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NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS: NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA

Latin American societies have fostered an abundance of religious revitalization movements since the early colonial period. Ongoing religious ferment and innovation in Iberoamerican contexts has often been interpreted as an adaptive response to such conditions as land dispossession, widespread poverty, racialized social systems, acculturative processes, political instability, and the demands of nation-building. Explanations of these movements must also consider the fact that religious systems have long played central roles in constructing and critiquing the social order in Latin America. Since remote antiquity, the indigenous peoples of the Americas have fashioned highly adaptive cultures centered on mystical cosmologies that encompass all aspects of life and natural relationships. The Spanish and Portuguese colonizers, and the later independent states, espoused forms of governance and culture rooted in an almost hermetically Catholic conception of social life. The encounters of these religious influences, in the context of severe social circumstances and frequently shifting political orders, create fertile conditions for symbolic change and religious mobilization.

In his seminal 1956 work on revitalization movements, Anthony Wallace proposed that the process of religious revitalization involves an effort by a segment of a society to resolve incommensurability between existing religious formulations and changing perceived realities. From this perspective, prophets function as diagnosticians who resynthesize religious knowledge and address sociocultural stresses. This article surveys the nature of Latin American revitalization movements through four empirical varieties of movement activity:

1. Indigenous nativisms and utopias;
2. Folk-saint movements;
3. Spiritist cults;
4. Protestant-related religious movements.

Burgeoning Protestant recruitment since the 1970s accounts for the fastest rate of religious change that Iberoamerica has experienced since the introduction of Catholicism.

INDIGENOUS RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

From the Amazon to the deserts of northern Mexico, the impact of European contact and modern state–minority relations have precipitated dramatic religious responses among indigenous peoples. The most common variety of indigenous religious movement is nativism, a belief in the return of an idealized native culture or age, as exemplified in the nineteenth-century Ghost Dance of the Plains Indians. However, the imagined past usually reflects some blending of symbolic elements that results from acculturative processes. Historically, armed rebellions have frequently followed nativistic prophecies and rituals. As one might expect, native movements that involved uprisings produced the richest archival evidence. Such movements generally represent attempts to intensify and defend ethnic boundaries and to symbolically mediate (often through syncretism) between the religion and social-status system of a minority group and those of dominant society. Mexican indigenous societies have produced some of the most famed examples of nativistic movements. Prominent among these are the

Chiapanec Mayan cults and rebellions of Cancuc (1712) and Chamula (1867–1870), the Yucatec Mayan Caste War movement of the Talking Cross of the mid-1800s, Yaqui and Mayo millenarian movements of the late nineteenth century, and the Great God Engineer cult of the Oaxacan Chinantec of the 1970s. The Chinantec cult arose in response to the Mexican government's proposal to relocate peasants in order to build a dam for commercial agriculture.

The movement centered on the town of Chamula, in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, resulted in a revolt known as Cuscat's War, or the War of Saint Rose. It exemplifies the themes of resistance and religious blending of many nativistic movements. The cult was a response to 350 years of domination by regional elites and rising pressures within Mayan communities resulting from Mexico's recently promulgated liberal laws, which aimed at breaking up all land corporations. A Chamulan prophet, Pedro Díaz Cuscat, declared himself to be an Indian priest, and he donned a Catholic priest's garb after three obsidian oracle stones began to speak through his niece. Cuscat established an altar with a deity's image, declaring his niece to be the mother of the god. The movement attracted throngs of Maya, and the cult center became an important marketplace. Cuscat revealed that the Maya should reject worship before any *ladino* (Euro-Mexican) sacred images. He presided over the crucifixion of a Mayan boy on Good Friday of 1868. *Ladino* authorities, worried about a possible Mayan revolt, imprisoned Cuscat for a brief period. The following year, a *mestizo* militarized cult followers and was executed for leading a failed assault on San Cristóbal, the region's seniorial city. Cuscat raided *ladino* properties up until 1870, when he died and the movement faded. Some features of modern-day Chamulan ritual still show the influence of the Cuscat cult. The nativistic search for an ideal age through the creation of an indigenous saint, the indigenous Christ, and an Indian mother of God, sprang from Mayan yearnings for cultural and economic self-determination. Oracular flint cults have ancient roots in Mayan religions. But, as with similar movements, the symbolic solution proposed by the prophet incorporated nonindigenous elements in an effort to exercise control over the Indians' acculturative realities.

