 |
| A change in spiritual and economic life | 3 |
| All of the above | 4 |
46. Do the family groups of your church participate in any activity organized by the neighbourhood?
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| Sometimes | 2 |
| I don't know | 3 |
| Definitely not | 4 |
47. How do you think Christians can promote positive changes in the country?
- | | |
|---|---|
| Through spiritual war prayer | 1 |
| Through spreading the gospel | 2 |
| Through members of the church involved in different fields of society | 3 |
| I agree with the ideas above | 4 |
48. Do you believe that prayer is the only way to change the country?
- | | |
|--|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| I don't agree | 2 |
| Yes, but it is also necessary to present proposals to solve the problems | 3 |

* Research done with the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS) Israel Ortiz, Guatemala, May 2002

C. Survey for Neo-Pentecostal entrepreneurs and professionals

INSTRUCTIONS

Please fill in the following form according to the questions in the respective blocks. Mark only one of the options presented and respond to the question in the space provided. Many thanks for your valuable assistance.

I. PERSONAL DATA OF THE PERSON INTERVIEWED

Age_____
Sex: Masculine 1 Feminine 2
Civil State: Single 1 Together 2 Married 3 Divorced 4 Widowed 5
Church_____
Education Level: Primary 1 Secondary 2 University 3 Post grad 4
Income Level (Equivalent in American dollars): From \$13-\$133 1 \$133-\$395 2 From \$396-\$658 3 \$659-\$1316 4 Above % \$1317 5
Do you own your business?: Yes 1 No 2
Date of Interview_____

II. QUESTIONS

1. Were you converted to the Christian faith (accepted Jesus Christ) in your present church?

Yes	1
No	2

2. What is your occupation

Businessman	1
Military	2
Public functionary	3
Professional	4
Other _____	5

2.1 Where do you work?_____

2.2 What position do you occupy? _____

2.3 When did you start?_____

3. If you are a businessman

3.1. Do you own the business?	Yes	1
	No	2

3.2. What kind of business is it? _____

3.3 When did you start it?

7.2 Do you consider that your present church has been a key factor in raising your social, economic and cultural position?

Yes	1
Partly	2
No	3

7.3 In what way has your church contributed to elevation that position?

6. In your personal opinion, What will Guatemala be like in the future? _____

8.1 Do you believe that the church should contribute to changing the poverty situation in which the majority of Guatemalans live?

Yes	1
No	2

How? _____

8.2 Do you believe that Christians should help to eradicate the corruption and the impunity of the country

Yes	1
No	2

How? _____

* Research done by Israel Ortiz Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMC) UK, May 2003

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1. INTERVIEWS

Table 1.1 List of senior pastors

Code	Church	Position
P1ICV	Iglesia Cristiana Verbo	General Pastor
P2FCG	Fraternidad Cristiana de Guatemala	Founder or General pastor
P3EHS	El Shaddai	Founder or General pastor
P4LDG	Iglesia Lluvias de Gracia	Founder or General pastor
P5IFD	Iglesia la Familia de Dios	Founder or General pastor
P6IVF	Iglesia Visión de Fe	Founder or General pastor

Table 1.2 Associate pastors interviewed

Code	Church	Position
A1LDG	Iglesia Lluvias de Gracia	Member of pastoral team
A2LDG	Iglesia Lluvias de Gracia	Member of pastoral team
A3LDG	Iglesia Lluvias de Gracia	Member of pastoral team
A4ICV	Iglesia Cristiana Verbo	Pastor of church
A5ICV	Iglesia Cristiana Verbo	Pastor of church
A6ICV	Iglesia Cristiana Verbo	Pastor of church
A7ESH	El Shaddai	Biblical institute director
A8ESH	El Shaddai	Co-pastor
A9ESH	El Shaddai	Woman Pastor
A10IFD	Iglesia Familia de Dios	Co-pastor and Seminary Rector
A11FCG	Fraternidad Cristiana de Guatemala	Co-pastor

Tables 1.3 Data interviews of Laity of the Neo-Pentecostal Churches

Verbo Christian church (ICV)

Code	Age	Profession	Sex	Church	Position	Date
L1ICV	37	Housewife	F	ICV	-	25-10-05
L2ICV	26	Medical Visitor	M	ICV	-	25-10-05
L3ICV	43	Business Administrator	M	ICV	House Church Leader	25-10-05
L4ICV	24	Teacher	F	ICV	Sunday School Teacher	23-10-05
L5ICV	46	Accountant	M	ICV	House Church Assistant	16-10-05
L6ICV	62	Agronomist Engineer	M	ICV	Rector of University	08-08-01
L7ICV	-	-	M	ICV	Administrator Casa Bernabé	22-11-02
L8ICV	45	Sales	M	ICV	House Church	16-10-05
L9ICV	-	-	M	ICV	School Manager	11-01-06