Amazonian nativistic movements tend to exhibit definite millenarian traits. Tukanoan, Arawakan, and Tupí-Guaraní peoples of the Amazonian lowlands have an extensive record of nativistic activity. Some movements have led to insurgency under messianic leadership, occasionally by an outsider, as in the Chamulan revolt. Perhaps the best-known millenarian cases from this region are the so-called "Land Without Evil" movements of colonial Brazil. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Tupí-Guaraní believers migrated great distances across South America, following the revelations of marginal shaman-prophets (*carais*), men sometimes identified with Catholic supernaturals. The pilgrims' goal was to reach a utopian land where they would find peace, immortality, and safety from the mass die-offs of native peoples caused by European diseases plaguing the Portuguese-dominated coastal regions. Michael Brown's 1991 ethnohistorical study of Amazonian millenarian movements suggests that cultural blending and hierarchical shifts within these movements point to an internal cultural critique, as well as a reaction against external forces. Movement adepts may view their cultural systems as lacking in certain adaptive powers and may attempt, through religious means, to adopt certain aspects of the majority cultural tradition that they regard as more efficacious.

Andean indigenous cosmologies possess a millenarian strain expressed in the notion of the *pachacuti*, a divinely caused upheaval or change in era. Since colonial times, members of Kechwa (Inca) nativistic movements have awaited the return of Inkarrí, a mythical Inca ruler executed by the Spanish. Though decapitated, Inkarrí's body continued to grow inside the earth. Andean messianic tradition holds that he will liberate Peru's indigenous peoples by reestablishing the pre-Conquest Inca state and civilization. Perhaps the most renowned movement based on this tradition was that led in 1780 to 1781 by José Gabriel Condorcanqui, or Túpac Amaru II, a descendant of the Inca emperor Huayna Cápac. He led more than 20,000 Kechwa peasants into armed rebellion against Spanish abuses in the Andes. Followers regarded him as a legitimate Inca ruler with a corresponding semi-

divine nature. Túpac Amaru rebels were unable to take the ancient Incan capital of Cusco, and the movement waned. The colonial administration executed Túpac Amaru II and members of his family in 1781.

Even when nativistic groups were not engaging in military activities, as in some Amazonian cases, governments often regarded them as politically threatening. A prophet might urge followers to alter their economic behavior or to criticize governmental legitimacy. For instance, in the Venancio Christo movement of the northwest Amazon, from 1857 to 1858, the prophet revealed that his tribal followers should not perform any labor for whites. He also prophesied that whites who did not heed his message would be obliterated. Missionaries were excluded by Venancio's creation of a ministerial corps bearing saints' names to confer the sacraments. Consequently, the Brazilian government vigorously persecuted the movement. Violent state suppression of various kinds of prophetic groups has been common in many Latin American countries.

FOLK-SAINT MOVEMENTS

Since the 1870s, Latin American peasantries have produced several messianic movements and prophetic holy cities based upon a folk-Catholic worldview, folk-saint cults, apocalypticism, and oppositional ideologies. Folk Catholicism is a religious worldview associated primarily with the poor. It focuses on practical solutions and thaumaturgy over other-worldly salvational issues. Folk saints are individuals whom folk-Catholic practitioners, rather than the hegemonic Roman Catholic Church, regard as charged with saintliness in both life and death. The holiness of the folk saint is judged by his or her willingness to suffer vicariously, and by his or her readiness to use divine gifts for miraculous healing, giving counsel, and interpreting mystical signs in order to aid the believer. Folk-saint cults using doctrinal revelation through a medium have shown considerable potential to evolve into sectarian organizations.

The holy city of Joaseiro do Norte, today a large city in the northeast Brazilian state of Ceará, began as a secular hamlet of the same name. In 1889 Father Cícero Romão Batista was distributing Ash Wednesday communion in the town when a host shed blood on the tongue of a young laundress, Maria de Araújo. Thousands of impoverished northeastern Brazilians poured into the town, drawn by the miraculous sign and the saintly reputations of Father Cícero and Maria. Maria revealed that Joaseiro would be the ark of salvation to protect humanity from the punishing hand of God. Father Cícero was suspended by his bishop for preaching his millenarian notion that the shedding of Christ's blood in the latter days at Joaseiro represented a second redemption. The colony's population reached 15,000 by 1910. Even in death, Father Cícero continues to enjoy a reputation as a thaumaturge and national hero.

Joaseiro was preceded by the colony of Império do Belo Monte (Canudos) of the folk saint and prophet Antonio Conselheiro. In the 1880s, Conselheiro (or Good Jesus, as his followers called him) preached the condemnation of the new Republican government of Brazil and led revivalistic folk-Catholic services in the impoverished backlands of northeast Brazil. A holy city of perhaps 5,000 followers sprang up in the region. The colony's professed belief that the republic was ungodly and that the monarchy should return prompted a military siege of the city. Conselheiro died during the attacks, most of the male defenders were massacred, and government militias captured a large number of prisoners. Similarly, a millenarian thaumaturge in the mountains of the Dominican Republic, Olivorio Mateo, died leading hundreds of his chiliastic rural followers in their defense against government attacks on their camps around 1916.

Recruitment to the Brazilian colonies was promoted by a long-standing fervent millenarian brand of folk-Catholic belief common among the Sertão region's peasants. The republic at the turn of the

century began to encourage the breakdown of patron-client ties between landholders and peasants through the sale of land and contractual labor policies. Severe droughts produced widespread destitution and hunger, along with loss of access to cultivable land and food redistribution. Peasants believed that their protective patron-client ties were divinely ordained. Thus, the sacred order appeared to be in upheaval, requiring an apocalyptic restoration under a new, saintly patron. Historical evidence points to peasant seekers' desire to join the colonies in order to escape banditry, to acquire a livelihood and food, and to find personal religious reform.

A contemporary millenarian colony has existed in Michoacán State, Mexico, since 1973. Nueva Jerusalén originated in a movement centered on millenarian apparitions of the Virgin of the Rosary to a peasant seer, Gabina Romero (d. 1981). The Virgin announced that the world would end before the year 2000, and that the Catholic hierarchy had lost its legitimacy. She requested a special community where she could live in body and soul and save the world. Gabina took the Virgin's message to Father Nabor Cárdenas, a local parish priest whom the Virgin had designated as her "chosen son." Father Nabor, also called "Papá," founded the colony, became a charismatic leader, and renounced the post-Vatican II church. The Virgin gave ongoing messages to Gabina and her successor medium, building up the colony's doctrine and highly stratified social structure. Residents and pilgrims spun miracle stories about seer and prophet over the years. Gabina became the Virgin's chosen handservant, the holiest woman on earth. The Virgin made Father Nabor the acting head of the church and declared that he is incapable of intentionally offending God.

Nueva Jerusalén's population of mostly peasants reached nearly 5,000 in the early 1980s, and currently stands at about 3,100 members. The sect's beliefs are rooted in Father Nabor's interpretation of apocalyptic varieties of the Catholic Traditionalist movement, combined with elements of Mexican folk Catholicism. Traditionalists hold that the post-Vatican II church is in apostasy. As Nueva Jerusalén is believed to be the remnant Catholic Church in the latter days, its bureaucracy replicates various religious orders for priests, monks, and a convent of about 400 nuns. Lay residents are ranked in quasi-monastic groups with an ascetic lifestyle. Ritual participation, penance, and work life are intensive and tightly regulated.

Recruits joined the colony with many of the same motivations as the Brazilian followers. Mexican peasants in the 1970s were under rising pressure due to increasing production costs, poor and inadequate land, and government efforts to connect rural producers to agribusiness. These factors promoted many peasants' availability to migrate to the colony. In addition, ethnographic research on the colony shows a strong pattern of interest in personal reform among men, with women acting as key agents in their sons' and husbands' recruitments. The folk-saint colony functions as a total institution where personal problems are formulated entirely in mythological and ritual terms. The highly structured, world-rejecting lifestyle of the colony's elect strongly supports personal change and discourages recidivism after conversion. Nueva Jerusalén's millenarian teachings do not appear to have played a significant role in most peasants' recruitments, although they do underwrite the colony lifestyle that many recruits found attractive.