Christian Fraternity of Guatemala (IFCG)

Code	Age	Profession	Sex	Church	Position	Date
L1IFCG	37	Publicist	M	FCG	-	16-10-05
L2IFCG	34	Industrial Mechanic	M	FCG	Worship Team	16-10-05
L3IFCG	53	Journalist	F	FCG	Deaconess	16-10-05
L4IFCG	40	Maintenance worker	M	FCG	Coffee Group Leader	16-10-05
L5IFCG	27	Housewife	F	FCG	-	16-10-05
L6FCG	-	Dental Surgeon	M	FCG	Medical trips	03-02-03
L7FCG		Economist	M	FCG	Bank Manager	16-08-03

Rains of Grace Church (LDG)

Code	Age	Profession	Sex	Church	Position	Date
L1LDG	23	Consultant	F	LDG	-	27-10-05
L2LDG	29	Secretary	F	LDG	Protocol	27-10-05
L3LDG	-	Administrator of enterprises	M	LDG	School Director	04-09-02
L4LDG	35	Business Administrator	M	LDG	Worship Team	29-09-05
L5LDG	37	Engineer	M	LDG	-	29-09-05
L6LDG	25	Accountant	M	LDG	Youth Team	29-09-05
L7LDG	24	Maintenance worker	M	LDG	Deacon	27-09-05
L8LDG	-	-	M	LDG	Member	10-10-02

El Shaddai' church (ESH)

Code	Age	Profession	Sex	Church	Position	Date
L1ESH	50	Bilingual Secretary	F	ESH	-	25-10-05
L2ESH	31	Systems Engineer	M	ESH	Leader of training	25-10-05
L3ESH	29	Administrator	M	ESH	-	30-10-05
L4ESH	47	Merchant	M	ESH	Worship Team	31-10-05
L5ESH	53	Technical Eng Computation	M	ESH	Server	29-10-05
L6ESH	19	Student	F	ESH	Youth Leader	29-10-05
L7ESH	50	Educator	F	ESH	School principal	08-05-03
L8ESH	28	Doctor	M	ESH	Hands of Love	12-11-04
L9ESH	44	Housewife	F	ESH	Hands of Love	10-05-03
L10ESH	-	Small Businessman	M	ESH	Cell Group Coordinator	19-05-03
L11ESH	-	Accountant	M	ESH	Station Manager	10-04-03

Church the Family of God (IFD)

Code	Age	Profession	Sex	Church	Position	Date
L1IFD	22	Maintenance	M	IFD	Intercession	28-10-05
L2IFD	39	Farmer	M	IFD	In charge of Group of 12	28-10-05
L3IFD	49	Accountant	M	IFD	Intercession	2-10-05
L4IFD	58	Housewife	F	IFD	-	30-10-05
L5IFD	-	Engineer	M	IFD	Coordinator of Professionals	12-06-03
L6IFD	41	Caretaker	F	IFD	Intercession	30-10-05
L7IFD	38	Graphics Designer	M	IFD	Evangelism	28-10-05

Vision of Faith Church (IVF)

Code	Age	Profession	Sex	Church	Position	Date
L1IVF		Politician/ Businessman	M	IVF	Family Group Leader	13-02-02
L2IVF	34	Programmer	M	IVF	Youth Pastor	25-10-05
L3IVF	30	Translator	F	IVF	Worship Team	16-10-05
L4IVF	53	Beautician	F	IVF	Member	21-10-05
L5IVF	34	Electronics Engineer	M	IVF	Cell Pastor	11-10-05

L Anonymous	-	-	-	-	-	10-06-03
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Table 1.4 Internal observers

Code	Institution	Position	Occupation	Church	Date
IO1	High School	Director	Theologian and writer	Evangelical	08-10-00
IO2	Evangelical Institute and	Founder	Historian and teacher	Evangelical	10-10-00
IO3	Private University	Professor	Jesuit philosopher	Catholic	26-03-03
IO4	GNO	Director	Theologian and economist	Evangelical	14-10-02
IO5	Theological Seminar	Dean	Theologian and historian	Evangelical	12-11-02
IO6	Publicity Agency	Manager	Journalist and business man	Evangelical	09-12-02
IO7	Evangelical Alliance	President	Pastor and theologian	Evangelical	09-02-07
IO8	Institute for leadership	Director	Consulter and business man	Evangelical	10-06-04
IO9	Political Party	General Secretary	Politician and lawyer	Evangelical	27-05-04

Table 1.5 External observers

Code	Institution	Position	Occupation	Church	Country	Date
EO1	Student movement	Coordinator of training	Theologian and writer	Evangelical	Colombia	21-03-03
EO2	College	Professor and historian	Historian and writer	Evangelical	Peru	18-07-03
EO3	Confederation of Evangelicals	President	Pastor	Evangelical	Costa Rica	10-02-03

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