El Niño Fidencio is perhaps the most successful folk-saint healer in Latin American history. José Fidencio de Jesús Síntora Constantino, a ranch worker in northern Mexico, received visions of Christ and God the Father instructing him to cure the sick. Between 1925 and his death in 1938, his healing ministry attracted tens of thousands of pilgrims to the desert site of Espinazo, Nuevo León. Fidencio combined spiritualist techniques and beliefs with those of folk-Catholic *curanderismo* (the Mexican folk health-care system). A line of trained mediums, mostly women, have ensured that he could continue to work after his death through spirit possession. Networks of El Niño's devotees are spread throughout Mexico and U.S.-Mexican communities. In July 1993 the Mexican government registered an independent religious association derived from the cult, the Iglesia Fidencista Cristiana. The new

church is an unusual example of an institutionalized, officially recognized folk-saint movement, for most of these cults remain diffuse and noncorporate in character. The Fidencista Church employs its own adaptation of the Novus Ordo Catholic mass, containing references to spiritualist beliefs and the supremacy of Fidencio in the spirit world. More than 600 mediums are said to be registered with the church in both Mexico and the United States. Unaffiliated mediums and devotees still constitute the overwhelming majority of followers. Like Fidencio himself, they consider their identity to be simply Catholic.

Another large Mexican folk-saint movement was that of Teresa Urrea, known as the Saint of Cabora, who was active between 1889 and 1906 in the Arizona-Mexico border region. Teresa was famed for her ability to heal miraculously with mixes of dirt, oil, and saliva. "Long live the Saint of Cabora" became a rallying cry in nativistic, millenarian revolts among the Rarámuri and the Mayo in 1891 and 1892. Fearful of her reputation, the regime of Porfirio Díaz banished her to Arizona, where she continued to heal until her death in 1906.

SPIRITIST CULTS

Latin American movements oriented around the mystical provision of health and advice often show strong roots in Kardecist spiritualism. (Kardecist beliefs and practices stem from the teachings of the nineteenth-century French educator, Allan Kardec, regarding human contact with the spirit world.) These therapeutic new religious movements (NRMs) are usually diffuse, have no folk saints, and draw upon folk-Catholic traditions. Spiritualist healing, centered on temples and mediums, witnessed an upswing in popularity in Latin American societies during the early twentieth century. Theosophical spirituality has contributed to the rise of a number of healing movements, such as the Mexican Espiritualismo Trinitario Mariano (Marian Trinitarian Spiritualism). Umbanda is among the most studied of the spiritist movements.

Umbanda (an invented term) is essentially an eclectic audience cult. Men of the business and upper classes in Brazil started the movement in the 1920s by melding Kardecism, aspects of Catholic teaching, and Afro-Brazilian Candomblé, a creolized spirit-possession tradition centered on the worship of Yoruban deities, called *orixás* (orishas). The syncretization became part of an effort to forge a distinctively Brazilian spiritual tradition that could sidestep allegedly backward black ethnic religion and Catholic dogma, both of which were considered inappropriate for modernizing whites and mulattos. Umbanda temples, or *terreiros*, now exist by the thousands in major Brazilian cities. It has been estimated that at least 60 percent of adult Brazilians, most of whom identify as Catholics, consult with Umbanda mediums. The movement has indeed become a national religious tradition.

Umbanda takes a variety of forms that may be arranged along a continuum, from the most Candomblé-like appearance to the most Kardecist. All Umbanda varieties focus on spiritualist notions of charity and spirit consultation as a means of aiding the living. The most Kardecist form is sometimes referred to as Umbanda Pura or Umbanda Branca. Mediums wear white spiritist robes, and African *orishas*, or deities, are shunned. However, the term *orixás* is used generally in Umbanda to denote the spirits. Umbanda's creators introduced spirits of Brazilian political and other historical luminaries, masculine Amazonian Indians (*caboclos*), and wise black slaves (*pretos velhos*). A panoply of spirits has grown over the decades to include people from many walks of life, each with his or her own personal history, known specialties, and favorite ritual offerings. The *terreiro* is headed by a master medium, called a mother of the saint (*mãe de santo*) or a father of the saint (*pãe de santo*). A believer identifies a spirit with whom she or he wishes to consult for a remedy, then approaches a medium in trance. The spirit will often prescribe a ritual involving such features as number symbolism or food offerings to keep trickster spirits (*exús*) at bay. An offering is left for the temple. Head mediums compete for clients in Brazil's libertarian religious environment, making the *terreiro* an unstable enterprise.

The spirit possession cult of María Lionza in Venezuela strongly resembles Umbanda. María Lionza also originated in the early twentieth century as part of an effort to invent a national image rooted partly in imagery of an indigenous past. The principal spirit being, María Lionza, is symbolized under two representations: as a nude Indian girl, Yara, who straddles a tapir, and as María, a girl dressed in the style of the Virgin Mary. Other spirits include Simón Bolívar, the spirit-doctor and folk hero José Gregorio Hernández (now in the process of canonization), and other prominent Venezuelans. Mount Sorte in María Lionza National Park, near Caracas, serves as the focal point for pilgrimages and is believed to be an ancient indigenous sacred site. Clearly, Umbanda and María Lionza originated as symbolic resources for shaping and celebrating emerging national identities.

PROTESTANT RELIGIOUS CHANGE

The spectacular growth of Protestant-related faiths in Latin America is now the subject of a large body of scholarly publications. In the twentieth century such groups as the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Baptists, and Presbyterians have become firmly established in every Latin American country, and over half of all Protestant members practice some type of Pentecostal worship. In most cases, U.S. Protestant missionaries helped to establish these groups early on. Later, new churches developed autochthonous leadership and adapted their worship to local cultures. For instance, two Swedish Americans founded the first Pentecostal church in Brazil in 1910, Assambléias de Deus. The church has long since become totally Brazilian in its hierarchy and operation. Migrants to the United States often have imported Pentecostal or other Protestant models for building native churches. In 1914 Romana Valenzuela established the first Mexican Pentecostal church in Chihuahua State, following her contact with William Seymour's Azusa Street Mission. Her Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús had grown to 130 congregations by 1944. Mexico's largest Protestant church is Iglesia de La Luz del Mundo (Light of the World), founded by a prophet from Guadalajara in the 1920s. The church has charismatic leadership and a sectarian colony organizational model, with colonies in various parts of central and eastern Mexico. La Luz del Mundo has expanded into the United States, carried by missionaries and Mexican immigrants.

Pentecostal churches have several features that substantially enhance their appeal among masses of folk Catholics. Pastors require little or no formal education in the ministry, and most possess class and cultural backgrounds similar to those of their working-class congregants. Pentecostal worship is ecstatic, involving a heightened emotional style through the use of *glossolalia* (speaking in tongues), lively music, liturgical dancing, and testimonials. Pentecostal churches are mostly local, independent congregations rooted in oral tradition. Pentecostals see the causes of illness largely in the folk-Catholic terms of negative spiritual forces, such as witchcraft, which only the Holy Spirit can banish. Most Pentecostal converts are attracted by promises of miraculous cures, something of great importance in an impoverished environment. They often remain because they either witness or receive a miraculous healing. Brazil's largest Pentecostal (or neo-Pentecostal) church, Edir Macedo's Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, specializes in exorcising Umbanda *orishas*. The spirits are believed to cause mental confusion that prevents the nonbeliever from making prudent lifestyle decisions and becoming a prosperous wage-earner or entrepreneur.

The growth of evangelical Protestantism, Mormonism, and the Jehovah's Witnesses as a whole is supported by an ascetic ethic that rejects the male prestige complex of heavy alcohol consumption and sexual conquests, along with secular entertainments in general. Women's interests in domesticating their husbands and sons thus drive much of the expansion. Pentecostal congregations in Brazil and elsewhere draw strong distinctions between the folk-Catholic male domain of the street and the household. Male Pentecostal converts in Brazil are said to change from being "kings of the street" to "masters of the house." Protestant emphases on work, frugality, marital fidelity, and financial security

of the family helps converts to maintain personal health and to accumulate assets. Although women do not usually acquire ministerial status within these churches, neither do they escape a patriarchal social system, but they do welcome the investments that a man makes in his household as a result of his conversion. Women also receive treatment as spiritual equals in the churches, because they have the gift of the Spirit, give testimonials, and serve in congregational ministries. In Mesoamerican and Andean indigenous communities, evangelical or Mormon frugality and the rejection of Catholicism enable converts to abandon systems of ritual obligation, such as the fiesta system, that hinder the accumulation of capital. Thus, studies of non-Catholic conversion are contributing ethnographic perspectives towards the critique of Max Weber's thesis linking the the capitalist ethic to the rise of Protestant values.

An interesting counterpoint to Pentecostal recruitment rates is the fact that Pentecostal churches tend to have the highest apostasy rates of all Latin American Protestant churches. The drop-out rate results partly from tension with the broader society and stringent behavioral and commitment norms. Congregants may be expected to attend long, ecstatic evening worship services twice a week, producing burn-out and lack of moral compliance, particularly for males. Thus, most Pentecostal groups rely on constant proselytization for replacement and sustained growth.

Latin American Pentecostalism may be understood as a largely endogenous movement, generated out of a folk-Catholic milieu. Since folk Catholicism is a practical religious variety that places high value on thaumaturgy, Pentecostal claims do not fundamentally break from the dominant religious worldview of the poor. Latin American Pentecostalism entails a redirecting of folk-Catholic belief. Nonetheless, Pentecostal and other non-Catholic groups significantly differ from surrounding society in the formation of corporate structures. Corporateness is marked and reinforced by a sense of spiritual election, signalled by glossolalia and baptism of the Spirit in Pentecostalism. Evangelicals often refer to themselves as *creyentes* or *crentes* (believers), distinguishing themselves from the dominant Catholic milieu. Church structures exert needed social pressure for healing the social illnesses associated with the male prestige complex and maintaining separation from worldliness. Dense internal networks of believers and tithing provide members with security, the faith that their investment in the church will mystically give them a return of health and prosperity. Such features are largely absent in spirit cults and folk Catholicism, whose practitioners do not profess a clear break with worldly behaviors.

Political adaptations of Protestant groups are far from uniform in Latin America. Major denominations have formed political associations at the national level to defend their interests. Unlike the mainline Protestant churches, the majority of Pentecostal congregations are small and marginal and have no bureaucracies to represent them before the state. In Mexico and other countries with histories of hostility towards Protestants, Pentecostals are often vulnerable to persecutions and discrimination by government and the general populace. In Chiapas State, Mexico, Maya traditionalists and folk Catholics have forcibly expelled large numbers of Protestants from Chamula. In recent years, the Mexican government considered a measure, backed by the country's Catholic bishops, that would have excluded any church having less than 1.5 percent of the national population from being recognized officially as a religious association. Obviously, this would rule out most Mexican Pentecostal groups.

In Brazil and Mexico, Pentecostal pastors may seek to forge patron-client ties with powerful political figures, exchanging votes for "God's candidate" for material improvements for their congregants. Bargaining of this sort often leads to public controversy. La Luz del Mundo has courted the Mexican official party, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), bringing party officials to their mother colony in Guadalajara. Pentecostal members are likely to hold that divine blessings accrue to the church from working within a system of political patronage. By contrast, progressive Catholic groups,

such as the Base Ecclesial Communities, attempt to improve conditions for the poor through direct confrontation and political activism. Pentecostal ideology deemphasizes political activism in part because of a fundamentalist scriptural orientation, supporting the notion that secular authorities are divinely sanctioned. Their viewpoint derives in large measure from their reading of *Romans* 14:1–2.

Pentecostal orientation towards political participation with other Protestants is changing somewhat in response to economic hardship and political crises. In Chiapas, the winner of the gubernatorial election of 2000 was the independent candidate, Pablo Salazar Mendicuchia, a lawyer with a Presbyterian and Nazarene family background. He ran on a platform critical of governmental neglect of indigenous rights and failure to resolve the guerrilla conflict in the state. Salazar was backed by Presbyterians, Nazarenes, Baptists, and the Assemblies of God, as well as the liberal and influential Catholic bishop, Samuel Ruiz. The first Protestant Mexican governor, Salazar has created effective ecumenical committees to resolve long-standing religious conflicts in his state, which has the largest non-Catholic population in Mexico. In recent years, Mexican Pentecostals have begun to discuss the formation of local evangelical political parties.

Protestant ideology and organization are highly adaptive in both rural and urban environments. The Protestant work ethic and its associated asceticism enable followers to gain some upward mobility and to foster a sense of well-being and cooperation. Latin American societies will continue to engender a wide range of spiritual traditions in response to the rapid socioeconomic and cultural changes sweeping the region.

For five centuries, movements of religious change in Latin America have generated remarkably wide-ranging blends of native and exogenous religious influences. The revitalization process has served as a potent means of defending indigenous cultures, advancing political ideologies, restoring health, and bringing hope to the marginalized in the region. Thus, new religious activities among Latin American peoples richly illustrate the dynamic nature of their cultures and identities.

SEE ALSO

Afro-Brazilian Religions; Kardecism; Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity; Spiritualism; Yoruba Religion.

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